

Jackie Henderson

From: Allison Silberberg
Sent: Tuesday, November 29, 2016 10:48 PM
To: Jackie Henderson
Cc: Allison Silberberg
Subject: Fwd: For your consideration.
Attachments: Draft Veteran Commission letter.docx; ATT00001.htm

Here you go. Thanks.

Allison

Mayor Allison Silberberg
Alexandria, Virginia
allison.silberberg@alexandriava.gov
o: 703-746-4500
c: 571-319-9948

Begin forwarded message:

From: Allison Silberberg <allison.silberberg@alexandriava.gov>
Date: November 28, 2016 at 12:47:24 PM EST
To: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>, Del Pepper <Del.Pepper@alexandriava.gov>, John Chapman <john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov>, Paul Smedberg <Paul.Smedberg@alexandriava.gov>, Willie Bailey <willie.bailey@alexandriava.gov>, Timothy Lovain <timothy.lovain@alexandriava.gov>
Cc: Mark Jinks <Mark.Jinks@alexandriava.gov>, Debra Collins <Debra.Collins@alexandriava.gov>, Allison Silberberg <allison.silberberg@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: For your consideration.

Dear Colleagues,

Hope you and yours have had a lovely Thanksgiving holiday.

For your consideration, during Orals on Tuesday night, I will be bringing up the idea of establishing the Alexandria Commission for Active Duty Military, Veterans, their Family Members and Caregivers (aka the "Alexandria Veterans Commission").

The mission of the Veterans Commission would be to address the needs and concerns of those who are Active Duty Military, Veterans, their Family Members and Caregivers. It would also be a repository of information.

Nearly 12 percent of the City of Alexandria are veterans. This figure does not include the

number of active duty, their family members and caregivers in our city.

The Veterans Commission would support planning for and execution of the city's annual 9/11 commemoration event. In addition, a few months ago, I signed Alexandria onto Hidden Heroes, a new nonprofit started by Senator Elizabeth Dole and is dedicated to caregivers of our veterans. The Veterans Commission would work on the issues raised by Hidden Heroes among other initiatives and help in celebration of Veterans Day and other veteran-oriented activities. One focus of the Veterans Commission would be employment. It would also focus on entrepreneurship. Capitol Post, which works with AEDP, can provide assistance to the Commission.

The Alexandria Veterans Advisory Group (AVAG), an informal veterans group, is already established and functioning and can serve as a good foundation for the Veterans Commission.

Establishing a Veterans Commission is supported by the following: Emily McMahon of Capitol Post; Retired Lt. Gen. Bob Wood; John Simms (a veteran with extensive experience at MOAA); Commander Doug Gurka (American Legion Post #24, Alexandria, Virginia); Mike Faber (the Friends of Rocky Versace); and Frank Tobin (EOD Foundation).

Attached is a letter with further explanation about this idea for a Veterans Commission that expresses support from these above-mentioned individuals.

In addition, veterans and local citizens John Bordner (Vice Chair of the American Legion Post #24, Alexandria, Virginia), Kathryn Kolbe, and Patricia Webb are also supportive of the establishment of the Commission.

Like nearly all of our city boards and commissions, the Veterans Commission would not have a budget. So the fiscal impact is limited to staff time. Plus, AVAG has demonstrated repeatedly that it is willing and able to organize and take action.

In terms of composition of the Commission, I would suggest that the body have 13 members, including:

- One appointee from each Member of Council and the Mayor
- One representative from Capitol Post
- One representative from the American Legion Post, #24
- One representative from the Friends of Rocky Versace
- One representative from the EOD Foundation
- Two veterans who live in the city

I look forward to our discussion and hearing your thoughts. And of course, I welcome your input.

If we agree, we would then ask Mr. Jinks to work with staff on the ordinance to establish the Alexandria Veterans Commission.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

All my best,

Allison

Mayor Allison Silberberg
Alexandria, Virginia
allison.silberberg@alexandriava.gov
o: 703-746-4500
c: 571-319-9948

Date: November 20, 2016

To: Mayor Allison Silberberg
Alexandria City Hall
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

From: LTG (Retired) John R. (Bob) Wood
711 Potomac Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Subject: Alexandria Veterans Commission Proposal

Madam Mayor,

Alexandria is home to a large active duty military, retired, and veteran population along with their families. While difficult to accurately estimate, active duty service members are ever present shopping in our stores, renting properties, buying new homes, and participating in our community's life and livelihood. The surrounding military bases and installations annually transition over 15,000 military service members out of active service to civilian life. When their family members are included in this transition, this number is magnified. It is estimated that over 11% of Alexandria's population are veterans. And, at least 240 veteran-owned businesses call Alexandria home.

Alexandria is also home to an array of entities and activities involved in services and support to the military community and veterans. Capitol Post, a model national veteran transition support center located in Old Town, provides a business incubator along with education and counseling services for veterans and their families seeking jobs, starting businesses, and beginning new careers. Importantly, Alexandria's American Legion Post #24 resides in its historic home of Gadsby's Tavern where it continues its vital engagement with the veteran community. The Military Officers Association of America, National Military Family Association, and the Blinded Veterans Association are based here along with a host of other nonprofit veteran support organizations. Each year we honor veterans at the Rocky Versace memorial, recognize their sacrifices in 9/11 commemorations, and plan to recognize Hidden Heroes – the caregivers who support veterans and Wounded Warriors.

As much as Alexandria is home for veterans and their families, a base of operations for veteran owned businesses, and transition site for military members moving into civilian life, there is no entity within the city that coordinates and advances the

needs, activities, and growth of this remarkable community within our community. Veterans and their families are a key resource to power the city's growth, strengthen the city's neighborhoods, and add their talents to the city's businesses and agencies, public and private. While this progress forward is desirable and possible, it is not inevitable.

I strongly encourage you and the City Council to support the formation of an Alexandria Veterans Commission. This commission will represent and advance the interests and needs of Alexandria's community of active military members, veterans, their families, and caregivers, and capitalize on the strengths of this unique group of citizens. It will form, expand, and empower a network of mutually supporting activities serving the common purposes of community engagement, personal growth, and compassionate, caring support.

Sincerely,

John R. (Bob) Wood
Lieutenant General (Retired), US Army
Alexandria, Virginia

Emily McMahon
Director
Capitol Post
Alexandria, Virginia

Commander Doug Gurka
American Legion Post #24
Alexandria, Virginia

John Simms
Col (Retired), US Army
Alexandria, Virginia

Frank Tobin
EOD Warrior Foundation

Mike Faber
Friends of Rocky Versace
Alexandria, Virginia