

City of Cambridge

The Veterans Committee conducted a public hearing on Wednesday, June 8, 1994 at five o'clock and thirty minutes p. m. in the Ackermann Room, Second Floor, City Hall.

Councillor Katherine Triantafillou, Chair of the above referenced committee, convened the hearing and stated that the purpose of this date's proceedings was to formulate an agenda for the committee for the upcoming year.

Present at the hearing were: Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr. and Deputy City Clerk, John E. Flynn.

At this time Councillor Triantafillou recognized Mr. William Cabral, Director of Veterans' Services, for a brief description of the operation and services provided by the department.

Mr. Cabral stated that the department is a state mandated program in which the city must fund Veterans' Benefits, provide a department and abide by regulations promulgated by the State Commissioner of Veterans' Services. He noted that the city also provides for collations and rent as covered by Chapter 40 Section 9 of the Massachusetts General Laws for the posts. In the Veterans' Benefits area the staff provides assistance in the filing of applications and claims for health, pension and compensation insurance. The city also provides money and medical assistance to eligible veterans.

Upon conclusion of Mr. Cabral's presentation, the Chair requested of those assembled their thoughts on what issues were not presently being addressed by the City.

Ms. Julia Perez stated the need for greater recognition for the role female veterans played during time of conflict. She stated that at present information is lacking with regards to eligibility and benefits for veterans.

Mr. Dominic Scalese, V.F.W. Mt. Auburn Post #8818, stated his thanks to Mr. Cabral and Mr. Salvey Reale for their contributions in the Memorial Day exercises and noted what a beautiful sight it was to see thirty-five hundred United States Flags placed on the veterans' graves at the Cambridge Cemetery.

Mr. Gore added that thank yous should be extended to the little league and scouts for their assistance in preparing for Memorial Day.

Ms. Perez, in returning to the recognition issue, stated that there are many veterans who are not being reached and the need exists to self-identify in order to be served. She also noted that some veterans were not happy when they returned from their tour of duty.

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Mr. Gore, in response, stated that some veterans do not want to be reached and could not accept when a veterans states that he or she is not appreciated.

Councillor Triantafillou inquired of the declining membership of the various posts throughout the city.

Mr. Gore cited the following age breakdown resulting in a declining membership:

World War II veteran	-	68 to 71
Korean Conflict	-	60's
Vietnam	-	40's

Mr. Brian Mooney, Veterans for Peace, noted the crisis of nationalism between World War II and Vietnam. He noted his pride in reviewing the D-Day Activities but acknowledged how the world has changed dramatically since that time. He stated that it is not by accident that Vietnam veterans feel isolated from the veterans' community. He also stated that Vietnam veterans experienced a never-never land ordeal.

Councillor Triantafillou inquired of the recruitment tools employed in attracting members to join posts.

Mr. Scalese, in response, stated that each post seeks membership through personal contact.

Councillor Triantafillou inquired of the present avenues for disseminating information to veterans.

Mr. Reale, in response, stated that information is provided by the local posts and national organizations.

Mr. Mooney spoke of his organization's activities (building homes, schools, etc.) and stated the belief that veterans could get involved in the schools through conflict resolution.

Councillor Triantafillou inquired of the number of veterans residing in the city.

Mr. Reale, in response, stated that the department could not provide that information due to the transiency of veterans.

Ms. Perez stated her concern of the lack of support for female veterans and spoke of the workings of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Women Veterans of which she was a member in 1984. She also spoke of the efforts exerted to get commissioned the Women Veterans Memorial in Washington, D. C.

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Mr. Reale noted that one female veteran of World War I and four female veterans of World War II are buried in the veterans lot at the Cambridge Cemetery.

Councillor Triantafillou noted the low attendance among the parade route at the recent Memorial Day observance and inquired if the parade should continue in the future.

Mr. Cabral, in response, stated that the need still exists for a graveside service on this holiday.

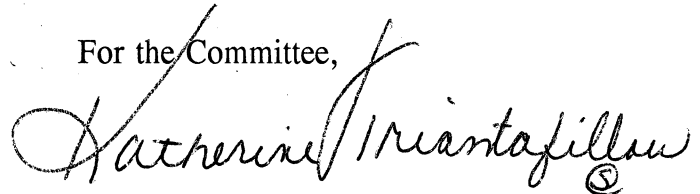
Councillor Toomey also noted as a factor in the low attendance is due to the Monday observance of most holidays. He further stated his displeasure with the role of the school system in not articulating the position veterans played in protecting our democracy.

Mr. Mooney concurred with Councillor Toomey's remarks noting that young people do not have a deep appreciation of the Constitution or Democracy and that the schools could provide this continuity of culture.

Councillor Triantafillou closed the hearing by thanking those in attendance for their comments, hoping that at the next meeting the committee could focus on some specific suggestions for activities and outreach.

The hearing was adjourned at six o'clock and forty-five minutes p. m.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Katherine Triantafillou". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Councillor Katherine Triantafillou
Chair

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

S-315

Veterans Committee Report regarding the
formulation of an agenda for the committee
for the upcoming year.

In City Council,

June 27, 1994

*Report accepted
And placed on file*