



Minutes Tempe Veterans Commission November 5, 2019

Minutes of the TEMPE VETERANS COMMISSION held on Tuesday, November 5, 6:00 p.m., at the Tempe Public Library, 3500 South Rural Road, Tempe, Arizona.

(MEMBERS) Present:

Troy Friedman, Chair
Jeremy Farr, Vice Chair
Phillip Kraft
Patricia Little-Upah
Michelle Loposky, telephonically
David Lucier, telephonically
Jezreel Ramirez

(MEMBERS) Absent:

William Blair
Abe McCann
Alfred Trevino

City Staff Present:

Robin Arredondo-Savage, Councilmember
Octavia Harris, Deputy Human Services Director
Jonae Harrison, City of Tempe Equity & Inclusion Manager
Cindy Kominska, Executive Assistant

Guests Present:

Nisha Dorsey, Military and Veteran Success Center
Tom Sheets, Southwest Veteran's Chamber of Commerce

Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order

Vice Chair Jeremy Farr called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Agenda Item 2 – Public Appearances

None present.

Agenda Item 3 – Attendance

Agenda Item 4 – Chair's Remarks

Chair Troy Friedman announced he will be leaving the Commission at the end of this year. He has served as a commissioner for 3 years. He will continue serving Tempe Veterans in his new position with Reveille Foundation.

Agenda Item 5 – Southwest Veteran’s Chamber of Commerce Presentation – Executive Director Tom Sheets

Southwest Veteran’s Chamber of Commerce (SWVCC) Executive Director Tom Sheets provided information about SWVCC and their Southwest Veteran’s Foundation. SWVCC helps members grow business while taking care of veterans and their families. They offer child and trade school scholarships and provide financial grants to organizations who support veterans and their families. They are looking to expand Chamber membership which can be veteran or corporate members. Funds they raise are utilized for seed money to support veterans’ families as well as helping grow businesses for vets. SWVCC would like to fuel collaboration among organizations and provide outreach to vets, whether emotional, technical, skilled, financial, or mentoring help that may be needed. They are seeking younger veterans who can be mentors for new vets and help with integration. SWVCC works with three businesses and individual vets on an individualized focused program in helping find jobs. SWVCC is talking with Salt River Project (SRP) and Arizona Public Service (APS) for technical training and internships which could potentially turn into jobs. Many of the veterans mentored through their program eventually become mentors themselves. Tom shared the Southwest Veteran’s Foundation might be a financial support for some veterans who would like to compete for available funds. SWVCC asked how they could provide support to veteran needs in Tempe.

Commission members asked questions and shared information. Jeremy shared SWVCC may be of support to the Commission as they consider developing a mentorship program proposal to present to Tempe City Council. Tom note a few additional sources which could help support veteran and military spouse entrepreneurs, work development needs such as bonding, tax break information, incentives and tax write-offs for employers, and other free services veterans are not aware of. SWVCC is looking forward to working with and supporting the veterans of Tempe and the efforts of the Tempe Veteran’s Commission.

Agenda Item 6 – Introduce City of Tempe Equity & Inclusion Manager, Jonae Harrison

The City of Tempe’s new Equity & Inclusion Manager Jonae Harrison was introduced. Jonae has been recently hired to fill a new position of the City’s Diversity Office and is available to assist the commission where needed. Her main role is to disseminate information and ensure equitability internally and externally. Jonae oversees events such as Tardeada and Martin Luther King Breakfast and advancing abilities and focus group initiatives such as Equity in Action. Equity in Action is a holistic approach to bringing together the voices of the underrepresented. Jonae shared there is an Equity in Action Supplemental Request for Quotation (RFQ) opportunity currently available. Ideas and recommendations are being sought from the community to assist the City of Tempe on different ways to make Tempe a place that is fair, equal and better for all. The RFQ offers \$25 an hour for valuable information shared from individuals, community groups or nonprofit organizations. Applications can be submitted at www.tempe.gov/bids. Jonae will send an electronic version of the application to Octavia Harris to forward to commissioners.

Agenda Item 7 – Review and Approval of October 15, 2019 Minutes

MOTION: Motion by Commission Member Patricia Little-Upah to APPROVE October 15, 2019 minutes with attendance revisions noted in packet

SECOND: Motion seconded by Vice-Chair Jeremy Farr

AYES: Chair Troy Friedman, Vice-Chair Jeremy Farr, Philip Kraft, Patricia Little-Upah, Michelle Lopusky, David Lucier, Jezreel Ramirez

ABSENT: William Blair, Abe McCann, Alfred Trevino

Motion carries.

Agenda Item 8 – Review and Approval of 2019 Board and Commission Annual Report

MOTION: Motion to APPROVE 2019 Board and Commission Annual Report by

Commission Member Jezreel Ramirez

SECOND: Motion seconded by Phil Kraft

AYES: Chair Troy Friedman, Vice-Chair Jeremy Farr, Philip Kraft, Patricia Little-Upah, Michelle Loposky, Jezreel Ramirez

ABSENT: William Blair, Abe McCann, Alfred Trevino

Motion carries.

Agenda Item 9 – Commission Member Updates/Announcements

Commission Member Patricia Little-Upah:

- November 11, 2019, 8:00 a.m., Surprise, Arizona, holding a dedication for the Veterans Reflection Circle along with their annual parade.
- November 11, 2019, 2:30-5:00 pm, Carefree, Arizona, David Lucier and Patricia Little-Upah will be speakers at Veteran's Day event.

Commission Member Jezreel Ramirez:

- November 7, 2019, 9:00am-3:00 pm, Talking Stick Arena, Hiring Our Heroes, veterans attending expo can receive two free tickets Phoenix Suns games along with opportunity to talk with employers.
- November 9, 2019, 10:00am to 9:00 pm, Arizona State University West, hosting annual Native American Festival honoring veterans. Friends and family invited.
- Arizona established their first Pre-9/11 Military Family Relief Advisory Committee last week. In November they will vote on their by-laws. In December or January families pre-9/11 can apply for benefits. This new advisory committee will help determine appropriate uses of the new funds available. Various eligibility requirements will apply. Commission members inquired if City of Tempe can promote this new funding option and tax credits available for veterans.
- Several Veteran's Day events are being held.
 - Arizona State University has a week-long Salute to Service with several events.
 - Tempe Veteran's Day Parade
 - Michelle Loposky will email Melissa Placencia to link with Veteran's Day events on her website.

Vice Chair Jeremy Farr proposed changing focus of the planned proposal to City Council from the East Valley Veteran's Court to a mentorship program. Judicial leadership at the East Valley Veteran's Court has changed and the person working with the Commission is no longer there. The mentorship focus will reach a broader audience of veterans in Tempe than the smaller opportunity with the veteran's court consideration. Jeremy requested permission of the commission to rewrite the proposal letter to be sent to the Mayor and City Council. Jeremy noted the extra support through mentoring would be valuable in transitioning veterans from military service to the civilian community when returning from deployment. The mentorship plan could include starting a relationship at the time of enlistment and developed over time to include being a source of resources for their families. Information will be gathered on organizations with available programs in place so there is not a duplication of services developed. The program will be further defined after the initial proposal. The new letter to City Council will focus on a base proposal on how the City of Tempe would benefit from having a mentorship program. Preparing details and seeking supporters will be valuable for the presentation and letter.

Octavia suggested the proposal be a pilot program with a limited group which can be developed over time.

Agenda Item 10 – Future Agenda Items – December 3, 2019

- Discuss new membership to fill expected vacancies.
- Octavia Harris recommended Vice Chair Jeremy Farr move into position as Chair upon Troy's resignation and Nisha Dorsey be considered to fill current vacant position.
- Planning and goal setting for next year.

Agenda Item 11 – Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

The next meeting will be on December 3, 2019

Minutes prepared by: Cindy Kominska

Reviewed by: Melissa Placencia

Troy Friedman, Chair
Tempe Veteran's Commission