

## **RESOLUTION NO. 2753**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council wishes to explore the creation of an Alexandria Veterans Commission to address the concerns and needs of veterans, service members, their family members and caregivers; and

**WHEREAS**, the Ad Hoc Veterans Commission Advisory Group will conduct specified tasks outlined in this resolution.

### **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA:**

That there is hereby established the Ad Hoc Veterans Commission Advisory Group ("Advisory Group") whose mission is to provide a recommendation to City Council regarding the creation of a permanent Alexandria Veterans Commission ("Commission") that would address the concerns and needs of veterans, service members, their family members and caregivers.


1. That the Advisory Group shall consist of seven members, to be appointed by the City Manager, representing a diversity of interests in veterans affairs.
2. That the City Manager shall appoint the Advisory Group Chair, whose role is to serve as a meeting facilitator, spokesperson and work with City staff to set Advisory Group meeting agendas.
3. That the function of the Advisory Group shall be to discuss and provide guidance to City Council with regards to the development of an Alexandria Veterans Commission. The Advisory Group will assist in the development of a report that shall include comments and recommendations concerning:
  - a. the need for the committee and possible duplications or conflicts with other committees;
  - b. the appropriateness of a committee format to deal with the issues involved;
  - c. the purview of the Commission through a defined mission, vision and strategies to better connect veterans, services members and their family members and caregivers to the City;
  - d. the impact that creation of the committee will have on city staff resources, including:
    - (i) the estimated total amount of city staff time that will be required on an annual or other basis to staff the committee;
    - (ii) whether the committee can accomplish its assigned work with existing staff; and
    - (iii) if new staff will be required, the total amount of additional staffing that will be required and the projected annual cost of such additional staff.
  - e. the responsibilities, duties, scope of work, and staffing and funding levels for a permanent Commission;
  - f. the concerns and needs of veterans, services members, their family members and caregivers that will be addressed by the Commission; and
  - g. the composition and term of office for the Commission members.
4. That members of the Advisory Group are expected to:
  - a. Support the City's community engagement and outreach efforts by speaking on behalf of their representative groups and communicating their interests in this process.
  - b. Attend and participate fully in all Advisory Group meetings, in addition to attending work sessions and public hearings of the City Council as needed. If unable to attend, members are encouraged to notify staff in advance and provide comments on meeting materials in a timely manner.
5. That the Advisory Group will be staffed by a representative appointed by the City Manager as dictated by available staff resources and the nature of the work.

6. That to assure compliance with City Code Section 2-4-8(c) 2-3, the Advisory Group shall develop an inventory of federal, state and non-profit organizations that provide services to veterans, services members, their family members and caregivers that are available to Alexandria residents.
7. That pursuant to City Code Section 2-4-8, the Advisory Group shall meet on an ad hoc basis as needed for the period of 3 months, with up to an additional 2 months if needed for completion of their stated tasks as defined herein, unless otherwise extended by City Council.

Adopted: December 13, 2016

  
**ALLISON SILBERBERG** MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
Jacqueline M. Henderson, MMC City Clerk

-----Original Message-----

From: Allison Silberberg

Sent: Monday, November 28, 2016 12:47 PM

To: Justin Wilson <[justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov](mailto:justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov)>; Del Pepper <[Del.Pepper@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Del.Pepper@alexandriava.gov)>; John Chapman <[john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov](mailto:john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov)>; Paul Smedberg <[Paul.Smedberg@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Paul.Smedberg@alexandriava.gov)>; Willie Bailey <[willie.bailey@alexandriava.gov](mailto:willie.bailey@alexandriava.gov)>; Timothy Lovain <[timothy.lovain@alexandriava.gov](mailto:timothy.lovain@alexandriava.gov)>

Cc: Mark Jinks <[Mark.Jinks@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Mark.Jinks@alexandriava.gov)>; Debra Collins <[Debra.Collins@alexandriava.gov](mailto:Debra.Collins@alexandriava.gov)>; Allison Silberberg <[allison.silberberg@alexandriava.gov](mailto: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

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Mayor Allison Silberberg  
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## ATTACHMENT 3

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  
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