

New York City Veterans Advisory Board

Minutes for June 16, 2016 meeting held at:

Staten Island Borough President's Office
10 Richmond Terrace, #120
Staten Island, NY 10301

Members

Present:

Todd Haskins (Manhattan)	John Rowan (Queens)
Charles Greinsky (Staten Island)	Joe Bello (Bronx)
Charles Hernandez (Bronx)	Mariel Juarez (Brooklyn)
Jules Martin (Manhattan)	

Absent:

Pat Devine (Bronx)	Anthony "Tony" Odierno (Manhattan)
Samuel Innocent (Bronx)	Wendy McClinton (Brooklyn)

Minutes

- Todd Haskins (Chair) commenced the meeting. (5:40 PM)
- All VAB members introduced themselves to the audience.

Public Session

Staten Island Borough President James Oddo gave greetings to the board and the audience.

NYC Deputy Mayor Richard Buery gave greetings and talked about how DVS is growing and the changes DVS is and will be going through. The Deputy Mayor also discussed Mental Health and the city's ThriveNYC plan, which is key priority to improve the health of New York City.

The Deputy Mayor discussed HUD's certification ending chronic veteran homelessness in NYC. He stressed there is still more work but that great process has been made. The DM made a point of saying that DVS continues leadership with other city agencies in this area.

The Deputy Mayor talked about how DVS is in the process of creating satellite offices in each of the five boroughs. In Staten Island, the satellite office will be at the College of Staten Island. No time frame when it will officially open as they are still discussing. The Deputy Mayor also talked about the new Staten Island Ferry that will be named for the late Staff Sgt. Michael Ollis, who died after

stepping in front of a wounded Polish soldier to shield him from an insurgent's suicide vest. Lastly the Deputy Mayor shared that both his nephew and cousin are veterans.

The Deputy Mayor took questions from the audience. There was a discussion on housing for specialized populations and the need for both long and short term housing in Staten Island. It was stated by someone in the audience that there is no Section 8 housing for veterans in Staten Island.

The board approved the April 2016 minutes and the new VAB By-laws without objection.

Commissioner Sutton reported on the continuing transition to the NYC Dept. of Veterans Services, including future hiring and budget resources. The Commissioner introduced Jamal Othman as the new Assistant Commissioner. Mr. Othman was the Deputy Director for the State Division of Veterans Affairs. She also introduced Matt Basile, who is the new outreach coordinator for Staten Island. The Commissioner introduced the New York Film Academy, student-veterans who are filming the meeting for DVS to post online. Lastly, the Commissioner discussed DVS' Artist in waiting program and the new positions that are available at DVS, and how to apply.

Public Comments: Board member Charles Greinsky (Staten Island) hosted this part of the meeting. The following individuals gave public comments to the board:

Paul Capofari: Mr. Capofari is an ADA with the Staten Island District Attorney's Office. He stated that the Staten Island Veterans Court is moving forward and they have identified a Judge for the court. The court is tentatively scheduled to open sometime in November.

Dan McSweeney: Mr. McSweeney shared his observation regarding the number of boards currently in existence, and how we can collate to create critical mass for younger veterans. He also discussed legal marijuana for veterans, how it can possibly help those with mental health issues, how we should be talking about it and that more information is needed.

Tony Davis: Mr. Davis is the Relationship Manager; North Atlantic District for the Department of Veterans Affairs. He talked about creation of the CVEB Metropolitan NYC Veterans Community Engagement Board and what its mission is and how it enables veterans and other stakeholders to identify and work to resolve issues at the local level to improve VA service delivery for veterans and their families.

Michael Williams: Mr. Williams is the Bronx VA Medical Center Minority Veterans Coordinator. He stated that he travels all over the community helping veterans and that if anyone wanted to speak with him, he would be available. (Note: He was at our Queens Meeting as well).

Jim Haynes: Mr. Haynes talked about the problems getting the word out to the community regarding these types of meetings. He stated that the Staten Island Advance no longer does local announcements. He also stated the paper no longer puts flags next to the names of veterans when they pass away, which helped identify them.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next Meeting: Bronx, September 21, 2016

Submitted by VAB Secretary Joe Bello.