

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
VETERANS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

1816 S. FIGUEROA STREET
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90015



**Jim Zenner
Director**

**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
Wednesday, September 20, 2023**

Present:

Anthony Allman
Dennis Anderson
Rocio Palmero
Patricia Jackson-Kelley

Absent:

Chi Szeto
John Gutierrez
Alfonso Noyola
Hugh Crooks
Jawana McFadden

**County Department
Military and Veterans Affairs**
Jim Zenner, Director
Stephanie Guerrero, Executive Secretary

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Szeto at 1:32 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner John Gutierrez, 5th District.

Roll Call

Eight (8) Commissioners were at the meeting during roll call; a quorum was present. At 1:40 p.m., Commissioner McFadden joined the meeting virtually, which changed the total to nine (9) Commissioners.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Jackson-Kelley to accept the Minutes for September 20, 2023, and seconded by Commissioner Allman. After a roll call was conducted with unanimous votes, the motion passed.

Chairman's Report

Chair Chi Szeto stated:

1. GovDelivery Notice of Meeting
 - 1/13/23
 - From: MVA@subscriptions.lacounty.gov
 - To subscribe email: info@mva.lacounty.gov
2. YouTube Channel
 - "LA County Military & Veterans Affairs"
 - 69 Subscribers
3. County training and emails
 - Communication through County email
 - Availability Oct 9th, 11th, 25th, 26th.

Memo of Finding

The Commissioners had to obtain a Memo of Finding from Legislative Affairs regarding their support of Assembly Bill 46 – Military Services Retirement and Surviving Spouse Benefit Payment Act. It was sent out in an email. They recommend that the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors support a motion to support Assembly Bill 46. Motion made by Vice Chair Noyola to approve and seconded by Commissioner Jackson Kelley. After a roll call was conducted with unanimous votes, the motion passed.

Metro Westwood/VA Hospital Station Artwork

Artwork presentation by Clare Haggerty, Director of Public Arts and Design at LA Metro. Ms. Haggerty provided a detailed presentation on the veteran inspired artwork designs to be featured on the walls of the Metro Westwood/VA Hospital Metro Station. She featured five (5) commissioned artworks pieces featuring the artistic designs of Los Angeles and the military/veteran community. Once presented, she requested feedback from the Veteran Advisory Commission and the veterans in public attendance at today's meeting.

Public Comments

Dreau Robbins, 3rd District veteran – He doesn't like the mural design for the Metro Westwood/VA Hospital Station Artwork.

John Oppenheim, 4th District veteran – He doesn't like the mural design for Metro Westwood/VA Hospital Station Artwork. He invited LA Metro to come to Century City at Cabrillo in Long Beach to see a mural for veterans to provide a good idea of the type of veteran artwork he believes would be appropriate for this Metro Station.

Thomas Lasser, 4th District veteran – He greatly appreciates the support from the Los Angeles County Veteran Advisory Commission of Assembly Bill 46.

Phyllis Miller, 3rd District veteran – She doesn't agree with the mural design for Metro Westwood/VA Hospital Station Artwork. She believes the artwork does not reveal veteran history, or any well-known, highly honored veterans.

Jerry Orlemann, 2nd District veteran – He doesn't like what the name of the station is or what some of the design represents to reflect the surrounding areas around the VA campus.

Christine Barrie, 3rd District service provider – She believes the mural does not reflect the history of the land.

Brandi Lago, veteran – She thanks LA Metro for their efforts in creating the artwork.

Stephen Machuga, veteran – He is not concerned about the mural but rather is disturbed that veterans are not being listened to by those in authority.

Daniel Ortiz, 1st District veteran – He doesn't like the mural artwork design for Metro Westwood/VA Hospital Station.

Bailey Steele, veteran – She doesn't like the mural artwork design for Metro Westwood/VA Hospital Station.

Mayra Duarte, 5th District veteran – She doesn't like the mural artwork design for Metro Westwood/VA Hospital Station. She believes the mural doesn't help to calm the veteran community that is stressed by visiting the VA and that it needs to be more positive.

Robert Pelayo, 5th District veteran – He works for LA Metro and doesn't like the mural design for Metro Westwood/VA Hospital Station. He states that it seems confusing.

Tess Banko, 3rd District veteran – She is disappointed in the mural design. She doesn't believe that women veterans are properly represented and doesn't like the name of the station.

Kyle Orlemann, 2nd District wife and caregiver of a veteran – She doesn't like the mural design but instead offered design suggestions.

Recommendation #4

The recommendation consists of the consolidation of serving programs under the department. MVA has not received any Measure H funds and believes that MVA should be the lead on these funds. Motion made by Commissioner Vice Chair Noyola to approve Recommendation #4 and seconded by Commissioner Anderson. After a roll call was conducted with unanimous votes, the motion passed.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Report

Director Jim Zenner was prepared to provide a report but happy to yield the time to Public Comments. Will provide a copy of the slides to the Commissioners instead.

Agenda Items that are deferred to a future meeting

1	LA County Homeless Initiatives	FY23 Funding Strategies	Allman
2	West LA VA Campus	Women Veteran Program	Jackson-Kelley
3	Veterans Healthcare Administration	Medical Devices Recall	Noyola
4	Department of Economic Opportunity	Modernization of AJCC	Allman
5	Commission Services	Cross Commission Cooperation	Szeto
6	Metro	Hiring and Veteran Initiatives	Zenner
7	Department of Public Social Services	Assistance for veterans	Palmero
8	Department of Mental Health	Programs overlapping with MVA	Anderson
9	Department of Military and Veterans Affairs	VSO Brief on veterans benefits	Allman

Good of the Order

Commissioner Palmero stated that Women Vets on Point will partner with MVA for an event entitled Battle Boutique for women veterans on October 14, 2023, at Bob Hope Patriotic Hall.

Commissioner Crooks said he wanted to thank the public for coming out to speak and passing Recommendation #4.

Commissioner Allman stated he wanted to encourage all to read the LA Times this morning regarding the coverage of the ongoing motion to dismiss and the legal proceedings; coverage is also available on the AMI issue as well.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he wanted to thank Commissioner Allman for the research and diligence on the Recommendation to consolidate funding. He also mentioned the five (5) tribute walls to the Washington Vietnam Memorial.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Stephanie Guerrero
Executive Secretary
September 20, 2023