

NORTHAMPTON TOWNSHIP VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes, Monday, March 17, 2023, 7PM

Members Present:

Kristin Reilly
Wendell Rich
Dave Reese
Tom Yaegel
Erik Saracino

Others Present:

Paula Gasper - Liaison
Lisa Russo - Administration Liaison

MEETING CALL TO ORDER – 7:00pm

PLEDGE OF ALLIEGENCE

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – February 20, 2023, Unanimous consent.

OLD BUSINESS

- VAC members were informed that Mr. Wynn resigned/retired as Director of Veterans Affairs in Dec 2022.
 - Mr. Saracino is currently assessing the VA's process for filing a disability claim. The results will be highlighted in a summary that committee members can review for comments. The VAC plans to release the information to the public upon approval from township management.
- OPEN VAC POSITION: Northampton Township is currently accepting applications for an open position on the VAC.
- Washington Crossing is hosting a dedication ceremony of George Washington which will be installed at the National Ceremony.
- Washington Crossing Historic Park will hold its annual Memorial Day ceremony on Sunday, May 28 at 1:00pm at the gravesite of Continental soldiers located near the Thompson-Neely House. The observation will include a colonial color guard, fife and drum music, artillery piece, Revolutionary War reenactors, veterans, including honorary guest speaker, Major General Tom Matthews (arrive early). After the dedication, American flags will be placed on the graves by the Guardians of Bucks County. The gravesite marks the resting place of soldiers who died during the Continental army's December 1776 encampment in Bucks County.
- VAC members exchanged ideas needed to honor the burial flags initially presented to the family of Army Master Sergeant Kenneth Elwell, a lifelong

resident of Holland, PA, who paid the ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan on July 19, 2011. The VAC agreed to place Master Sergeant Elwell's burial flags in a framed display case that will be included in the formal dedication of the Richboro Nike Ajax Base video presented to Council Rock North High School (TBD).

- VAC members plan to invite our Gold Star families to attend the dedication ceremony.
- Mr. Saracino and Mr. Colburn plan to meet with Council Rock South officials to discuss the possibility for the dedication ceremony at the school.
- The VAC anticipates purchasing the U.S. Space Force flag which was officially unveiled on May 15, 2020.

NEW BUSINESS

- Mr. Yaegel acknowledged the passing of Police Sergeant Frank Ambrose from Newtown Township who has passed away from Cancer in June of 2021 and an event that will be upcoming in his honor.
- **Mr. Yaegel Left the Meeting.**
- VAC members agreed to draft a short summary seeking assistance from the public to assist in collecting contact information for Veterans residing in the township. The data will be used to create a repository needed to disseminate pertinent information to Veterans in the local area.
- Chairman Reilly relayed that PA State Representative Kristin Marcell was interested in learning about Veteran concerns that appear to be the "busiest" when applying for VA claims.
- A memorial plaque was removed from the intersection of Bristol and Bustleton Road and moved to the Veterans Site in front of the Administration Building. Ms. Russo asked the VAC on behalf of the Administration to create wording for an additional plaque to create symmetry that explains the Brick program.

2023 VAC EVENTS

- **MEMORIAL DAY: Monday, May 29th @ Dembowski Park:**
 - M/C: W. Rich (Draft version of the script will be sent to all VAC members for review and comments shortly)
 - Guest Speaker: Lynn O'Brien/Charlene Lindsey (Potential Candidates)
 - Singer: TBD
 - Bagpiper: Secured
 - Chaplain: Mrs. Heenan recommended Father Passolini, St. Vincent's Catholic Church, Richboro, PA
 - Fireside Florist: Secured
 - Color Guard: TBD
 - Firing Squad: TBD
 - Bugler: TBD
 - Scheduled walk-through: May 27, 2023 @ 2:00pm

- **FLAG DAY: Wednesday, June 14th @ NH Recreation Civic Center.**
 - Sound system provided by the Northampton Indians Football and Cheerleading Organization.
 - The VAC seeks to obtain participation commitments from the Northampton Township Baseball Organization and Troop 145 parents & scouts.
 - M/C: Frank O'Donnell/James Gallagher (Potential Candidates)
 - Note: James Gallagher is not available.
 - Singer: Christina Keyak, Junior, Council Rock South High School
 - Chaplain: TBD
 - Color Guard: TBD
 - Firing Squad: TBD
 - Bugler: TBD

- **VETERANS DAY: Saturday, November 11th @ NHT Administrative Building**
 - CR South Marching Band. [Check on availability]
 - M/C & Guest Speaker: Erik Saracino
 - Chaplain: TBD
 - Singer: TBD
 - Color Guard: TBD
 - Firing Squad: TBD
 - Bugler: TBD

- **HOMETOWN HEROS WREATH LAYING CEREMONY: Saturday, December 2nd @ Union Cemetery, 209 Almshouse Rd, Richboro, PA**
 - M/C: K. Reilly
 - Singer: TBD
 - Chaplain: TBD
 - Wreaths: TBD
 - Color Guard: TBD
 - Firing Squad: TBD
 - Bugler: TBD

Meeting Adjourned: 8:10pm

Respectively Submitted

Erik Saracino, Secretary

Next Meeting: Monday, April 17, 2023