

MINUTES
TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD
COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS
Tuesday, March 21, 2023, 7:00 PM

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER, 7:03 PM

The meeting began in Room 312 at Town Hall but moved to Room 407

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Na'eelah Bakari, Inga Bowes, Alexis Davidoff, Jeremy Donnelly, Matt Hart, John Keleher, Adam Raider (Secretary). Absent: John Johnson. Guests: Heidi-Anne Mooney (Commander of American Legion Post 96), American Legion member John Mele

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Donnelly moved that the minutes from the Commission's special meeting on May 18, 2022 be approved. Mr. Keleher seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

4. WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Commission welcomed Na'eelah Bakari, a West Hartford native who served in the U.S. Coast Guard, and Inga Bowes, an employee of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Following introductions, a lengthy discussion followed about the current state of the Commission and what its purpose should be moving forward. As a first step, the group agreed to start by learning more about what services are currently offered veterans in town via the Department of Social Services and determine how (or if) the Commission might provide assistance. Mr. Raider said he will invite a representative from Social Services to the Commission's next meeting.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Raider talked about the need for the Commission to have a new Chair (and, if desired, a Vice Chair) to help set agendas, preside over meetings, and lead the Commission. Ms. Bakari and Mr. Donnelly volunteered to serve as Co-Chairs (it was not immediately clear if this was for the remainder of the calendar year or beyond). Mr. Raider made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hart, to accept this arrangement. It passed unanimously. Ms. Davidoff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Keleher, that Mr. Raider continue as Secretary. It passed unanimously.

6. AMERICAN LEGION UPDATE

Heidi-Anne Mooney, Commander of American Legion Post 96, updated the Commission on upcoming Post activities, including a breakfast at Conard High in April for children of veterans and possibly a back-to-school Backpack Drive. Ms. Mooney also mentioned the continued need for wheelchair access at the

Veterans Memorial in West Hartford Center and the Post's goal of having a dedicated space in the new Community Center where military/historical memorabilia can be put on display. The Commission will explore this topic in greater detail in the future.

7. 2023 MEETING SCHEDULE

The Commission set its remaining 2023 quarterly meeting schedule: June 13 (from June 20), September 19, and December 12 (all beginning at 7:00 PM). Additionally, a Special Meeting will be held on April 19 to follow up on matters discussed at the March 21 meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hart made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Mr. Raider. Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM.