



**Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs
Meeting Summary Minutes
April 18th, 2017**

I. Call to Order & Introductions

Dan Bullis, Chairman, 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 March 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken and the March 2017 Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved. Approved minutes are available online at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cva.

III. Montgomery County, MD Vietnam War Era Honor & Gratitude Plaque to All Who Served and Memorial for Those Killed in Vietnam for Wheaton Redevelopment – Merlyn Reineke, Executive Director, Montgomery County Media, and Neil Greenberger, Legislative Information Officer, Montgomery County Council

Draft language to be displayed: Honor & Tribute

1) First part is to honor all who served and including those who are still living engraved and on a wall:

Montgomery County, MD honors and pays tribute to all County residents that served during the Vietnam War Era with many of our County residents serving side by side with many nations and with our South Vietnamese counterparts.

2) Second part: Memorial to those who were killed in Action:

A plaque on a pedestal will have the 131 names of County residents who were killed serving in Vietnam during that time. In addition to the name listed it will say:

In memory of those residents from Montgomery County who died serving our country in the Vietnam War. They are forever remembered here.

A planning committee previously met and expressed interest in using the same Honor and Gratitude theme that was used at the Vietnam event held in October 2015 that was put together by the Montgomery County PEG stations.

A discussion was had that the memorial/monument be as inclusive as possible and honor everyone who served and those who were killed in action. Dan suggested including those who served in the South Vietnamese Army alongside the U.S. Military. Dan noted that he will be meeting with the Association of Vietnamese Americans soon about their interest and possible involvement in this memorial/monument. Jane McCarthy, Commissioner, noted that the Republic of Korea (ROK) Marines served alongside the U.S. Military.

Neil announced that the broadcast of the October 2015 Honor and Gratitude event for Vietnam Veterans won a national Telly award, which is the equivalent of an Emmy award for media that is not broadcast on television.

Neil and Meryln offered to assist in publicizing the memorial/monument leading up to and after the unveiling.

Merlyn noted that on September 17th PBS will begin airing a new 10-part 18-hour documentary on the Vietnam War directed by Ken Burns. With the buzz around this project, it may be a good time to align an announcement of the County's memorial/monument and bring it to the community's attention.

Neil suggested having a large weather protected searchable screen that will have everyone who served and include their photo, if available, their hometown, and what unit they served in. The technology would make it easy for individuals to be added or listings to be edited. It was also suggested that a QR code be made available to visitors can scan the code with their phone and be taken to a website or video with more information. Jameelah Johnson, Commissioner, will ask her Uncle, who served in Vietnam, about this kind of technology as he recently retired in IT.

Mike Subin, Commissioner, indicated that the Commission is responsible to tell the County what it recommends for Honor & Gratitude and the Memorial for this project.

A member of the public suggested watching the documentary "The Lucky Few: The Story of USS Kirk, Providing Humanitarian & Medical Care at Sea". The destroyer escort USS Kirk became a haven for refugees fleeing South Vietnam. Capt. Paul Jacobs, retired commander of the USS Kirk, currently lives in Northern Virginia and may be a good contact. Video: <https://archive.org/details/THELUCKYFEWWMV91280x72016x9>.

IV. Animal Services – Tom Koenig, Director, Animal Services Division, Montgomery County Department of Police

PowerPoint: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Resources/Files/A%26D%20Docs/CVA/MCADS.pdf

Animal Services and Adoption Center are always looking for volunteers and fosters. It may be a good opportunity for Veterans, especially for those with PTSD.

Volunteering: <http://montgomerycountymd.gov/animalservices/volunteer/index.html>

V. Announcements

The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs is actively trying to find a replacement for the Montgomery County Veterans Benefits Specialist position. They held interviews last week and today.

Mike read the IG report regarding the DC VA Medical Center and at this time does not see any impact to the installation of the Montgomery County Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC). He and Senator Van Hollen's and Senator Ben Cardin's office will be following this closely. Mike also reported that Senator Van Hollen will be taping an episode of Montgomery County Cable Homefront tomorrow.

The Commission will be back to meeting at Health & Human Services Building, 401 Hungerford Drive in Rockville starting in May.

Adjournment: 7:15 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: Tuesday, May 16th, 2017 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Health & Human Services Building, 401 Hungerford Drive, 1st Floor 1A Conference Room, Rockville, MD 20850

Respectfully submitted:

Carly Clem, Administrative Specialist I

Betsy Luecking, Community Outreach Manager