

**VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, April 15, 2004**  
**County Council Room and Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)**  
**3:00 p.m.**

**Present**

**Members**

Denny Austen  
Richard Highley  
Roy Hinokawa  
Paul Johnston  
Louis Kaoiwi  
Wendall Kekumu  
Morris Kihara  
Patrick Pavao  
Gilbert Sampaia  
Hideo Segawa  
Dale Wilson  
George Yamamoto

**Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)**

**Members**

Peter Callahan

**Guests (Kona)**

Himeo (Boss) Hanato  
Minoru Honato  
Joe and Lee Pretsch  
Ted Funk  
William D. Paris, Jr.  
LTC Dan Malarie

**Ex-Officio (Hilo)**

Patricia G. Engelhard, Director, P&R

**Also Present (Hilo)**

Nathalie Santos, Department of Parks and Recreation  
Delbert Nishimoto  
Keith Ribbentrop

**Absent**

Penny Fox  
Charles Mayes  
George Mukai

**Call to Order**

- Vice Chairman Denny Austen called the meeting to order at 3:10 p.m. (12 members present – 11 in Hilo and 1 in Kona.) Chairman Kaoiwi arrived at approximately 3:20 pm and presided over meeting.

### **STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

No public statements made.

### **Previous Meeting Minutes – March 18 , 2004**

- The Minutes of the March 18, 2004 meeting were approved as circulated.

### **STATE VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD – REPORT**

Mr. Delbert Nishimoto, Big Island representative on the State Veterans Advisory Board.

#### **Veterans Cemetery III – West Hawaii**

See attached e-mail information from Senator Russell Kokubun's office regarding funding for improvements to West Hawai'i Cemetery – Total funding request - \$300,000. E-mail also recommends that supporters of this funding lobby governor to release funds appropriated.

#### **Veterans Cemetery II**

Mr. Nishimoto reported that Veterans Cemetery II – Phase II is approximately 25% complete. Bad weather has caused delays.

#### **Gate Location:**

Mr. Nishimoto suggested that members recommend a gate location so that when the time comes for a decision to be made, a location will already be selected.

#### **Trees:**

Mr. Austen asked if it would be beneficial to sell trees that are being removed. Director Engelhard said that if someone is interested, the county gets paid minimal and buyer removes and transports, however, she believes it is scheduled to just be cut.

Chairman Kaiwi shared his concern that trees are still there and heavy equipment has been removed from site. Mr. Nishimoto will ask Major Mitsuyoshi what the status of tree removal is and express committee's concerns relating to maintenance problems if trees remain.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **Veterans Cemetery I – Expansion of Flagpole Area**

George Mukai – No List Available.

#### **Veterans Cemetery III – West Hawai'i**

Mr. Highley reported that during last months meeting landscape improvement plans were described as follows: Poison the grass, repair irrigation system, level the burial area, add soil and fertilizer. According to the Golf Course Superintendent's Association, the seashore paspalum sod selected thrives well on brackish water which is what is available through the Kukio Golf Course at the cemetery.

**Landscaping Improvements – Update**

Following the March meeting, items have been removed from the cemetery and a letter was sent to West Hawai‘i Today to inform public and request for volunteers. Reporter Kim Eaton will be interviewing Mr. Highley tomorrow.

Mr. Highley shared a letter he sent to West Hawai‘i Today. He shared that documents required by the County which addressed liability needed to be processed prior to commencement of work project which caused a delay in the proposed start up date of March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The project will fall under the County’s “Friends of the Park” program.

Mr. Highley said that on April 1<sup>st</sup>, veterans met at the cemetery and it was decided that a major makeover was necessary. Looking at the site, there is no soil, it was recommended that a minimum of 450 cubic yards of soil be brought in. In order to accomplish leveling this amount of soil, this task would require the removal, temporary storage and replacement of all headstones to its original location. Golf Course Association is willing to do this through global positioning equipment, however, they would like to receive blessings of family members first by sending letters and obtaining their permission. Because of the extent of this current proposal, accomplishing all of this by Memorial Day is not possible. It was agreed during the April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting that the start date should instead be June 1<sup>st</sup> following Memorial Day. In the meantime, the irrigation system could be upgraded and existing grass should be kept alive until commencement of project. In the interim families of interred will be contacted for permission. If someone objects to removal of a headstone, volunteers would have to work around those headstones, which could be accomplished, but would make job more difficult.

**Donations for Project:**

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| DeLuz Trucking in Kona | 450 yards of soil  |
| Kukio Golf Course      | Seashore Paspalum sod to cover present burial site area - the entire ½ acre. (Approximate Value - \$30,000)<br>Offered more than 3,500 gallons of water per day. |
| Kona Irrigation        | Donating equipment and supplies needed to upgrade system to include automatic watering.  |

It will take approximately 6 to 7 weeks for sod to become lawn.

Parks staff were unaware that improvement project was delayed and stopped watering and weedeating cemetery.

Director Engelhard shared that the last communication to the Department of Parks and Recreation from Golf Course Superintendent’s Association stated that they would begin spraying poison on April 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Boss Hanato said that he attended a burial on Tuesday and the weeds were overgrown, however, yesterday maintenance employees did a really good job and cleaned cemetery.

Mr. Highley requested approval from the committee to have headstones removed. He also asked if the Department of Parks and Recreation would consider accepting applications from various veterans organizations such as American Legion, Korean War Veterans and DAV to become "Friends of the Cemetery" under the "Friends of the Park" program to assist with improving the cemetery.

Director Engelhard responded that could be worked out, however, the department would need a description of the work planned prior to acceptance of the agreement. She also explained that it's not a blanket approval.

In response to a question from Mr. Highley relating to fundraising, Director Engelhard explained that if funds raised are to purchase a particular item for the cemetery, monies stay with the organization until the amount needed is raised and then the organization either purchases and donates item or donates funds to P&R to purchase a particular item.

#### **Authority to Move Headstones**

Following a discussion on who has the authority to move headstones. Mr. Pavao recommended checking with Corporation Counsel.

(Following the meeting, it was determined that P&R has the authority to give permission to move headstones. See sample of attached letter sent to families.)

#### **Canopy**

Director Engelhard reported that a replacement canopy will be purchased soon.

#### **Graveliners**

Mr. Highley reported that Major Mitsuyoshi sent an update that the liners are a priority. Graveliners must be designed, then reviewed, advertised for bids and then a contractor selected before liners can be constructed. This process is time consuming and plans are to start using graveliners in the second burial phase.

Mr. Nishimoto described concrete liners are similar to presentation made by Mr. Paris on slick foam, but should be an improved method. Mr. Nishimoto also said that HB 1800 funds \$300,000 for West Hawai'i Cemetery improvements which should be enough to build a committal shelter - \$25,000 for design and \$275,000 for construction. Again requested that veterans organizations write to the governor to request that she release the funds.

Mr. Callahan requested that funds be used wisely and not overspent in design and not have enough left to complete construction. He reiterated importance of funds being used for West Hawai'i Cemetery only and spent wisely.

Mr. Nishimoto will put in a request to Major Mitsuyoshi, Department of Defense to maximize available funds.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Monument for West Hawai'i Veterans Cemetery**

There was a discussion about the possibility of moving a monument or the plaques on it from a cemetery that belongs to Central Kona Union Church to West Hawai'i Veterans Cemetery. Mr. Callahan said there needs to be further discussion with people in authority at the church.

Matter was postponed until further details are known.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Honor Detail at Cemeteries**

Mr. Nishimoto reported that there is discussion at the state level regarding the honor detail currently provided by the US Army for fallen comrades at burial sites. The recommendation of the State Veterans Advisory Board will be that honor detail be performed by the branch of service deceased served in, example if it's a marine burial, the marines could come, etc. Family can also request for the army if they prefer. This recommendation will distribute the load amongst the branches of service.

#### **First State Veterans Home on Hawaii**

See attached letter dated May 18<sup>th</sup> from Ronald Schurra, Chief Executive Officer of the Hilo Medical Center to Big Island Legislators, East Hawai'i Management Advisory Committee, Hawai'i County Council and State Veterans Home Advisory Committee announcing that Architects Hawai'i has been selected to be the architectural and engineering firm for the State Veterans Home on the Hilo Medical Center Campus (HMC).

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on May 20, 2004 at 3:00 p.m. in the Hawai'i County Councilroom and video-conferencing at the Kona Mayor's Office.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Nathalie Santos*  
Secretary