

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BOROUGH OF THE BRONX
COMMUNITY BOARD 7



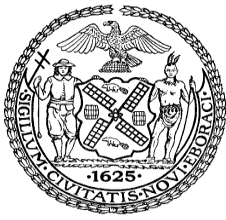
HON. VANESSA L. GIBSON, BOROUGH PRESIDENT YAJAIRA ARIAS, CHAIRPERSON KARLA CABRERA CARRERA, DISTRICT MANAGER

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Chair: | Chad Y. Royer |
| Meeting Date: | November 13, 2023 |
| Meeting Time: | 6:30PM |
| Meeting Location: | <u>Bronx Library Center</u> 310 E Kingsbridge Rd, Bronx, NY 10458 |
| Members In Attendance: | <u>✓</u> Chad Royer <u> </u> Emmanuel Asamoah <u>✓</u> Bernard Wright <u> </u> Jean Hill <u>✓</u> Hugo Gonzalez <u>✓</u> Tobie Buford |
| Minutes done by: | Chad Y. Royer |

Minutes:

- I. Guidelines & Code of Conduct for the meeting**
 - A. Guidelines were read
- II. Introduction**
 - A. Introduction and attendance was taken
- III. Review of October 2023 Minutes**
 - A. Minutes were reviewed
- IV. New Business**
 - A. Veterans Month & VA Future Plans by Shawn Kingston**
 1. The new fiscal year started on October 1 and the VA has requested a 5.4% increase in budget, giving the operational budget over \$325 billion to care and provide for our Veterans.
 2. Veterans who have not utilized their VA healthcare benefits are being encouraged to visit the James J Peters VA. The VA is currently making an outreach push to reach out to new Veterans so that they can take advantage of earned benefits. The VA is relying heavily on community



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partners, including Bx Community Board 7, other boards, elected officials, and other Veterans to spread the word.

3. Veterans are encouraged to get screening for the PACT ACT toxic exposure at the VA, a non-evasive screening which takes a few minutes. The VA is working with the claims partners like NY state, Disabled American Veterans, and Veterans Benefits Administration to ensure claims are processed in a timely fashion.

B. Presentation on Recovery for Veterans: Keep It Simple & Safe (KISS) Presentation by Walter Bell

1. Many of our Veterans are either homeless, dealing with drug addiction, dealing with substance abuse or a combination of all. KISS is working on an event on November 30 from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm at one of the Jericho Projects buildings where Veterans can have lunch and also learn about the importance of Veteran recovery.
2. Much of the trauma and experiences that Veterans face is not readily known by the predominant substance abuse field. This is called Veterans Focus Recovery because other Veterans would more than likely understand and Veterans who would want the help would not feel comfortable telling everyone that they have this type of problem.
3. Veterans are invited and encouraged to bring others to the event. One of the goals is to have monthly events where there will be therapeutic activities and presentations on the use of NARCAN and fentanyl test strips. Details on the location will be available as soon as possible

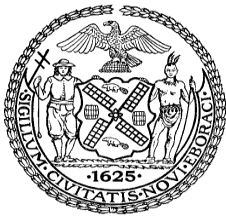
C. Community conversation around advocating for veterans

1. Over the past two months, the committee spoke about an idea of improving the application process for Veterans who apply for housing through the HPD portal.

THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION, CONTACT US AT:

229-A EAST 204TH STREET ♦ BRONX, NY 10458 ♦ PHONE: (718) 933-5650

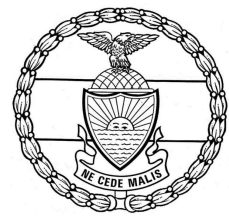
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2. Upon discovery, there is a question in the portal that asks if the applicant has ever served in US Armed Forces, National Guard, or the Reserves, yet the answers does not change the context of the questions or provide any additional perks in the application. Applicants who are community board members get 50% additional preference; New York City employees get 5% preference; anyone with a mobility disability gets 5% preference; anyone with vision or hearing disability gets 2% preference; and anyone who identifies as a Veteran with no other disclosures would get 0%.
3. Motion by Jean Hill to write a letter of recommendation to City Council to prioritize a Veterans section within the HPD portal to a) add a percentile for Veterans preference, b) collect aggregate data, and c) retroactively account applicants who previously applied to the HPD portal, seconded by Bernard Wright. 5 yay, 0 nay, 0 abstentions.
Motion passes

V. Next Meeting Date

- A. The next meeting for the Veterans Committee will be in January 2024, but the date has not been determined

VI. Adjournment

- A. Motion to adjourn meeting by Jean Hill, seconded by Emmanuel Asamoah

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