



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
Meeting Summary Minutes
January 20th, 2015**

I. Call to Order & Introductions:

Dan Bullis, Vice-Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Commission on Veterans Affairs (CVA). Dan asked for all present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance and to remain standing for a moment of silence for all of those who have given their lives and those who have been wounded for our country in the different conflicts in which our country has been engaged. A POW/MIA Empty Chair is placed at all official meetings of the Commission as a physical symbol of the thousands of American POW/MIAs still unaccounted for from all wars and conflicts involving the United States of America.

II. Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the November, 2014 Meeting Summary Minutes and the December, 2014 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva.

III. Strategic Planning: 2015 is the Year of Montgomery County's Veterans and Their Families

In November, 2014 County Executive Isiah Leggett and then County Council President Craig Rice declared that 2015 shall be the year of Montgomery County's Veterans and Their Families. The County is encouraging all of our residents to join us in honoring our veterans and their families for their courage and sacrifice. The Commission discussed possible events and activities that the County could sponsor in 2015 to honor and provide outreach to veterans and their families.

Suggestions included:

- Schedule a meeting with the Department of Economic Development and the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce about contacting businesses and encouraging them to hire veterans.
- Carol Legarreta, Montgomery County Public Libraries, offered to assist the Commission in getting information and resources out to the community.
- This year is the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War and the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Vietnam War. A discussion was held about having a motorcycle ride for Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, which is March 30th as designated by the U.S. Senate. It was suggested pushing the date back to April 18th to allow for the possibility of warmer weather. Michael Walsh, Public, Vietnam Veteran, will contact Harley Davidson in Gaithersburg about hosting or sponsoring the motorcycle ride that would leave from their location and ride to the new Memorial Plaza in Rockville. Groups that could be invited to participate include Rolling Thunder, Legion Riders and Patriot Guard. The event would be open to anyone to attend. Dan Bullis, Vice Chair, suggested contacting a local veteran service organization to sponsor the event.
- The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Project committee continues to work on a plan to erect a Vietnam veteran memorial in Montgomery County.
- Mike Subin, Commissioner, will begin filming the new County Cable veteran program titled "Homefront" in February. Mike will be interviewing County Executive Isiah Leggett. The program will be shown during the month of March. Mike would like to interview Jessica Fuchs, Serving Together, and Wayne Miller, Silver Spring Vet Center, in April. The Homefront program could feature public service announcements or other information regarding 2015: Year of the Veteran and Their Families.

- It was suggested that the Commission host a booth at the City of Rockville's Hometown Holidays event during Memorial Day Weekend.
- Randy Stone, Commissioner, suggested that the Commission contact the Montgomery County Civic Federation and ask them to encourage their homeowners associations and community groups to sponsor events throughout the community.
- Mike Subin will schedule a meeting with the Office of Public Information to discuss outreach promotional materials and other targeted broadcasts the County could push.
- Design a pamphlet or a flyer.
- Contact a local defense contractor that would be willing to sponsor an advertisement.
- Contact local veteran service organizations such as Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, and Disabled American Veterans and hold a meeting to discuss outreach opportunities.
- Roland Kauffman, Commissioner, would like to see Montgomery County Public Schools closed for veterans day so students can attend veterans day events in the area. It was suggested that students could earn student service learning hours. Montgomery County currently is open with a two-hour early dismissal. Out of the 24 counties in Maryland, only four are closed on Veterans Day.
- Jessica Fuchs, Serving Together, will continue to field requests for the veterans speakers bureau. The speakers bureau currently has 17 veteran speakers signed up. She will contact teachers on a quarterly basis, and especially in May and November.
- It was suggested that the Commission take advantage of events and activities already taking place.
- The Commission should decide on a main message to be used in promotional materials or several messages that could be targeted to specific groups, such as businesses, community members, etc. For example, for businesses "Hire A Veteran".
- Betsy Luecking, Staff, reported that SEEC, a Montgomery County nonprofit agency providing individualized, community-based people with developmental disabilities, has informed her that their parent support groups have a disproportionate number of military families across the state due to relocation. She suggested outreaching to families who have children with disabilities.
- List of local businesses that can give discounts or free services for Veterans Day.
- The Commission could be a vendor at various events held in the County and surrounding jurisdictions, such as health fairs and various trade shows.
- Advertisements in Ride On buses.
- Post information about 2015: Year of the Veteran and Military Family on our website and include a calendar of events.
- Veterans Collaborative can assist in disseminating information.
- Contact Montgomery County Public Schools to identify military families and distribute information on resources to them.

- Contact Congressman Van Hollen and Senator Delaney about including information about the 2015: Year of the Veteran and Their Families in their monthly e-newsletters to constituents. It was suggested to create a one page contact sheet of resources that could be included.

IV. Chair and Vice-Chair Report:

The Commission will not be able to meet at Hungerford Drive next month as we have been bumped from the space for another meeting. The Commission will hold an off-site meeting at Easter Seals in Silver Spring. Stan Seidel, Volunteer, Easter Seals, will do a presentation on the services available to veterans and their family members and will give a tour of the facility.

V. Unfinished Business: None.

VI. New Business: None.

VII. Roundtable:

Lisa Stern, former Commissioner, is working with a group of women from the University of Maryland who would like to do a project on March 7th that would benefit female veterans. Suggestions can be sent to Betsy Luecking.

The annual Winterhaven Stand Down will be held this Saturday, January 24th. The event is held at the Washington, DC VA Medical Center.

The County's point-in-time count of homeless individuals will be on Thursday, January 29th.

Adjournment: 7:30 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: ****PLEASE NOTE DIFFERENT MEETING LOCATION**** Tuesday, February 11th, 2015 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Easter Seals, 1420 Spring Street, Silver Spring, MD, 20910.

Respectfully submitted: Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I; Betsy Luecking, Program Manager II