

**VETERANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, April 17, 2008, 3:00 p.m.**  
**Prosecutor's Office (Hilo) and Kona Mayor's Office (Via Videoconferencing)**

**Present**

**Members**

Don Bennett  
Carolle Brulee-Wilson  
Penny Fox, Chair  
Edward Lee, Vice Chair  
George Mukai  
Delbert Nishimoto  
John Young

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

**Members**

Antonio Gaspar  
Minoru Hanato  
Richard Highley  
Robert Welter

**Guests (Kona)**

Boss Hanato

**Ex-Officio (Hilo)**

Patricia Engelhard, Director, P&R

**Also Present (Hilo)**

Nathalie Santos, Secretary  
Herring Kalua - State Veterans Advisory Board - E HI Representative  
Herbert Lum - State Veterans Advisory Board - W HI Representative  
Keith Ribbentrop  
Fred Fogel

**Absent**

Wendall Kekumu  
Gilbert Sampaia  
Norman Stahl  
Richard Stevens  
George Yamamoto

**Call to Order**

Chairwoman Penny Fox called the meeting to order at 3:10 pm - (11) members present.

**STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

**PREVIOUS MEETINGS MINUTES – March 20, 2008**

- The minutes of the March 20, 2008 meeting were approved as submitted.

**REPORT ON CEMETERIES – STATE VETERANS ADVISORY BOARD**

**Hawaii Island - East Hawaii Representative Mr. Herring Kalua**

**Hawaii Island - West Hawaii Representative Mr. Herb Lum**

**Report Prepared by Herring Kalua, Jr., General Labor Supervisor, Hawaii State Veterans Cemetery, Oahu - Presented to Committee by Mr. Herring Kalua, Member, State Veterans Advisory Board. Regarding February 25, 2008 visit to Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii - To conduct training on burial procedures. (Copy Attached)**

**Mr. Herring Kalua - Report**

**Veterans Cemeteries I & II - Columbariums**

As requested at last months Veterans Advisory Committee meeting, Mr. Kalua submitted a report he requested relating to the visit by State Maintenance employees of the Office of Veterans Services to the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery III. Mr. Kalua shared that these employees wouldn't be coming back to the cemetery unless it's really important. He suggested members review the report and then make comments on it.

**Legislative Update**

Mr. Kalua said he spoke to Representative Cindy Evans who told him the additional funds for maintenance of the (3) cemeteries were approved, but he doesn't think it was and would wait to see where the funds would go. He also said the Director of OVS plans to set up a class to explain how to request funds.

*(Interruption - Off Air) \* There were several times throughout the meeting that the videoconferencing got disconnected.*

Mr. Kalua continued. He announced that Representative Cindy Evans is the Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs. They are having meetings called "Talk story" with the veterans as follows:

Hilo, Tuesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 9 am to 11 am, University of Hawaii @ Hilo Rm. UCB-1  
Kona, Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 9 am to 11 am, West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery III

Mr. Highley confirmed that Mr. Gaspar has a copy to share with the Kona attendees.

**Mr. Herb Lum - Report**

**Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii**

Mr. Lum reported that the bid opening for Phase IIC will be on June 26<sup>th</sup>. The construction start date will be January 9 and completion expected by October 9. OVS has applied to the VA for 4 1/2 million dollars to complete the project.

Mr. Lum said the Phase IIB contract was approved and accepted by March 31<sup>st</sup>, but understands there are some problems and he couldn't say how it affects the contract at this point. They would have to determine whether it's a construction performance

problem or a spec problem, but Minoru Hanato and Rich Highley will know more about that problem at the cemetery.

*(Interruption - Off Air) \**

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii**

#### **Reforestation Project**

Mr. Gaspar reported that Dr. Richard Stevens told him last week they will continue to work on small scale planting. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, 30 marines helped with a planting project and sometime in September they will be scheduling another big planting project.

Mr. Lum said on March 8<sup>th</sup> the 30 marines that volunteered planted about 57 large trees which they were able to lift and haul easily. It was a very successful day. It would've been very difficult for the veterans to carry those huge trees up the hill. The weekly Hawaii Marine newspaper has an article on the beautification volunteer project that marines participated in.

#### **Motion - Send Thank You Letter to Marines**

Mr. Nishimoto suggested sending a thank you letter to the Marines for their planting project. A motion was passed to send a thank you from the committee.

Chairwoman Fox asked Secretary Nathalie to draft the letter.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Veterans Cemetery III - West Hawaii**

#### **Burial Concerns**

Chairperson Fox shared that Mr. Hanato submitted a letter regarding some problems with burials in the new section at Veterans Cemetery III. Director Engelhard said in response to Minoru's concerns prior to getting the letter, she arranged for Neal Mitsuyoshi to come to Kona and meet with P&R staff to see what can be done. Staff will be renting a jumping jack to see if that will help. She just received a report today from Herring Kalua, Jr. suggesting checkerboarding and said that is okay if we never have to bury in the other puka.

#### **Moving the Temporary Columbariums**

Director Engelhard said the temporary columbariums at Vets III will need to be moved. Gina Ichiyama of DAGS is the Project Coordinator and working with Neal and Hamada to get the next phase together. Part of the next phase will include either removing the temporary columbariums and replacing them or moving them to another location. They would like to know what the protocol would be. They want to know if the veterans or if

P&R will be moving the urns. She asked veterans to discuss and get back to her so she can include decision in their specs.

Mr. Minoru Hanato asked if it would be possible to move the entire columbarium with the niches in tact, otherwise in order to remove the urns from the niches we would need permission from all of the families.

Mr. Highley said prior to implementation of the landscape improvement project, we obtained permission from each family and worked around the approximately five families that did not give permission. He asked if we would need to do the same to remove the urns or even to move the columbarium.

Director Engelhard said that P&R contacted all of the family members to obtain approval prior to the landscaping improvement project.

Mr. Highley said he doesn't think so because he spoke to one person who was not contacted. Chairwoman Fox said basically P&R were the ones that contacted as many people as they could get ahold of.

Mr. Lum and Chairwoman Fox shared a concern that the urns may topple over while moving the columbarium if they are left inside.

Director Engelhard read Project Coordinator Gina Ichiyama's email dated today:

*"We need to input as soon as possible since the consultants are finishing the pre-final submittal next week. Remember to bring up the relocation of the niches. We are contemplating setting up a temporary relocation outside of the construction area first where visitors can access the columbaria. The contractor can then install the new ones (In other words those were temporary and they are intending for them to remain temporary) and when the project is finished the urns can be moved over. They're not sure of the details yet."*

Director Engelhard said that is the end of that information, so the question remains do the West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery folks want to do it? Or do you want the P&R staff to move them? What is the preference?

Mr. Highley shared that he didn't feel the veterans in West Hawaii would be able to take on the responsibility of moving the columbarium and the remains without special permission. Just moving the marker was difficult and there were people that objected to that. He asked if the alternative is to leave the columbarium where it is set up.

Chairwoman Fox said that is not an alternative. The columbariums are temporary, they are going to be removed. What they need to know is do you folks want to move the remains or do you want Parks and Recreation to do it?

Mr. Highley said if they have the authority to move the columbarium then we don't have any say about it. I'm commenting on the problems that we may encounter at the cemetery.

*(Interruption - Off Air) \**

Mr. Highley said we have no more authority to move the remains to another location then we have to move someone's coffin to another location. So the answer to the question is "No" you would have to be responsible to move the columbaria.

Director Engelhard said P&R would do it.

### **New Flagpole Light**

Director Engelhard said there are 2 or 3 more flagpoles going in and I understand that people aren't happy with the existing flagpole light because it doesn't last long enough.

Mr. Highley said it doesn't shine bright enough and its just a temporary solar light that will eventually burn out and wouldn't be replaced without getting HELCO to come back to do it. So, yes it would be better to have a more permanent type fixture.

Director Engelhard said the question was "is what is existing now good enough?" and I will tell them "it is not, they will have to plan for better".

### **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS**

No Reports.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*(Interruption - Off Air) \**

### **Wreaths Across America**

Carolle Brulee-Wilson announced that Lt. Barbara Cooper is looking for a point of contact person for the Wreaths Across America program. Carolle shared that through her own personal experience it was an extremely successful event last year and very meaningful especially for the young people. This event will be occurring again this year and if anyone has questions they can call Carolle.

### **Chairman's Mail**

Mr. Highley asked if Chairperson Fox can make corrections to the mail he's been forwarding to her as Chair and contact people to send directly to her.

### **IRS - REBATE**

Mr. Highley announced that the committee received correspondence about the rebate from the IRS stating that veterans who weren't employed are eligible for the rebate, but

must file a tax form even though they do not receive income. He suggested members share info with their organizations and to tell veterans to submit form even if its late because they won't be penalized if they don't owe anything.

Chairperson Fox said if anyone needs further information on the rebate to call her, the deadline to file for the rebate is the end of May.

**Training - "Government Records Law Training"**

Training by Lincoln S. T. Ashida, Corporation Counsel

"Government Records Law"

Kona - Wed., 4/30/08; 9:30am-12pm; Liquor Control Conference Room

Or

Hilo - Thurs., 5/15/08; 9:00am- 11:30am; Aupuni Center Conference Room

**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on May 15, 2008 at 3pm.

Meeting will again be held in Hilo at the Office of the Prosecutor and in Kona at the Mayor's Office.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Nathalie Santos*, Secretary