



COMMISSION FOR VETERANS
PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES
6420 ALLENTOWN ROAD
CAMP SPRINGS, MD 20748



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May 4, 2020 Meeting via Zoom
Minutes

In light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom. The April 6, 2020 meeting was cancelled due to the Pandemic

The mission of the Commission is to evaluate the needs of county veterans and their families against the programs and services offered within Prince George's County, and to promote the development or expansion of programs and services when a need is identified.

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- I. Call to Order
 - a. The meeting was called to order at 7:04PM. Participants recited the Pledge of Allegiance and had a moment of silence for our fallen veterans.
 - II. Roll Call
 - a. Those present were Chairperson Andre Martel, Lisa Alston (Vice Chairperson), Ronald Dickens, Kenneth Hafford, Glynn Parker, Richard Hollis, Dr. James Dula, Kimberly Lewis, and Jermoni Dowd (host)
 - b. Absent
 - a. Ethel Sligh
 - III. The minutes were distributed prior to the meeting and approved without correction
 - IV. Chairman's Report
 - a. Chairman Martel has been working with AmVets, but they are experiencing low membership participation. Anyone interested in AmVets can join.

- b. It was mentioned that we may need to do something different to attract younger veterans to AmVets
- c. Motorcycle Ride
 - a. There will be a motor cycle ride this year, but it will not be as large as last year due to COVID-19

V. Dr. Dula's Report

- a. Robo Calls
 - a. County Executive, Angela Alsobrooks, has been sending robo calls to county residents to keep them abreast of the Census and COVID-19 updates.
 - b. Dr. Dula wants to acknowledge veterans who have succumbed to COVID-19. He stressed that we need to reach out to the spouses of veterans who have succumbed to COVID-19 as well. He encouraged us to notify his office of such.
- b. Anthony Smith was welcomed as our newest team member
- c. Veteran Strong
 - 1. Our motto is that we are Veterans Strong in that it is our duty to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our veterans. Commissioners can assist by sharing the information that Dr. Dula emails to the commissioners with veterans and their spouses. Commissioners can also help by starting our own database of veterans in our community, Civic Associations, social circles, etc. This will allow us to reach a wider community base. The emails that Dr. Dula sends should be shared with them. Commissioners are encouraged to get feedback from Veterans about our progress and how we can improve. These are some of the practices that we can implement to ensure that we are keeping with our motto of "Veterans Strong".
 - 2. Dr. Dula invites persons to email him with Veteran needs. His office makes a practice of returning the calls within 24 hours. His office is still open throughout COVID-19. Even though we are social distancing in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic, Dr. Dula goes into the office weekly to check emails and other items of importance. He addresses several calls, emails, texts, walk-ins per week to help ensure that our Veterans get a better quality of life. He makes referrals to other partnering organizations.
- c. Veteran Service Officers (VSO)
 - 1. Dr. Dula encouraged us to Identify VSOs in need and refer them to him
- d. Partnerships
 - 1. The Prince George's County Veterans Affairs Office has developed a partnership with various groups and non-profit organizations to assist veterans beyond county lines, as our partnerships send

referrals from other counties and states. Dr. Dula encouraged Commissioners to refer any potential partnerships to his office.

- e. Women Veterans
 - 1. May is Women's month, therefore we will recognize our Women Veterans weekly for the month of May. Commissions are encouraged to notify Dr. Dula of women veterans who have made certain achievements so that Dr. Dula may feature them.
- f. Census
 - 1. There is a focus for Veterans to complete the Census to ensure that they are counted so that they may receive much needed resources.
- g. Cemetery
 - 1. In light of COVID-19, the State Veterans Cemetery at Cheltenham is closed to visitors and is only open for burials.

VI. Old Business

- a. None

VII. New Business

- a. None

VIII. Committee Reports

- a. Vice Chair, Lisa Alston
 - a. The Vice Chair reported that her work has been limited due to COVID-19, however, she is posting information and events on social media
- b. Taylor Robison
 - a. Mr. Robison is encouraging veterans to complete the Census. He went to Andrews Airforce Base to encourage base members to complete census, but has had limited success. He wants publish the Census in the Andrews Paper and will continue to work with Dr. Dula on this.
- c. Kenneth ;Hafford
 - a. Mr. ;Hafford's committee has been working
- d. Glynn Parker
 - a. Mr. Parker is assisting Veterans with claims via phone, in light of COVID-19
- e. Kimberly Lewis
 - a. Ms. Lewis reported that the Census Project that the Prince George's County Bar Association was partnering with the Maryland National Capitol Park and Planning to sponsor at the Tree of Life Christian Ministries on April 26, 2020 was cancelled in light of COVID-19. However the Prince George's Bar Association is conducting a Census phone bank on Saturday, May 23, 2020 to encourage the completion of the Census.
 - b. Ms. Lewis announced that she followed up with an attorney who assists veterans in claiming benefits for service-connected disabilities who is

willing to speak at one of our meetings. She is waiting for a response. Chairperson Martel stated that the attorney may appear at our September or October meeting and requested the attorney's contact information.

- IX. Citizen Comments
 - a. None

- X. Honors to the Colors
 - a. Will be done remotely

- XI. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at 7:50PM. Next Meeting is June 1, 2020 at 7:00PM. The next meeting will likely be via Zoom.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly V. Lewis