

# Minutes Tempe Veterans Commission March 13, 2024

Minutes of the TEMPE VETERANS COMMISSION held on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 6:00 PM. – 7:30 PM.,  
via Microsoft Teams and Tempe Public

**(MEMBERS) Present:**

Juan Garcia  
Romaldo Gonzales  
Beno Thomas  
William Gorman  
Melanie James  
Jose Moreno  
Jim Lange  
Ryan Swearingen  
Phillip Kraft, Chair

**(MEMBERS) Absent:**

Aaron McBride  
Gwendolyn “Gwen” DeNeal

**City Staff Present:**

Abe McCann, Veteran Services Coordinator

**Public Appearances**

There were no public appearances.

**Guest Appearances**

There were no guest appearances.

**Agenda Item 1 – Call to Order-6:08**

**MOTION:** Commissioner \_\_\_ moved to START the meeting

**SECOND:** Motion Seconded by Commissioner \_\_\_\_; Motion passed unanimously.

**ABSENT:** Aaron McBride Gwendolyn “Gwen” DeNeal

**Agenda Item 2 – Attendance**

Commission Members DeNeal and McBride could not attend this meeting.

**Agenda Item 3 – Public Appearances**

There were no public appearances.

**Agenda Item 4 – Review/Approve of February 14, 2024 Minutes**

**MOTION:** Commission Member Gorman moved to APPROVE the February 14, 2024 minutes

**SECOND:** Motion Seconded by Commission Member Moreno

**AYES:** Chair Kraft, Commission Gonzales, Thomas, James, , Garcia,

**ABSENT:** Commission Member McBride and DeNeal

**Agenda Item 5 –Chair’s Remarks**

Chair Kraft apologized for his absence during the February meeting. He had no remarks.

**Agenda Item 6 – New Projects Proposals**

VSC McCann briefly remarked on last month's goal of proposing new arenas and events in which the Commission could participate, attend, or sponsor.

Commission member Gorman proposed that the Commission could cosponsor a town hall with either of the two organizations he represents. This town hall would serve to address, discuss, and inform attendees on issues pertaining to Fort McClellan, toxic exposure, health issues past personnel maybe experiencing, and potential legislation that may arise for this situation. Other Commission members supported this suggestion and highlighted the need for awareness surrounding toxic exposure. To stay within COT's commission regulations, VSC McCann highlighted that such an activity would require outside independent work from a commission member. Finally, commission members discussed the location and logistical tools needed to incorporate a larger audience better. Upon this, the Commission motioned the proposal.

**MOTION: Commission Member Moreno moved to HOST and SUPPORT a townhall at the VFW on issues of Agent Orange and Fort McClellan Toxic Exposure**

**SECOND: Motion Seconded by Commission Member Swearingen**

**AYES: Chair Karft, Commission Member Gonzales, Thomas, James, Chair Karft, Garcia, Gorman, Lange**

**ABSENT: Commission Member McBride and DeNeal**

Commission Member Gorman also highlighted last month's Welcome Home Vietnam Vets. It was a lovely event, and the attendance was good.

VSC McCann directed the conversation to more suggestions on potential 'Field' Meetings.

Commission member Garcia mentioned that the Commission should consider having an official presence at Tempe Beach Park's Veterans Day Parade. While the details were hammered out fully, commission members expressed interest in the proposal as it would be an optimal opportunity to meet with the public. The Commission opted to put it to a motion.

**MOTION: Commission Member Garcia moved to have active PRESENT public-facing role in the Tempe Beach Park Veterans Day Parade**

**SECOND: Motion Seconded by Commission Member Gonzales**

**AYES: Chair Karft, Commission Swearigen, Thomas, James, Moreno, Garcia, Gorman, Lange**

**ABSENT: Commission Member McBride and DeNeal**

Commission Member Lange is currently working on shirt design; The commission members expressed their gratitude.

**Agenda Item 7 –Commission Nominations- Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary**

-Chair Kraft expressed his belief that to improve an organization, it needs repeatedly changing leadership.

**MOTION: Commission Member Gonzales moved to NOMINATE commission member Thomas to the post of Chairman of the Commission**

**SECOND: Motion Seconded by Commission Member Moreno**

**Commission Member Thomas accepted the nomination.**

**MOTION: Commission Member Moreno moved to NOMINATE commission member Lange to the post of Vice Chairman of the Commission**

**SECOND: Motion Seconded by Commission Member Gonzalez**

**Commission Member Lange accepted the nomination.**

**MOTION: Commission Member Kraft moved to NOMINATE commission member James to the post of secretary of the Commission**

**SECOND: Motion Seconded by Commission Member Gonzalez**

**Commission Member James accepted the nomination.**

**MOTION: Chairman Kraft moved to ACCEPT the nominations of Commission Member Thomas to the post of Chairman of the Commission, Commission Member Lange to the post of Vice Chairman of the Commission, and Commission Member James to the post of secretary of the Commission**

**AYES: Chair Karft, Commission Swearigen, Thomas, James, Moreno, Garcia, Gorman, Lange, Gonzalez; Motion passed unanimously.**

**ABSENT: Commission Member McBride and DeNeal**

**Agenda Item 8 –Commission Member Update/Announcements**

Commission Member Garcia highlighted that earlier in the day, his organization hosted a Red, White, and Blue Award ceremony, which honors various military members. Moreover, Commission Member Garcia will begin a term as the head of the Military First Command committee.

-On the weekend of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Luke Airforce Base will host an airshow, and First Command will host a booth there. Commission Member Gonzalez will also host a booth there this weekend

April 5, Tempe Veterans Service Organization (TVSO) has tickets available for members and their families for the 'Let's Swear' Celebrity Basketball event.

-On March 16, TVSO hosted a valor day for military members and their families; it's the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the organization.

-Phoenix Rising FC's annual military appreciation night will be April 20. Commission Member Garcia will be handing out tickets to veterans for this event.

-ASU hosted an 'Out of the Darkness' walk; it raises awareness and funds for suicide prevention

-April 11-14, The traveling wall "the wall that heals" will be at Lake Pleasant; Commission Member Gorman will be heading there with his organization.

-Commission Member Moreno highlighted two events. Jeff Davis, a veteran at ASU, seeks for veterans to speak at local High school to inspire a life of service.

-March 24 at Kiwanis Park from 10 AM – 2 PM Joint VSO Social

-May 6, Commision Member Kraft's choir has been asked to participate at Tempe Salutes.

VSC McCann highlighted a series of programs that Tempe offers, and seeks to assist with, for Veterans.

**Agenda Item 9 –Future Agenda Items**

-The new chair, vice chair, and secretary will meet with VSC McCann over their new roles

**Agenda Item 10 – Adjournment**

**MOTION: There was a motion Adjourn,**

**SECOND: Motion Seconded by Commission Kraft**

**AYES: Motion passed unanimously.**

**ABSENT: Commission Member McBride and DeNeal**

The next meeting will be on April 10, 2024.

Minutes Prepared by: Jorge Benavente

Reviewed by: Abe McCann

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, Chair

Tempe Veteran Commission