

MINUTES
TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD
COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Virtual Meeting
Thursday, March 18, 7:00 PM

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER, 7:05 PM

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Kate Hamilton (Chair), William (Randy) Malloy, John Johnson, Al Cortes, Jeremy Donnelly, Garrett Sheehan, Dave Pauluk, Adam Raider (Secretary). Guest: John Rixon

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Raider moved that the minutes from the Commission's special meeting on January 14, 2021 be approved. Mr. Molloy seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

4. DISCUSSION: MISSION AND NEXT STEPS

After thanking Mr. Sheehan for his service as Chair of the Commission, Ms. Hamilton opened the discussion by asking members what they would like the Commission to focus on moving forward. Reading from the Commission's webpage, she suggested that a good place to start would be focusing on "raising awareness among veterans as to the benefits for which they may be eligible."

Mr. Pauluk suggested the Commission invite members of the VFW and American Legion to our meetings to see how we might support their work.

Mr. Sheehan said he always felt that the Memorial Day ceremony was the most important part of the day's festivities and he would like to see the Commission involved in more activities like that.

Ms. Hamilton mentioned the "Humans of New York" photo blog and its many spinoffs that focus on people's personal stories. She said that reaching out to veterans and asking them to share their stories could be an effective way of creating greater awareness of their service and sacrifice. She suggested the Commission start with members of the VFW and American Legion, as they would be natural partners for a project like this. Mr. Cortes and Mr. Johnson expressed their enthusiasm for this and volunteered to assist.

Mr. Sheehan wondered if there are any Connecticut residents in units currently deployed and, if so, whether the Commission could connect with them to share their stories. Or perhaps the Commission could "adopt" a unit. There would be many logistics to work out.

Mr. Raider mentioned former Commission member John Rixon and his wife as another possible source to help identify veterans in West Hartford who might be willing to share their stories.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Raider made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Cortes. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.