**Veterans, Ceremony and Parade Commission Regular Meeting**

**April 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

**Opening:** The Veterans, Ceremony and Parade Commission held their Regular Meeting on Monday April 12, 2021 in the Fowler Memorial Building, 45 New Haven Avenue, Tom Flowers called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and asked those present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call**:

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Tom Flowers - Chairman

Mike Kupson

Vincent Zelinsky

John (Jack) Jansen

**ABSENT/EXCUSED**:

Pattie Deer

Emily Sopchak

**GUESTS**:

Wayne Carson

Frank Rodriquez

Diane Zelinsky –recording secretary -– VIA Teleconference

**Agenda**: Open Agenda

**Consideration of Minutes** –Motion was made by Vinny Zelinsky and 2nd by Jack Jansen to accept the minutes from the March 8, 2021 meeting.

**A quorum was present for tonight’s meeting.**

**Old Business:**

Memorial Day Parade – last week additional discussions were had regarding Milford’s Memorial Day Parade. Pamela Ruddell, a reporter who was working on a news article, sent an email to Mayor Blake inquiring what Milford’s intentions were as surrounding areas such as West Haven and Shelton/Derby intended to go forward with hosting a parade. The Mayor referred Pamela to Tom Flowers as Chairman of the VCPC. Tom responded to both by email, in detail explaining that on average the traditional parade takes at least two months to plan and given the current COVID circumstances the members of VCPC (Veterans Ceremony and Parade Commission) were polled and the preference is for having a ceremony vs a parade. One key factor that went into this decision was the Milford Education Department Instructional Supervisor could not commit to the Foran and Jonathan Law High School marching bands participation due to mandated restrictions on band activities as well as the Milford Volunteer Ancient Fife and Drum Corp could not commit as they are following the current state requirements. Both are integral to the Milford Parade’s success and other civic and school organizations have not been contacted yet to participate. Tom Flowers, also, had a discussion with Deepa Joseph, Director of Public Health for Milford and she agreed that a ceremony is the way to go for this Memorial Day, with outdoor municipal events still limited to 500 people a traditional parade would far exceed that number.

The Ceremony will be on Sunday May, 30th at 2 pm and will be live streamed on YouTube and MGAT (Milford Government Access TV) and follow a similar format as the Veterans Day Ceremony, The Mayor will speak as well as Tom Saadi the DVA Commissioner and other dignitaries will be invited to attend and the Milford Concert Band will play an hour prior to the ceremony. Tom Flowers will coordinate with Justin Rosen and make sure the logistics are worked out and a Press Release will be done in the coming weeks.

Brief discussion was had to reiterate that each VSO needs to purchase 5 wreaths, one for each monument and have them arrive prior to the event. Florists were discussed again 4, Dillion Florist is now a vendor of the City of Milford however they are closed on Sunday and they do not deliver so arrangements would need to be made to pick them up on that Saturday. Beechwood Florist though the price is increased will still deliver to each monument for the event. Tom also indicated that the flags have been put on order and will be separated by cemetery for pick up by the VSOs at the Fowler building as in the past.

Tom also encouraged each VSO to have a presence at each of the weekend’s events.

**Memorial Day Events**:

* Flag Placement – Saturday, May 29, 2021 beginning at 8:00 AM. Flags will be placed at Veterans gravesites at each of the Milford Cemeteries’ each hosted by a VSO. (Masks and social distance requirements are necessary)

- Wreath laying ceremonies – Sunday, May 30,2021 at 10:00 am The names of those service members who have passed in the last two years will be read at the Doughboy statue before placing wreaths at the other war monuments up on the Green

- City Hall Ceremony – Sunday May, 30, 2021 at 2:00 PM- Limited attendance (Masks and social distance requirements are necessary) – Live streamed event

Mayor Blake informed Tom at the Vietnam Veterans Ceremony a couple of weeks ago about the total renovation of the Veterans Auditorium that is now underway. Part of this renovation will include the placement of 2 Large TV Screens. There is already a Wall of Honor which displays the names of those WWI, WWII, Vietnam and Korean services member who entered the service as Milford Residents. These screens would now serve to recognize any Milford Resident who entered the service in support of the Global War on Terrorism from December 1990 to present. Discussions were had on how to go about soliciting this information and what would the validation criteria be as well as how to collect the submittals. More discussion will be necessary to organize this project and get it underway with an anticipated timetable based on when the Auditorium project will be completed which was not available at this time.

* Who would be eligible – Milford Residents who entered the service or were put on active duty in support of the Global War on Terrorism (December 1990 to present)
* How would data be collected – couple options would be to use Milford’s City Clerk’s Office – Tom Flowers will reach out to Karen Fortunati on that or the VCPC could rent a P/O Box to collect initial submittals
* How would data be validated – Public press solicitation would need to include the specific years of service and a request a copy of the corroborating documentation – DD214 or Letter from the person’s CMDR or 1ST SGT
* How would names be managed once collected and how would new names be added – Database creation was discussed so a digital file is available and can be organized and updated by multiple sources prior to submission to the City for display, possible to add new names on a yearly bases as necessary.

**New Business:**

Frank Rodriquez joined this evening as a guest. He will be the new Representative of the VVA for the VCPC. Tom has sent an email to Mayor Blake and Frank will need to be approved by the Board of Alderman. Tom and the other members present introduced themselves and explained what VSO the represented and then Frank gave a brief biography on himself.

**For the Good of the Order**:

Mission BBQ in the old Bertucci’s location on the Boston Post Road is now open for business. They support and are dedicated to veterans. They have provided food to the VFW Post 7788 and American Legion Post 196 recently prior to their opening, encouraged to support this new local business.

Motion was made to adjourn by Vinny Zelinsky and 2nd by Mike Kupson

**Meeting adjourned at**: 8:25 pm

Respectfully Submitted by

Diane Zelinsky

Recording Secretary