

Commission on Veterans – March 3, 2025 Meeting Summary

The February meeting of the Commission on Veterans was opened by Chair Jackson with a welcome and the Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Dula followed with remarks highlighting ongoing initiatives, emphasizing Black History Month and veteran recognition efforts.

OVA Highlights:

- **Black History Month Programming:**
The Office of Veterans Affairs (OVA) hosted a featured movie night showcasing *The Six Triple Eight*, followed by a powerful panel discussion including the son of Major Charity Adams. Chair Jackson and Vice Chair Jackson participated in the panel Q&A session.
- **Community Partnership with Library System:**
A joint event with the local library system highlighted local heroes, featuring panelists from the American Legion, VFW, and the Tuskegee Airmen. The initiative aimed to deepen public understanding of veteran contributions within the community. Commissioner Henderson and Commissioner Odom attended on behalf of the Commission.
- **Closing Remarks:**
Dr. Dula closed by expressing gratitude to the commission for its active engagement and ongoing support of OVA's efforts.

Commissioner Reports:

- **Commissioner Harris** reported on outreach to local town halls, including engagement with District 8. A discussion with Council Member Burroughs considered funding for veteran initiatives expanded beyond OVA and through community outreach.
- **Commissioner Henderson** led outreach to civic organizations and homeowner associations, resulting in new engagement opportunities. She also spearheaded a business recognition initiative identifying women-owned veteran businesses for future commendation. A strategic meeting with OVA aligned her vision with agency priorities.
- **Commissioner Sleight** shared plans for a new initiative focused on outreach to federal employees impacted by administrative transitions, particularly those at risk of termination.
- **Chair Jackson** shared updates from his participation in Marine Corps ceremonies honoring the legacy of the first Black Marines.

Secretary:

Introduced Ursula Gann and her desire to serve as the Commission Secretary. She is a Navy Veteran.

Discussion Items:

- Commissioners discussed enhancing community presence through consistent engagement. Strategies included offering resources, announcing Commission involvement, and strengthening visibility.
- A renewed request was made for business cards to support community outreach.
- The Commission reached consensus on developing a community-facing fact sheet and leveraging OVA's website, the Commission website, and other tools to support public engagement.

Adjournment:

The meeting concluded with agreement on next steps for outreach tools and continued collaboration with OVA and community partners.