

Stamford Patriotic and Special Events Commission

Minutes (Approved)

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 PM by Chairperson Xavier Shellman with all participants joining by Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/98066585413?pwd=S1ppUmc0cDYvY25QbzBsZGVucHNadz09>

Meeting ID: 980 6658 5413

Passcode: PSEC

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Attendees

P&SEC Members: Xavier Shellman, Dave Kaplan, Kate Cook – quorum present.

Guests: Pat Parry, Chris Munger, Colleen Harkey, Alan Gerard, Archie Elam.

Agenda

- 1) Read minutes from May 26, 2022 meeting
 - a. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.
- 2) After ACTION Report
 - a. Planning Stage
 - i. • Schedule of meetings
 1. Need to start planning earlier. Now is the time to set dates for Veterans Day Parade and Ceremony and, as soon as possible, Memorial Day.
 2. Develop SOP including timeline of all actions to be accomplished.
 - a. **ACTION:** PSEC members to work off-line on draft SOP previously emailed by Dave Kaplan.
 3. Focus subsequent meetings on actions by timeline.
 - ii. Early advertisement
 1. Advertising needs to be accomplished much earlier. Advance notice of time and date should be sent out well in advance of the event with details to follow, if necessary.
 2. Coordinate with City Website personnel much earlier to ensure advertising is posted front and center (if detailed ad is on a sub-page, there needs to be a header on the main page with link).

3. Need to document where to advertise, whether registration is required, and list of contacts.
 4. **ACTION:** PSEC develop advertising timelines and procedures for implementation (and incorporation into the SOP)
- iii. Contacting participants
1. Many potential participants lock in their schedules a year in advance. Due to PSEC late start in holding official meetings (pending new members for quorum), some units had already committed to other parades and were not available for the Stamford Memorial Parade.
 2. Solution is to agree on specific dates and times for events a year out so units can be given a soft commitment, pending budget approval.
 3. **DECISION:** PSEC agreed unanimously to hold the Veterans Day Parade and Ceremony on November 6, 2022. Parade at 12:00 PM and Ceremony at 1:00 AM.
 4. **ACTION:** Dave Kaplan to begin contacting units for participation in the 2022 Veterans Day Parade.
 5. On-line registration form
 - a. All agreed that a standardized form would be beneficial to ensure participants are aware of requirements at the onset.
 - b. Colleen Harkey suggested that general information regarding staging area, parade and ceremony start time, transportation requirements (to/from) could also be included. No agreement was reached on this, since other than start time and date, details are subject to change and better served through the information packet which would be published later.
 6. **ACTION:** Dave Kaplan to draft an on-line registration form for units to provide required information (official name of unit, parade leader and POC, number of marchers and/or riding in vehicle, description to be announced during pass in review, vehicles and proof of insurance, cost, etc).
 7. **ACTION:** Kate Cook to provide Dave with the form she uses for Stamford-Downtown application/registration.
- iv. Political Candidates and Campaigning
1. Potential issues were averted.
 - a. Setting a policy allowing candidates to participate in the parade as individuals but prohibiting overt campaigning and or banners worked well. The policy was made known to political candidates in discussions prior to the parade and was enforced in the staging area. Key was uniform enforcement.

2. Chris Munger noted that as we get closer to elections, more candidates will be campaigning.
- v. **DECISION:** PSEC agreed unanimously to maintain the “no campaigning” policy for Veterans Day.
- vi. Mayor’s Proclamation, Plaque, and Citation
 1. In past years, the Mayor worked with his staff (top down) to prepare a proclamation and it was decided early on who would read/present it. This year, the process was bottoms up with PSEC preparing a draft based on Alan Gerard’s input (representing Veterans Council). Actual coordination with Mayor’s staff and roles was unclear.
 2. **ACTION:** Going forward, PSEC coordinate with Mayor’s office to ensure that any proclamation is being prepared, with offer of assistance (e.g. provide bio), but not in lieu of the staff’s role.
 3. **ACTION:** PSEC clarify, going forward, roles and responsibilities for Plaque (Mayor’s Office?) and Citation (Hartford).
- vii. Seating
 1. Of the 250 chairs in the park, 50 were unoccupied. However, spectators sitting on the second-tier wall were obstructing the view from the officials and guests seated in front.
 2. **ACTION:** Limit seating to bottom wall and grass area immediately above. Account for the approximately 25 spectators who would have required additional chairs.
- viii. Rain Date
 1. No rain date was planned.
 2. **ACTION:** Consider scheduling a rain date for the 2022 Veterans Day Parade and Ceremony.
- b. Parade
 - i. Participants
 1. Consensus was very positive regarding numbers, diversity, quality, and organization of participation. Feedback from participants and spectators was also very positive.
 2. Pat Parry remarked that the Parade in Ridgefield the following day included many youth groups, including Boys and Girls Club, lacrosse, soccer, baseball, and martial arts teams. Dave Kaplan stated that similar effort was made to include youth groups in Stamford. Team coaches were enthusiastic but did not get the support of parents who voiced concern over Covid or who had other plans for Memorial Day weekend. Another factor is that the Stamford Parade, on Sunday, was in the middle of the holiday weekend and noontime as well. Following discussion concluded that changing to actual holiday (Monday) or holding the parade earlier on Sunday (competing with church services) was not a good option. Nonetheless, effort will be redoubled for Veteran’s

- Day. Planning will be easier with greater lead time compared to Veterans Day.
3. Alan Gerard noted that the American Legion sponsors a SR league baseball team which should be invited. He also noted that the American Legion in the past has included several military vehicles in parades. This year, they did not get enough advance notice to schedule the vehicles.
 4. Pat Parry asked if participants could be offered the opportunity to include floats in the parade.
 5. **ACTION:** Dave Kaplan and Xavier Shellman to include the suggestions above (subpara i.1 – i.5) in Veterans Day planning.
- ii. Transportation for school students
1. Pre-meeting with Police, Director of Transportation, and school bus drivers was critical to the successful planning and implementation of drop of and pickup of students and bands and should be SOP. With that, one band director failed to follow the instructions in the participant package and voicemail reminders, initially taking his student to the wrong pickup location with resultant short-term confusion. This was corrected on the spot.
 2. **ACTION:** David Kaplan to move the bus pickup diagram to near the front of the participants package and, going forward, work with Rebecca Chuhta, Stamford Schools, who has offered to coordinate among all the Stamford School band directors and participants in Veterans Day Parade.
- iii. Participant package
1. All agreed the participant information package worked very well. The only suggested change was to move the bus pickup diagram forward (**ACTION**, above)
 2. Extracting the lineup page and handing it out to the lead person for each unit, Police and CERT team members in the staging area worked well and should be SOP.
 3. **ACTION:** Implement lineup page handout for staging area as a best practice going forward.
- iv. Flow of parade
1. Parade started close to on-time...delayed only a few minutes while Police confirmed Bedford/Atlantic was clear.
 2. Flow was excellent with good spacing between units.
 3. Musical Group lineup order
 - a. If possible, separate musical groups. This was done in planning, but evidently two groups did march back-to-back.
 4. Unit Announcements
 - a. Minor disruption to flow occurred near Veterans Park due to some unit description announcements running long, and units marching in place until the announcement finished.

- b. **ACTION:** Limit each unit announcement to thirty seconds or less.
- 5. Toy Vendors
 - a. Unregistered toy vendors congregated in front of Veterans Park, obscuring view from the Showmobile and interfering with flow of the parade.
 - i. **ACTION:** CERT and Police need to be instructed to clear the area on Atlantic St itself and allow only registered vendors to position in unobstructed areas.
 - ii. **ACTION:** Coordinate with Frank Fideli, Chief Compliance Officer, well in advance of Veterans Day to discuss rules and limits on registered vendors, issue badges, and enforce compliance during parade.
- v. CERT assistance
 - 1. Assistance was excellent.
 - 2. **ACTION:** Going forward, ensure CERT personnel in staging area are reminded that they should relocate to Veterans Park to assist inflow of spectators once staging area is cleared. This was not done, and CERT personnel in staging area left, thinking their role was finished.
 - 3. Pat Parry mentioned that several CERT personnel near Veterans Park appeared to be not actively engaged. When she suggested they could assist in the park, they responded that was not the role they were assigned and would need authorization. These were probably CERT personnel assigned to support the Police and had completed their assignment.
 - a. **ACTION:** Chris Monger to coordinate with CERT personnel going forward that irrespective of assignment to Police support, if role is complete, they should assist in the park.
- vi. Police assistance
 - 1. Excellent job. Police cleared the streets, blocked intersections, and ensured illegally parked cars were removed efficiently and effectively. They interfaced with the public in a very polite and professional manner
- vii. Showmobile
 - 1. Need better, more powerful PA system. Officials and invited guests on the platform and the parade unit directly in front of the Showmobile could hear the announcements, but the sound did not project beyond.
 - 2. Need a podium with stand-mounted microphone for the announcer. It was too difficult to hold a paper script and microphone and keep an eye on the marching units.
 - 3. **ACTION:** PSEC coordinate with Parks and Recreation to procure a proper PA system and provide a podium for future parades. Also

check on their plans for an upgraded sound system for the park which should include equipment for the Showmobile.

4. Not all elected officials chose to sit on the platform and so the Showmobile was not as fully occupied as expected. We can encourage the individuals to view the parade from the platform, but it is their choice. Some chose to interact with spectators instead.

c. Ceremony

i. Length of ceremony

1. Ceremony timing was appropriate and well-paced.

ii. Length of time between parade end and ceremony start.

1. There was a 23-minute interval, which worked well. This gave the officials adequate time to interact with attendees and for attendees to get settled in the park.
2. The 102nd Infantry Bn Quintet was to play patriotic music during the interval., but evidently this did not happen or was very abbreviated.
3. **ACTION:** Going forward music should be scheduled to fill more of the interval.

iii. Run of show

1. Colleen Harkey stated there was too much focus on emcee narrative at expense of Mayor and Grand Marshal participation.
 - a. **ACTION:** Coordinate roles and detailed speaking parts with Mayor's office going forward.

iv. Speakers

1. Discussion focused on fact there was too much political reference in presentations. Going forward, speakers should be asked to focus on the theme of the holiday, i.e., Memorial Day or Veterans Day rather than overshadow purpose.
2. **Future Consideration:** As an alternative to political or elected officials, consider asking ranking Veterans Organization leaders or other affiliated Civic leaders to speak.

v. Live Stream

1. Needs more advance advertising/announcement for community and public awareness
2. Videographer needs more focus during interval from parade to ceremony. Camera appeared set on static wide angle without attention to details. Could have given a virtual, unspoken tour of the park.

vi. At this point, since Kate had to leave the meeting, a quorum was no longer present, and further discussion of the Ceremony was carried forward to the next meeting.

1. **ACTION:** Revisit Ceremony AAR at the next meeting.

3) Actions carried forward from May 26th meeting:

- a. **ACTION:** Evaluate possibility of an overhead banner along route on Bedford St. for Veterans Day.

- b. **ACTION:** Confirm if Mickey Doyle, Springdale Florist, has submitted invoice and been paid for wreath.
- 4) Running Reminder Checklist
- a. When it's time for the Honor Guard to raise flag and stand at attention, ensure no one is standing near the Lincoln or in front of US Flag and during rifle volley.
 - b. Position wreath far away from the Dough Boy and walk the wreath slowly to allow time for a complete stanza of Amazing Grace.
 - c. Create an SOP covering all actions needed to plan a parade with calendar lead times for each. Consider a standard form that participants would fill out at the time they agree to participate to provide all necessary information, including estimated numbers, vehicle proof of insurance, short narrative description for Showmobile announcer, etc. (also an action item in Planning section, above).
 - d. Future Consideration: Archie Elam suggested we solicit the broader Stamford youth community for future events (e.g., bugle player for Assembly and Taps) to increase awareness and participation.
 - e. Future Consideration: Pat has also asked Sandy Errico, Stamford Schools Performing Arts, if any students who play the trumpet would be available and capable of playing Taps. This option is available going forward.
- 5) The meeting was adjourned at 3:13 PM.
- 6) Next meeting is scheduled for August 3, 2022 at 2:00 PM.