

anthem

community council

Special Work Session of the Board of Directors
March 22, 2017
Anthem Civic Building
3701 W. Anthem Way
Meeting Room #2

5:30 p.m.
Open Session

AGENDA

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **ESTABLISH QUORUM**
3. **ADOPT AGENDA**
4. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. Discuss and Provide Direction Regarding Future Events at the Anthem Veterans Memorial.
5. **ADJOURNMENT**

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Memorandum

To: ACC Board of Directors

From: Jenna Kohl, Community Executive Officer
Neal Shearer, Community Operations Officer
Kristi Northcutt, Communications and Public Affairs Director
Michele DeMichele, Special Events and Civic Building Operations Director

Date: March 16, 2017

Re: Anthem Veterans Memorial Ceremonies

Recommendation

Staff seeks Board guidance on the direction of ceremonies at the Anthem Veterans Memorial.

Background

Since its dedication on November 11, 2011, the Anthem Veterans Memorial has become a revered symbol of support for our nation's veterans and a significant point of pride for Anthem. Following the dedication ceremony, the Daisy Mountain Veterans and then the Anthem Veterans Memorial Support Team moved forward with planning two ceremonies annually at the Memorial to honor veterans – Memorial Day in May and Veterans Day in November. Over the past five years, the scale and scope of the ceremonies have expanded significantly and the AVM has gained worldwide attention. This has led to a series of ongoing and increasing challenges:

- 1) **Security:** The cost and manpower involved with keeping the AVM safe, as well as those who visit it, has grown. At the Veterans Day/fifth anniversary event in November 2016, Homeland Security, MCSO, Phoenix PD, North Valley Posse, armed and undercover officers and K9s were part of the security plan, which began the day before and included overnight watch. Due to issues the year prior with the crowd “stampeding” to get a view of the solar spotlight at 11:11 a.m., the AVM must now be secured and individuals are not allowed to approach the AVM for the spotlight, at any time during the ceremonies or during event set up. To see the solar spotlight, staff recommends one LED screen at the November event going forward. Having the LED screens this past Veterans Day significantly reduced the “stampeding” issue and allowed for a much safer and more enjoyable experience for all guests. This is not a budgeted expense (covered by sponsorships in 2016).
- 2) **Staff Time:** Since its inception, much of the planning of the ceremonies at the AVM was initiated and led by the AVMST, primarily Elizabeth Turner, who donated countless hours to spearhead Memorial events. With Liz's retirement from Memorial volunteer activities, all lead planning duties

have shifted to ACC staff. The responsibility of securing speakers, scheduling travel, coordinating music, writing scripts, processing invoices, paver placement/ceremonies, etc., has been added to event logistics/security/set-up (for which staff already had primary responsibility). Hours that Communications/ Events/Parks and Facilities staff will spend on planning and executing the event will at least double from previous levels with the absence of Liz, who oversaw these elements. Staff time across departments is currently equal to or exceeds preparation and execution of Independence Day, a four-hour event with over 20,000 in attendance (in comparison to a one-hour event).

- 3) **Parking:** Due to safety concerns, staff began closing the upper lot of Community Park beginning with Veterans Day 2016. This alleviated congestion and interference, and aided in a much safer area in and around the AVM the day prior for setup and the day of the event, when only authorized personnel, security, staff, speakers and their supports, etc., were allowed to access this lot. However, doing so requires additional staffing and creates the need to have shuttles from Boulder Creek High School (more than 500 people utilized this free service in November 2016). With Safeway reopen, the lot across the street is far more congested; therefore, a traffic control plan may be necessary to address traffic and parking going forward; another unbudgeted expense (covered by a sponsorship in November 2016).
- 4) **Budget:** Currently, \$10,000 is in the Operating Budget for ceremonies; divided between Memorial and Veterans Day. To maintain security at the AVM on Veterans Day, regardless of the scope of the ceremony, the following must be considered, in addition to the regular scope of expenses (programs, entertainment, signage, wreaths, supplies, etc.):
 - a. 2016 cost for screens/sound was \$11,777 (discounted 50% for nonprofit status).
 - b. Pro-Em (Setup of chairs, tables, ropes, etc.) is approx. \$3,000.
 - c. Parking attendants (see item 3) is approx. \$475.
 - d. Security (day before, overnight and day off) is approx. \$2,000.
 - e. Shuttles were donated for Veterans Day 2016; not guaranteed to continue.
- 5) **Fundraising/Sponsorship:** Pursuant to the Board-approved Charter, fundraising for the Memorial and related events is a key responsibility of the Anthem Veterans Memorial Support Team. Liz was the primary driving force behind most of the fundraising/ sponsorships for Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies. As successful fundraising takes significant time and staff is already involved in securing sponsorships for the ACC's special events, fundraising expectations and responsibilities need to be discussed and clarified. Competition for sponsorships and sensitivity to Anthem's limited sponsorship market are also key factors to consider in this discussion.

After evaluating the above challenges, staff began to develop alternative approaches to the AVM ceremonies for the Board's consideration. They are outlined below:

- 1) **Scale back the two ceremonies from the current scope.** Scaling back the ceremonies to a more manageable level would reduce staff time; however, costs would not be reduced greatly. For example, Veterans Day may include the AVM being dressed (flags, wreaths, roses), roped off Nov. 10-11, cadets and paid, armed officers at guard. Local/regional speakers could offer a short address and music would be incorporated. For Memorial Day, setup could be reduced by reducing seating and scaling back the ceremony to just a prayer and poetry reading, the POW/MIA ceremony and "Taps," for example. Essentially, the current ceremonies remain, with a more conservative approach.
- 2) **Consolidate to just one ceremony (Veterans Day).** Scaling back to just one ceremony (Veterans Day) would reduce staff time and costs to some degree. Veterans Day is the largest of the

ceremonies, and requires the most setup, preparation and execution. Due to the solar spotlight, the LED screen(s) are recommended (see item 4a above).

- 3) **Transition from formal ceremonies to the AVM as a place of quiet reflection.** As an alternative to formal ceremonies, staff could organize other events to properly recognize veterans in the community. For example, the ACC could host a creative writing contest with Anthem schools about the military, the AVM, veterans, etc. Staff could invite local schools to have field trips to the AVM to learn more. The *Art in Public Places* rotation could be themed to Veterans (either art by veterans, or in tribute to) in partnership with the Sonoran Arts League. Java & Jammin' in November could be patriotic-themed. Staff could create a Veterans-themed book collection in association with the North Valley Regional Library.
 - a. On Memorial Day, the AVM pavers would still be dressed in memoriam, and on Veterans Day, the AVM would be dressed (flags, wreaths, roses), roped off Nov. 10-11, cadets and paid, armed officers at guard (this does not reduce costs). The ACC could also work alongside the Daisy Mountain Veterans to help the DMV utilize the AVM during the DMV Parade, or for their Memorial Day picnic. However, the AVM/upper grassy area of the Park would not be reservable for events on Memorial or Veterans Day, in order to maintain it as a place of quiet reflection (i.e. no outside groups could host an event at the AVM on these days). Note: Daisy Mountain Veterans have not yet been consulted.
- 4) **Consider maintaining ceremonies at the current scope, with an additional paid staff member.** In order to absorb the responsibilities of planning and executing the ceremonies, pavers, educational outreach, fundraising, etc. – all aspects of the AVM previously coordinated by Liz Turner, AVMST and ACC staff – the ACC could create a position, either full-time (to assist Special Events, Communications, or park rentals coordination when not in ceremony planning mode) or part-time, solely focused on AVM programming and related activities.

On March 9, Jenna Kohl, Neal Shearer, Michele DeMichele and Kristi Northcutt met with Rear Admiral Ron Tucker to discuss his feelings about ceremonies moving forward at the Memorial. Admiral Tucker felt strongly that ceremonies should continue at the Memorial, but acknowledged that they should be scaled back to a more manageable and sustainable size and scope (*option 1*). Because of the positive notoriety that has come to the AVM, Admiral Tucker felt that the community truly values and looks forward to the ceremonies at the AVM on Memorial and Veterans Day, and that people will continue to visit the AVM on these national holidays; therefore, offering a scaled back but dignified and respectful ceremony is the right approach.

Staff has the Memorial Day Ceremony fully planned for May 29, 2017. A decision regarding the approach going forward is of critical importance, as planning for Veterans Day Ceremony is several months behind where it would normally be. Speakers must be secured and time is of the essence if the Board wishes to continue with the Veterans Day Ceremony, regardless of scope.