VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD
CITY OF LAS CRUCES
July 27, 2021, at 9:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Karen Woods, UMW of Southwest, Chair
Kyle Trout, Special Forces Association, Vice-Chair
Christine Sautter, MOAA
Hector Sanchez, Member at Large 2 - Student
Hubert L. Gay, Vietnam Veterans
James (JR) Turner, Member at Large 1
John Poland, American Legion Post 10
Mike Cano, Member at Large 3
Patrick Ramirez, VFW Post 10124
Vctor Eres, Marine Corps League

STAFF PRESENT: Eric Enriquez, Assistant City Manager
Larry Nichols, Director Community Development
Cathy Matthews, Landscape Architect, Parks & Rec
Audriannn Sambrano, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: Dale Lawrence
Desiree Johnson
Dolores Archuleta
Michael Amaral
Montevis Price
Ray Maldonado
Rick Pineda
Scott del Oso
Tony Alvarez
Travis Rogers
Victor Sanchez
William Beerman

I. CALL TO ORDER (9:05 a.m.): Chair Woods called the meeting to order.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA: Motion to approve agenda by Vice
Chair Trout, seconded by Board Member John Poland.

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

a. The minutes from May 25, 2021, and June 22, 2021, were approved
with edits. Motioned by Board Member Mike Cano and seconded by
Vice Chair Trout.
IV. OLD BUSINESS:

a. Iraq/Afghanistan memorial: Mr. Gay stated that he will be having a meeting with Parks & Rec for the foundation on August 2nd. The Board has previously approved the monument to be placed where the Korean monument was.

V. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Marine Corps Monument: Victor Eres, Marine Corps League, stated that the monument has been taken to get refurbished.

b. Korean War Monument: Christine Sautter, MOAA, stated that the kneeling figure will be painted black.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

a. VA Clinic: Michael Amaral, El Paso VA, stated that the VA has Covid-19 vaccines available at the main office only. Right now, the Veteran population not counting who’s been vaccinated is at about 37% and the staff is at about 93.5%. William Beaumont has changed locations. Mr. Amaral stated that if a referral is given to a Veteran for William Beaumont, the referral will be for the new facility. The El Paso VA is working towards getting a facility on the William Beaumont campus within the next four years.

b. Veterans Park Monthly Report: Ms. Matthews stated that the parking lot project is nearing final design. It is potentially over budget, but they are looking for additional funding to complete the project or to phase it. The Women’s Veteran Monument has had electrical work, light fixtures have been ordered, and the concrete was poured incorrectly so it needs to be redone. All issues are being worked on. Ms. Matthews also stated that Parks & Rec are working on a lighting project for the pathways along the park. There will be about 10 light fixtures that will match the future parking lot. It is anticipated that the light fixtures will arrive in September. It is taking a while to order construction supplies to the skyrocketing prices. By the end of this calendar year, they hope to have the additional lighting on the pathway completed.

Chair Woods had asked if there was going to be a delay in the parking lot due to construction item prices. Ms. Matthews stated that yes, it will affect the project as well as many other projects right now.
Mike Cano, Member at Large 3, asked if the pathway lighting will be level with the concrete or elevated. Ms. Matthews stated that the lighting will be elevated and on posts that are about 20 feet high to have a larger light spread out of each light fixture.

c. Dolores Archuleta, stated that on Memorial Day weekend there was a plaque added with 14 names on the Iraq/Afghanistan Panel. The plaque took a long time to get the names on it. The process was started in 2018. There is also a waiting list for the following: Korean War – 3, Vietnam War – 9, Persian Gulf – 2. There are 28 POWs on the Wall: WWII – 25 and Korean War – 3. The total names on the Wall are 8,032:

- Civil War – 108
- Sp/Amer – 102
- WW I – 337
- WW II – 2,666
- Korean – 1,019
- Vietnam – 2,530
- Gulf War – 479
- Iraq/Afg – 791

d. Larry Nichols, Community Development Director, stated that he is now a member of the Vietnam Veterans Association.

e. Monteviis Price, El Paso VA, stated that works with the Veterans Treatment Court assisting Veterans to get registered with the court.

f. Victor Sanchez, Veterans Treatment Court Coordinator, stated that the Veterans Treatment Court is to support Veterans with high risk, high need, and mental health. He stated that a lot of Veterans they see go through the criminal justice system and have offenses. Each Veteran is assigned a mentor to help guide them in a year long process. They receive home visits and drug tests. Mr. Sanchez also stated that if there is a need for community service, he can send help.

g. Roy Maldonado, State Commander, stated that the stand down for the homeless Veterans first meeting is going to be on August 17, 2021, at Post 10124. He also stated that the Veterans Court fell $30,000 short this year. He is hoping to coordinate with the Veterans organizations to assist with the shortage.

h. Scott del Oso, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, stated that his job is to help and support homeless Veterans with housing. He stated that Veterans do not have to have an honorable discharge but do have
to have one day of active service to receive their benefits. If there is an apartment available, they can house a Veteran the same day. Mr. Oso is a healthcare navigator; he leads Veterans in the right direction to receive healthcare.

i. **Tony Alvearez, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope**, stated that he is the program manager to the Oak Street Apartments. Mr. Alvearez also stated that if anyone needs volunteer work done to reach out to him.

j. **William Beerman, City Council Candidate**, stated that he is running for District 6 which is where the Veterans Park is located and if there are any questions or concerns, he would like to assist.

k. **Desiree Johnson, El Paso VA - Las Cruces Clinic**, stated that spouses and caretakers of a Veteran are also eligible for the vaccine.

l. **Travis Rogers, El Paso VA – Las Cruces Clinic**, stated that when a patient has a complaint, they can go to him, and he will do some research and then give a report of his findings.

m. **Rick Pineda, Veteran Liaison for Congresswoman Yvette Herrell**, stated that he is still traveling in the surrounding areas looking for trends and issues. Mr. Pineda is asking the Congresswoman about the bill regarding the Veterans that she spoke about.

n. **Dale Lawrence, Las Cruces Vet Center**, stated that they are currently waiting for approval for their going back to work plan to reopen and have their groups back in. Mr. Lawrence stated that Sam will be at the National Guard Amory on August 7, 2021. On September 18, 2021, there is going to be an open house at the VFW on Valley. Mr. Lawrence stated that Sam is working on a website for the Vet Center.

o. **Bill Hawkins, Veterans Parade Committee**, stated that they are going to have their first planning meeting for the parade. The parade will take place on November 6, 2021, at 11:00 a.m., with staging starting at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Hawkins stated that he will report to this board monthly with updates about the parade.

p. **Ronnie Cisneros, City Council District 5 Candidate**, stated that he is an Occupational Therapist assistant for the past 15 years. Mr. Cisneros stated that he works in home health with a lot of Veterans.
He also asked what resources Las Cruces has as far as if a Veteran needs to go to the Veterans Hospital in Tucson, or El Paso.

Mr. Amaral stated that a veteran will need to qualify to get the transportation for those appointments.

**VII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:**

a. **John Poland, American Legion Post 10 Commander,** stated that the facility is back up and running and insured. They are welcoming everyone back to their facility.

b. **Mike Cano, Member at Large 3,** stated that there is going to be a car show on September 11, 2021, at Borman Auto plex from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., with registration at 7:00 a.m. They are going to honor all First Responders that show up. They will have trophies to give away to police and fire agencies. It will be called the Travis Mulls car show. Travis Mulls was the 82nd airborne paratrooper that got injured in Afghanistan and lost all four of his limbs. Mr. Mulls has a foundation that he helps all Veterans who have had similar situations.

c. **Patrick Ramirez, VFW Post 10124,** stated that they are open again and will be having some events. Friday night dinners and karaoke, and Saturday the 31st, there is a teachers luncheon from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., and pool tournament at 5:00 p.m. They also still do the Senior breakfasts with donations if possible. It will be at 9:00 a.m., on August 22, 2021. On August 28, 2021. There will be a rummage sale from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

d. **Victor Eres, Marine Corps League,** stated that their detachment won the non-commercial float for the 4th of July Parade. Funerals have been picking up. Mr. Eres stated that they are not only the Honor Guard for the Marines, but they also get contacted by local funeral homes for all Veterans. On August 19, 2021, they will be gearing up for Honor Guard training and competition in Albuquerque.

e. **Hector Sanchez, Member at Large 2- Student NMSU,** stated that NMSU will be going back to full student services starting August 2nd, 2021, and the term starts on August 18th face to face. Some offices will continue to work remotely. Mr. Sanchez stated that they are hoping to have a grand opening for the computer lab for the Veteran students. Mr. Sanchez also stated that they are hoping that the university will increase and give an extra staff member to assist with first year student Veterans get through their first year.
f. **Kyle Trout, Vice Chair, Special Forces Association**, stated that the concrete bench next to the memorial similar to the one next to the Korean memorial has already been paid for they just need to get with Parks & Rec for placement. Vice Chair Trout also stated that this is his last meeting on the board. He has been on the board for eight years now and would like to thank the City for the opportunity.

Chair Woods stated that there is potential replacement person. The paperwork has been submitted.

g. **Hubert Gay, Vietnam Veterans**, stated that they have their regularly scheduled food drive the first Sunday of every month. The one in July they had issues with Walmart telling them they were not on the schedule to have the food drive. They have learned that Walmart has cancelled that nationwide. They are looking for a replacement place to have this event. Mr. Gay stated that they are going to have a meet and greet and information at Lowe’s Home Improvement store on Saturday, August 31st, at 7:30 – 11:00 a.m. They will be passing out information to Veterans and membership for VBA.

h. **James Turner, Member at Large 1**, stated that everyone knows that the Garrison flag flies on specific dates that have been voted on. It is flying today for Korean War Armistice Day. Mr. Turner provided additional dates that the flag will be flown and mentioned that it is a good opportunity for community service to help. The next day will be on August 7, 2021, for Purple Heart Day. Mr. Turner stated that the NM Department of Veterans Service Office has been closed during the pandemic and people have been shuffled out of that office. Right now, they only have one person doing the job. She is back in the office working and doing claims by appointment. They are in the process of hiring someone.

i. **Karen Woods, Chair, United Military Women of the Southwest,** stated that they are having two events in September. One is a car show and a swap meet at Sonoma Ranch Clubhouse on September 4th. The process will go to them. They will also be doing an event in El Paso at Top Golf on September 25th from 9:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Chair Woods stated that she is looking for sponsors.

**VIII. REMINDERS:**
a. **Garrison Flag: Hubert Gay**, stated that they are still working with Parks & Rec for the flagpoles, there is currently a work order in place.

b. **Next meeting August 24, 2021:** will take place at the East Mesa Public Facility Complex.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT (10:18 a.m.)**

Motion to adjourn by Vice Chair Trout, seconded by Board Member John Poland. Motion passes.

[Signature]

Chairperson

[Signature]

Date