

New York City Veterans Advisory Board

Minutes for October 22, 2015 meeting held at:

Bronx Library Center
310 East Kingsbridge Road
Bronx, NY 10458

Members

Present:

Todd Haskins (Manhattan)	Samuel Innocent (Bronx)
Charles Hernandez (Bronx)	Mariel Juarez (Brooklyn)
Joe Bello (Bronx)	John Rowan (Queens)
Anthony "Tony" Odierno (Manhattan)	
Vincent McGowan (Ex-Officio)	

Absent:

Wendy McClinton (Brooklyn)	Charles Greinsky (Staten Island)
Pat Devine (Bronx)	Jules Martin (Manhattan)

Minutes

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

Old Business: The board reviewed the minutes from August (Brooklyn). The Chair followed up on **Rev. Robert Farley** comments during the public session, in which he stated he was not being offered space at the new MOVA location. In speaking with Commissioner Sutton, this statement was not true as he was offered space but wanted a bigger location, which MOVA could not accommodate. He has a standing offer to return to MOVA if he should chose so in the future. The minutes were accepted by the board. The chair also informed the board and audience that our last two meetings for 2015 will be on November 16th and December 7th respectively.

Presentations:

MOVA. The Chair stated that we were given a briefing earlier by Deputy Commissioner Laporte and MOVA's VAB liaison Latisha Russaw regarding the structure changes currently taking place. MOVA has increased from 4 to 19 people and they're in the process of putting an outreach specialist in each borough with each individual being an overlapping backup to another borough. The chair stated that MOVA is in the process of completing interviews for those positions. The chair also announced that MOVA has moved into their new space at 1 Centre

Street and while they are unpacking, they are up and running. Lastly, the chair talked about the upcoming veteran's week and that if any of the board members or audience knew of any events, please make MOVA aware of it.

IDNYC. Mr. Mohammad Kaba talked about the IDNYC Card and the veteran's designation. He also discussed the benefits available to veterans and stated he would be available for any questions.

Vince McGowan (UWVC). Ex-Officio McGowan talked about this year's Veterans Day parade (Americas Parade). This will be the 95th consecutive parade and it will start at 11 AM. There will be three (3) hours of consecutive parade coverage from WPIX-11.

Public Comments: Board member Charles Hernandez hosted this part of the meeting. The following individuals gave public comments to the board:

Trent Love: Talked about creating a multi-media virtual tour of the Bronx. He is looking for help to develop an app. He has an African-American History presentation with QR Code.

Latasha Peeler: Talked about NYC street vendor's issues. She talked about the Harlem Vets Center facilitating a group called Vets4Vets. She also talked about the problems with Veteran Vendors v. Undocumented vendors, as well as the Black market and rent-a-vet problems. She passed out a letter that was sent to the City Council (copy given to the board) as well as the creation of a survey and meeting on November 18th with City Council Veterans chair Eric Ulrich. John Rowan asked her about Newspaper stands and Vince McGowan asked her to follow up on that. Lastly, Ms. Peeler talked about a 10-week guitar program that the Harlem Vet Center is conducting and how after the 10-weeks you get to keep the guitar.

Paul Gill: Stated he was an OIF vet. Talked about a shortage in the VA budget (\$2.9 million), the increase to MOVA's budget and what can they do with the new budget. He also talked the City of Boston and how its veteran's budget is \$45 million and how NYC allocates less than half of that. Lastly, he talked about Intro. 314 and the need to create a Veterans Department in NYC.

New Business: The chair recognized **Joe Mondello**, who was appointed by Bronx Borough President Rubin Diaz Jr. as the Chair of the Bronx Veterans Advisory Council. Joe gave greetings to the members on behalf of the Borough President and talked about some of the items the council has worked on and is currently working on. He thanked the board for its work and looks forward to us coming back to the Bronx in 2016.

Racquel Levine from NYLAG, a legal non-profit organization that provides assistance to veterans, spoke about how they have a volunteer based project that helps connect veterans to benefits. They currently have a grant from the City Council.

Meeting Adjourned.

Next Meeting: November 16, 2015

Submitted by: Joe Bello, Secretary