



Veterans Advisory Committee Meeting

Minutes of October 8, 2024

TOPIC		DISCUSSION
PRESENT:		Members: Robert Challinor Jr., Hans Lowell, Dave Gilbert, Michael Vassar, Alan Joslin, Jim Bradley, Mayor Barney Seney (Ex Officio – Town of Putnam Executive Head), plus 4 guests
ABSENT:		Willie Bousquet – (Ex Officio – Town of Putnam Parks and Recreation Department Head), Harold Charbonneau & Arthur (Buster) Corey of Memorial Day Parade Committee
1.	Call to Order	Rob C. called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. Quorum was met during roll call.
2.	Pledge of Allegiance	
3.	Public Comment – 3 min max per person	*Guest Rene Morin introduced himself as the newly appointed (7/1/24) Veterans Officer for the Town of Thompson. *Guest Gabbi Labonte introduced herself as a board member of Senior Resources and pointed out their Veterans Directed Care (VDC) program, available but only being used by 1 veteran in NECT at this time. Info to be provided to Rob for Vet Services office. *Guest Bill Schmidt of Elks Veterans Committee updated on their gun raffle with proceeds coming to Veterans Park Improvement project: Elks secured permit, passed out flyers to be shared with member groups, have tickets. Drawing 11/7/24, 2pm @ Elks.
4.	Approval of minutes from last meeting(s)	Approve Regular meeting minutes from September 10, 2024: Mike V made a motion, 2nd by Jim B, no discussion, all approved.
5.	Communications	*Modern Lumber Veteran & Customer appreciation event Thurs 11/7/24, 12-6pm. Flyer will be distributed to members via email. *Mike V presented 2 checks: \$5,000 from NEFK for the Iraq monument they sponsored and \$12,000 from Am Legion Golf Tournament. *Polar / brick producer located in Naples FL has been in constant contact with updates regarding 2 outstanding orders coming to us (689 bricks) and how multiple weather events (hurricanes) are impacting. See 7/A/1 below for more.
6.	Reports of Standing Committees	A Cemetery Committee: Replacement stones are now coming in (time of order to receipt is long...). Need to scrub cemetery vets list with those who have already gotten bricks (Marcy to complete before winter end) B Grove Street Monument: looking good, review any work needed in spring C Memorial Day Parade Committee: 1st meeting set Nov 12, 5pm (before regular VAC meeting) to discuss details and set next year's meeting dates (March/April/May), start thinking about Grand Marshal & keynote speaker, new committee members, new parade starter for 2025 D Hometown Heroes Banners, \$125 ea/DUE 8/1/25: New forms are in print & online, webpage is updated

7.	Reports of Special Committee	A Veterans Park (127 Church Street) Revitalization-all phases: total cost currently at \$211, 360 1. Memorial Bricks: Total to close out 2024 Phase 1 = 2290 • Last order(s) Status: 2 orders still to come: Hurricane weather has impacted a number of times, and this week another is expected. Polar rep in continual contact with us with facility, production & shipping status. • Ellis Tech: has installed all bricks received to date • Next Brick Order Phase 2025: Deadline 2/1/25. Orders coming in. 2. Monuments: • WWII Stones: in place • WWII Bronze: still in design phase. Most likely will not be installed for dedication completion. If mock-up is available on time submit to Chase Gr to produce banners to hang over stones at dedication. If no mock-up is received by then, submit info to Chase Gr to design and produce banners. • WWII TOTAL PRICING = \$78,720 paid in full ▪ 3 new smaller stones: proofs of all monument fronts rcvd & reviewed, corrections to be made to sponsor names (Use full names, not abbreviations). • Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan) Graphic on back: Outline of Afghanistan w/words Afghanistan - stone to be donated by bankHometown (\$5000) • Operation Iraqi Freedom Graphic on back: Crossed swords in hands. NEFK donated (\$5000 check received) • Operation Desert Storm Graphic on back: Outline of Kuwait w/words Liberation of Kuwait - stone to be donated by JCSB (\$5000) <i>Hans made motion for renderings to be added to back sides of stones as noted above (slight change since 9/10/24 meeting), and wording to match existing stones (as to Mercer installing), Mike V 2nd, no discussion, approved.</i> 3. OTHER: • Garbage Cans (2-small top openings): received, pads poured, ready to be placed by Ellis @ each walkway entry next week • Benches (4-backless new & all sponsored, plus 1 Doug Valentine existing w/back): built, pads poured, ready to be placed by Ellis next week, 3 sponsor plaques ordered via NE Awards, still need Elks wording for theirs • Dog waste bag station: pole ready to be placed by Ellis next week • Dedication: Dedication ceremony Sunday, November 10, 2024, 1pm – committee (Rob, Barney, Willie, Gary O, Marcy, Mike V via emails for color guard coordination) planning in progress, mostly complete • Thank you meal for Town employees involved in project (Highway, WPCA, Rec crews): Friday, 11/1, noon, community room catered by Renees, RSVPs needed for count for food order ASAP. • Stone Wall at base of white fence: Looking shabby now that rest of park has been improved, plus will be in the way of hanging wreaths. <i>Alan J made motion to have wall removed, taken to Armory for Ellis to rehab for future town needs, river rock added in place – Jim B 2nd, Approved.</i> Barney to connect w/Highway Dept to assist.
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		• In-ground stake stands & flags for ceremonies: Received. Rob to get timeline from Ellis to see when bases can be placed. Hoping for Beirut (10/20) B Quarterly Audit Status: (Barney, Dave G, Jim B): in progress. 2023 Taxes: 990 return ready to be submitted. Available for review if desired. See Rob. C Other: Beirut Ceremony by Am Leg Sunday, October 20, noon, Vets Park. Rob to keep Mike V posted on status of in-ground flag stands. Elks Raffle: See Bill S update in section 3 / Public Comments
8.	Unfinished Business	A Tree Removal Nancy Drive, Aspinwall Cemetery (town property): No news B Creation of VAC facebook page approved 8/13/24 mtg: Waiting for town input on best practice on admin/passwords, etc C VAC logo – complete – remove from agenda D America 250 celebration (7/4/2026, Cady Copp): Jim B will consider filling a veteran role on committee made up of reps from historical society, library, teacher, selectmen... Get decision at next meeting E Need VAC member for vacancy: Rob & Hans have someone – Rob said he would meet with Barney about this
9.	Grant Considerations & Updates	Nothing to report – review after holidays
10.	New Business	None
11.	Public Comment – 3 min max per person	None
12.	Adjournment	Jim B motion, Alan J 2nd, meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm. Next meeting Tuesday, November 12, 2024, 6pm, Room 201 <i>(2nd Tuesday unless otherwise noted)</i>

Members: Chairman Robert Challinor Jr. (11/30/28), Jim Bradley (11/30/30), David Gilbert (11/30/29), Alan R. Joslin (11/30/29), Hans W. Lowell (11/30/28), Michael Vassar (11/30/30), 1 vacancy.

******4 members needed for quorum******

Willie Bousquet (Ex Officio – Town of Putnam Parks and Recreation Department Head), Mayor Barney Seney (Ex Officio – Town of Putnam Executive Head).

Memorial Day Parade & Event Committee: Arthur “Buster” Corey, Harold Charbonneau