

# CITY OF MANCHESTER

## MEETING OF THE VETERANS COMMISSION

Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2022

A meeting of the Veterans Commission of the City of Manchester, Missouri was held at 4:30 p.m. on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February 2022, on the video conference application, Zoom, for the transaction of such business that came before the Commission.

Present:

Mayor Mike Clement

Alderman Megan Huether

President Kay Bell

Secretary Bonnie Krueger

City Administrator Justin Klocke

Ms. Ruth Baker

Mr. Bob Bell

Ms. Julie Nguyen

Mr. Bud Niebling

Director Ms. Kat Schien, Parks, Rec & Arts

Commander Sam Fletcher

Ms. Rebecca Pate, Rec & Arts Specialist

### **Introduction/Welcome**

Mike Clement called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m. Ruth Baker made the motion to approve the Minutes of the Jan.12 meeting and Julie Nguyen seconded it with approval for Justin Klocke to post on the City of Manchester website.

### **Flags of Valor art exhibit**

Rebecca Pate shared that art exhibit is scheduled from May 16 to July 11, 2022. There are two components: The story of the event as told by Rick Randall and Lee Presser. The second is an open entry from all three events (10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> anniversaries). Call for entry will be open as early as Feb. 28 or perhaps March 1, with a deadline for entry April 22. There will be an un-juried selection by peers for those selected to be a part of the exhibit. Rick and Lee will be notified of the plans for the event and be asked for input.

### **Flags of Valor on Art Hill mailing**

With an addition of 40 flags from Rick Randall, the City of Manchester is commissioned to mail 240 flags to Gold Star families. There are approximately 25 more flags to be mailed, which should be completed before the next Commission meeting. Janet Lawder and Bonnie worked diligently and relentlessly on one particular soldier and as of 2/23, family was located. Bonnie has promised to compose an article about how she is touched by the project, which may be published online on the Veterans page. She may be asked to speak at an upcoming Board of Aldermen meeting as well.

### **Hometown Heroes Banner Program**

Of the 24 open spots for banners, one slot was still available for purchase, per Kat Schien, with an April 1 deadline. The banners still remaining at the Justice Center will be removed soon. Kat said about 50 percent of the previous participants opted to participate this time. Some of the families wanted to open up the opportunity for new Hometown Heroes recognitions. Kat will continue to work on the city's banner, which will feature all five branches of the military.

### **Installation at Veterans Memorial Park**

The plaque for PO1 Robin Collins was installed by Paul the week of Feb. 20. Bonnie happened to hear from the parents of fallen soldier Jacob Fleischer who is one of the plaques at the Memorial Park. They plan to be in attendance for the Memorial Day event.

### **Recognition of Eugene Ganz, WWII Veteran**

Eugene Ganz recently passed away. As a Manchester resident, the Commission discussed honoring him at the Memorial Day Event with his family invited. Kat suggested he receive his own wreath during that portion of the ceremony.

### **Rescheduled Recognition of 100-year-old WW11 Veteran Bill Dees**

Originally Bill was going to be recognized at the first Board of Aldermen meeting in January, but with an upsurge of COVID cases, the current meeting format for now is ZOOM. His daughter did not feel that was a good option for him and preferred to meet in person when it is allowed. With the Board of Aldermen meetings resuming in person in March, he is scheduled to attend the second meeting of the month, which is March 21.

### **Memorial Day Event (May 30)**

A large portion of the meeting was devoted to the specifics of what our Memorial Day event at Stoecker Park might look like. The last big event was held in 2019, so Kat will provide the itinerary of that event so it can help guide this year's event. Some of the elements discussed included:

- Invocation, presenting of the Color Guard
- Manchester Community Band music (including Taps)
- A speaker, which may be Wayne Wallingford, who gave a presentation of Linebacker II this last year.
- Wreath Ceremony
- Unveiling of the new plaques

Among the individuals to be invited (or have been in the past) Boy and Girl Scouts, military veterans, the motorcycle group, Manchester Police Department veterans, an Eagle from World Bird Sanctuary, Gold Star families represented in the new plaque display. A lengthy discussion took place about asking the police attendees to discuss the loss of life by current/former soldiers by suicide, if that is something they are comfortable doing. Julie Nguyen suggested inviting the police formally to make them feel more included and honored as guests.

A small team of volunteers, including Bob and Kay Bell, Mike Clement and Megan Huether, will work on a preliminary Memorial Day agenda to present at the March meeting.

### **Food Drive for Jefferson Barracks**

The "Forces for Food" food drive is unofficially underway. Mike Clement had not connected with the Jefferson Barracks representative to get some specifics on how best to serve them. Once he connects, a larger push for the collection will take place. It is a combined effort between Manchester Cares program and the Veterans Commission.

### **Other:**

- The Flags of Valor flags gifted by Rick Randall, in addition to the flag gifted to the City of John Stone of Vermont (because his family declined the flag) can line the walkway at Stoecker Park.
- Janet Lawder, one of Bonnie's excellent volunteers, has agreed to help her work on the Freedom Memorial Wall at South High once our FOV project is completed.
- Bonnie will check with Principal Dr. Patrice Aitch about us hosting the April Veterans Commission meeting at the Freedom Memorial Wall. Megan said the mask mandate has been lifted so this should not be a problem. Bonnie suggested with weather possibly being an issue we should continue Zoom one more month.
- Megan suggested designing a brick that will be placed at the Memorial Park in honor of Wallingford since he has not taken the lead on the design. They can then send it to him for approval. Megan would like to have the brick for the Memorial Day event.
- Bud Niebling said he has a relative that might qualify for recognition of WWII veterans, in addition to Ganz and Dees.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held by Zoom on Wed. March 30 at 4:30 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

At 5:45 p.m. the meeting was unanimously adjourned.