



Veterans Affairs Commission
2018 Annual Report

Meetings

Eight (8) Veterans Affairs Commission meetings were held on the following dates: February 21st, March 14th, April 4th, May 2nd, June 13th, September 5th, October 18th and December 12th.

Membership

The Veterans Affairs Commission had 13 appointed members, including two members representing the two major military installations in Anne Arundel County (Fort Meade and the Naval Support Activity, Annapolis), as well as one member representing the Anne Arundel Community College (AACC, due to a large veteran student population), as follows: John Bremer (leave-of-absence status), Terry Douglas, Harlan Harrell (AACC), David Hogen (Chairman), Curtis Jones, Brian Kelm (Naval Support Activity, Annapolis), Karla Lathroum, Robert Leib, George Matthews (Fort Meade), Paul McGuire, Kathie Morrison, Kathy Reents (Secretary) and Adger Stokes (Vice Chairman.) Additionally, John Church (veteran) has regularly attended the VAC's meetings as a guest, and Debra Luzietti-Myers (Paralyzed Veterans of America) has also routinely participated as a guest via call-in.

Guest Speakers

During regularly scheduled meetings, the Commission's Agendas included presentations by Federal, state and county organizations serving veterans that were useful in educating the Commissioners who are involved with outreach to county veterans. Details regarding each guest speaker's presentation and related discussion are available as part of the applicable Meeting Minutes, available online at:

<https://www.aacounty.org/boards-and-commissions/veterans-affairs-commission/index.html>

The guest speakers and dates were:

February 21st: Dana Burl (nee Hendrickson), Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs, Outreach & Advocacy Program Director.

April 4th: Jen Corbin, Director Crisis Response Team, AA County Mental Health Agency.

May 2nd: Candance Willett, Outreach Coordinator, Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic, Easter Seals.

May 2nd: Dominika Polynice, Chairman, Maryland Veterans Mental Health Advisory Council.

September 5th: Laurie Barone, Community Engagement Directorate, Veterans Experience Office, Department of Veterans Affairs.

December 12th: Robert Hartman, MyVA Community Program, Chesapeake Veterans Alliance.

Accomplishments

- A. Attended/participated in various veteran-related state and county events, including: Homeless Outreach (JAN), Maryland Veterans Caucus' Advocacy Day (FEB), Hospice of the Chesapeake's Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day (MAR), American Legion Post 141's Veteran Health and Wellness Expo (JUN), Maryland Suicide Prevention Task Force for Service Members, Veterans and Families (AUG & SEP), AACC Mental Health Fair (SEP), "Dress for Success" event held for Veterans and Transitioning Service members (SEP), County Police/Fire Departments' Veteran Appreciation Day (OCT), AACC Veterans Day observance (NOV), and Veterans Benefits dinner at American Legion Post 141 (DEC).
- B. County Veterans Court Mentorship Program support.
- C. Planned and conducted (with American Legion Post 141) the Memorial Day Service at the Annapolis World War II Overlook (MAY.)
- D. Co-hosted (with MDVA) the first "Service Member, Veteran and Families Wellness Round Table" in support of the Maryland Suicide Prevention Task Force, supporting the Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention.
- E. Completed a handout for distribution at events, Family Service Centers, and Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs).
- F. Updated Tax Benefits for Veterans information links on the county website.

Proposed Initiatives for 2019

- 1. Seek to establish a county "Veterans Service Officer/Veterans Services Manager" position.
- 2. Encourage County Veteran Service Organizations' (VSOs') participation in the County Veterans Court Mentorship Program.
- 3. Encourage County VSO's to "adopt and visit" veterans in County Assisted Living Facilities, nursing homes, and neighborhoods.
- 4. Support Hospice of the Chesapeake's Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event (March 29th) via table presence, in conjunction with the county Department of Aging.
- 5. Plan and conduct the Anne Arundel County Veterans EXPO2019 at the Annapolis High School (tentative date: April 27th.)
- 6. Support Maryland legislative initiatives pertaining to veterans via – for example – the Maryland Veterans Caucus.

7. Revisit updating the Commission's Bylaws.
8. Re-establish a current Facebook presence.
9. Research the Serving Together Project, a program of EveryMind, affiliated with AmericaServes.
10. Plan and conduct the 2019 Memorial Day event (May 27th), in conjunction with VSO's.
11. Investigate holding a Welcome Home for Korean Veterans event on July 27th (Armistice Day), to include a county proclamation and ceremony.