



Virtual Commission Meeting

Meeting Agenda Thursday, 1 October 2020

1. Roll Call of Commission Members for Establish Quorum:

Mr. J. Greg Jolissaint, Chair
Mr. Jonathan K. Branch, Co-Chair
Mr. Reginald Avery
Mr. Michael Blum
Mr. Steven M. Bolen
Ms. Nafrettifi Griffin
Mr. Michael Griggs
Ms. Kelly Kesler
Mr. Robert Lowell
Mr. Keith McGuire
Mr. Paul Rivers

Acknowledgement of Howard County Government Officials in Attendance:

Ms. Lisa Terry (Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families [HCOVMF]).

Special Guest(s):

Others in Attendance:

2. Meeting Opened

Meeting Chair will lead attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance (***everyone except the Chair should mute their microphones***)

3. **Reminders of Virtual Meeting etiquette** (please stay muted; use Chat box to notify chair if anyone has a comment or question; if calling in, please don't place the phone on "hold")

4. Consideration of the September 2020 Meeting Minutes

5. Presentation by Invited Guests?

6. Old Business:

a. **Update from the Commission's Subcommittee on Equity and Racial Justice (Jonathan Branch):**



Subcommittee members: Mr. Branch (Chair), Mr. Avery, Mr. Blum, Mr. Gillette, Ms. Kesler, Mr. Lowell, Mr. Rivers, and Ms. Terry.

b. Exploratory Committee to Investigate the Feasibility of Building a Veterans Home in Howard County (Mike Blum):

c. Update on Veterans Support Group (Paul Rivers, Kelly Kesler, Lisa Terry):

NAMI Connections Veteran Support Group

Mondays, Oct 5, Nov 2, Dec 7, Jan 4 and Feb 1
5:30 - 7pm

Oct. 5 – Centennial Park Pavilion O (off Centennial Lane near the back parking lot) outside

Nov 2 – VFW 7472 4225 VFW Ln, Ellicott City, MD 21043

Dec – Feb – Locations to TBD or zoom options

Joining a veteran peer support group can help a Veteran feel better in any number of ways, such as:

- Knowing that others are going through something similar
- Learning tips on how to handle day-to-day challenges
- Meeting new friends or connecting to others who understand you
- Learning how to talk about things that bother you or how to ask for help
- Learning to trust other people
- Hearing about helpful new perspectives from others

For more information, email or call 410-772-9300, Yulanda: yblackston.namihc@gmail.com or Ashlyn: volunteercoordinator.namihc@gmail.com

d. Feedback on September VAMHCS Meeting (Steve Bolen):

e. Update on Veterans Day Presentations in HoCo Schools (Reg Avery):

f. Update on MHFA Proposal to the FMA Foundation Board (John Way):

g. Update on Virtual Veterans Connections thru Office of Aging and Independence (Lisa Terry):

Join our 55+ community virtually to share conversation, trivia, County resources and other interesting activities.



October 7 from 4-5pm

Meeting link:

<https://howardcountymd.webex.com/howardcountymd/j.php?MTID=mc06f2753f0a6e7cce275fa4a9bf3ea25>

Meeting number: 172 257 0375

Password: yCDXWKYM735

For questions, please email veterans@howardcountymd.gov or Howard County Office of Aging and Independence

7. Business “On Hold”

- a. Columbia Lake Monument completion; fundraising for the monument; dedication ceremony**
- b. Howard County School Level Buddy Program for incoming military family members**

8. New Business

- a. Veterans Day Ceremony Update (John Spain)**
- b. Howard County Joint Military Council (JMC) significant items (Ed Hall)**
- c. New business from Commission Members (Greg Jolissaint)**
- d. Lisa, any update on solicitation for new commission members?**
- e. Comments or requests for other meeting attendees (Greg Jolissaint)**

9. Announcements and Events of Importance

- a. S. Bill 633: “Six Triple Eight” Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2019**

Sep 15, 2020 — New Cosponsors added

New Cosponsor: [Sen. Marco Rubio \[R-FL\]](#)

New Cosponsor: [Sen. Jeanne Shaheen \[D-NH\]](#)

New Cosponsor: [Sen. Kyrsten Sinema \[D-AZ\]](#)



The bill now has 49 cosponsors (26 Democrats, 22 Republicans, 1 Independent).

- b. Veteran Virtual Connection – NEW**
- c. Howard County Commission for Veterans and Military Families** <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/vetcomm>
- d. For questions regarding VA benefits:**

Mr. Andrew Rutherford
Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs Veteran Benefit Specialist
Howard County Multiservice Center in Laurel
410-313-0229
andrew.rutherford@maryland.gov

- e. Resources for Veterans and Military Families** – Lisa Terry publishes an email containing a link to an informative e-Bulletin. Contact Lisa if you are not on the distribution list LB Terry@howardcountymd.gov
- f. Veteran Owned Business Enterprise (VOBE) Program**

The Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise Program (VOBE) is designed to foster participation by Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises in the County's procurement process.

The program includes an overall aspirational goal of 1% of the County's total dollar value of procurement contracts to be made directly or indirectly with Veteran-Owned Business Enterprises.

For the purposes of the Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise Program, a Veteran-Owned Business Enterprise (VOBE) is defined as a business enterprise that is verified by the Center for Verification and Evaluation of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as a Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise.

To qualify, veteran-owned businesses must be verified by the Center for Validation and Evaluation of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. For more information on verification visit <http://www.va.gov/osdbu/>.

To search the database of business enterprises that are verified by the Center for Verification and Evaluation of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as a Veteran-Owned Small Business Enterprise visit <https://www.vip.vetbiz.va.gov>.

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/County-Administration/Purchasing/Veteran-Owned-Business-Enterprise-Program#:~:text=The%20Veteran->



[Owned%20Business%20Enterprise%20Program%20%28VOBE%29%20is%20designed,made%20directly%20or%20indirectly%20with%20Veteran-Owned%20Business%20Enterprises.](#)

g. New Floating Launch for Non-Motorized Boats Improves Accessibility and Safety for Users of Seneca Landing Park at Riley's Lock (Montgomery County)

A new floating launch for non-motorized boats has greatly improved accessibility and safety for kayakers, canoeists and paddle boarders at Seneca Landing Park in Poolesville. The area commonly known as Riley's Lock.

[Montgomery Parks](#), part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, recently completed construction of the floating launch—a project that was strongly supported by the County's Commission for People with Disabilities and the County Commission on Veterans Affairs.

The site is one of the busiest access points to the Potomac River and also adjoins the National Park Service's extensively utilized C&O Canal. Prior to completion of the new floating launch, motorized and non-motorized boats were sharing the same ramp, causing conflict and safety issues. The original ramp also is not ADA accessible, presenting numerous challenges for users with disabilities.

As part of the project, **Montgomery Parks also installed an accessible drop-off area and walkway, three accessible parking spaces and a fully accessible picnic area with tables and grills.**

The need for an accessible boat launch was initiated by [Team River Runner](#), a nonprofit organization that provides adventure and adaptive paddle sports to veterans and their families. It approached the County Commission on Veterans Affairs about the need for an accessible launch and was assisted by the Commission on the project.

On Sundays from May to November, Team River Runner hosts a kayak program at Seneca Landing with patients from Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, as well as veterans from the community.

A second phase of the project, which will include accessibility upgrades to improve safety, expand capacity and enhance accessibility of the existing boat ramp for motorized boats, is scheduled to begin this winter.

10. Next Commission Meeting Date(s)

- a. Thursday November 5; Thursday December 3

11. Adjournment