



**Government Office Building
9830 Patuxent Woods Dr.
Columbia, MD 21046**

**MINUTES
03 June 2021**

Meeting Opened: 1900 hours
 Meeting Closed: 2024 hours
 Meeting Location: Virtual (WebEx); due to COVID-19 pandemic

MEETING SUMMARY:

J. Greg Jolissaint, Chair, presiding, brought the meeting to order at 1901 hrs.

1. Roll Call of Commission Members to Establish a Quorum

The roll was taken; ten commission members present, two excused, and one vacant. The Chair declared the Commission was in a quorum and brought the meeting to order.

Commissioner	Present	Excused	Absent
J. Greg Jolissaint (Chair)	✓		
Jonathan Branch (Co-Chair)	✓		
Reginald Avery	✓		
Cherron Blakely	✓		
Michael Blum		✓	
Steven M. Bolen	✓		
Nafrettifi Griffin		✓	
Michael Griggs	✓		
Kelly Kesler	✓		
Robert Lowell	✓		
Keith McGuire	✓		
Paul Rivers	✓		
(Vacant)			

2. Acknowledgement of Howard County Government Officials in Attendance: Lisa Terry (Manager, Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families), Jennifer Jones (Deputy Chief of Staff Howard County Executive), Cheryl Mattis (Director, Howard County Department of



Community Resources and Services), and Rohini Gupta (Adult Curriculum Specialist, Howard County Library System)

3. **Special Guest(s):** Jordan Foley (CEO, Chow Corporation), Eric Crawford (President, Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park, Ltd.), and Bruce Clopein (Board of Directors, Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park, Ltd.).
4. **Others in Attendance:** Jerry Wykoff (Commission Applicant), Bob Pelletier (A.L. Post 156/VFW Post 7472), John Spain (A.L. Post 156), and Vikki Garcia (Community Outreach for U.S. Representative John Sarbanes)
5. **Welcome by the Commission Chair/Pledge of Allegiance**
 - The Chair led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.
6. **Reminders of Virtual Meeting Etiquette**
 - The Chair stated the meeting rules of etiquette.
7. **Consideration of the May 2021 Meeting Minutes**
 - The May minutes were approved by unanimous vote.
8. **Guest Speaker(s):**

Jordan Foley:

- Jordan is an active duty Naval officer.
- Chow is a nonprofit that partners with other nonprofits; its mission is to provide services for military veterans through their food truck operations.
- The company needs changes to Maryland state law so that they can partner with non-certified kitchens (e.g., other nonprofits that serve food on a part-time basis.)
- Their fleet of trucks assists veterans through cooking therapy classes, cookware donations, and the opportunity to own and operate one of their trucks.
- For more information about Chow Corp: <https://www.letschow.org/>.

Bruce Clopein/Eric Crawford:

- The Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park Ltd. (FPVSP) supports the park by promoting stewardship through programming, sustainable recreation, and the preservation and restoration of its natural resources.
- FPVSP was established in 1999.
- In 2017, they created the first accessible playground for Maryland state parks.
- Programs FPVSP offers are:
 - *Healing Waters* where they work with *Wounded Warriors* and other VSOs to provide fishing programs for veterans.



- *Operation Camp-Out* for veterans and their families in the Hollifield area to provide camping materials for veterans and their families so that can have a camping experience.
- A “sensor” trail near the Catonsville area; they are also developing an “adaptive” trail for people with disabilities.
- An adaptive paddling activity for people with disabilities to get out on the water.
- Commissioner Blakely asked if the VAMHCS TBI and SCI programs knew about these activities. Bruce did not know if they did.
- For more information about FPVSP: <https://fpvsp.org/our-mission/>. For more information about FPVSP adaptive programs: <https://fpvsp.org/adaptive-programs/>.

9. Old Business

a. Update on Equity and Racial Justice Survey:

- Commissioner Branch said that there have been fourteen responses to the survey.
- Commissioner Branch asked the Commission how many responses do we need?
 - Commissioner Blakely thought we should try to get about 25% of veterans who live in Howard County to respond. She used the “Nextdoor” application to distribute the survey and received a couple of responses. Lisa Terry thought there were about 20,000 veterans in Howard County. 25% response would require 5000 county Veterans to respond.
 - Commissioner Kesler asked if the survey was distributed through County resources, including the “Ball Bulletin.” Lisa Terry said that the Office of Human Rights has distributed it. Cheryl Mattis noted that the survey could be distributed through her department’s “Constant Contact” network. Commissioner Branch noted that it was on the County website. Chair Jolissaint asked Commissioner Avery if he could distribute the survey through the Howard Commission on Aging. Rohini Gupta said that hardcopies could be distributed at different events around the county. Commissioner Kesler said that the survey could also be distributed through the HCPD and HCDFRS.

b. Update on Veterans Support Group:

- Commissioner Rivers said that the next meeting is next Monday. He expects the same 5-8 people to show up.
- He just completed an eight-week NAMI class on peer-peer support and would like other people to get the same training.
- The group will be back to meeting in person soon at the VFW post in Ellicott City.

c. Feedback on the VAMHCS April Meeting:

- The Chair said that the VAMHCS is allowing volunteers to start working again.
- The VBA is back to in-person appointments; veterans should call ahead to schedule an appointment.

d. Update on the HCPSS Simulated Congressional Hearings (SCH):



- Commissioner Avery thanked all of the commissioners that volunteered to judge; seven commissioners volunteered and participated in the hearings.
 - Hanover Hills Elementary School was thankful for our support.
- e. Update on Veterans Day Presentation in Howard County Schools:
- Commissioner Avery said that if school is in session this Fall, HCPSS will hold Veterans Day activities. We are on standby to hear back from the school system.
- f. Update on Howard County Web-Based Veterans Tribute:
- Lisa Terry encourages anyone who knows a veteran who lived in Howard County and died in service to our county to fill out the Veterans Tribute Form found on the press release. More information about the Fallen Heroes Tribute here:
<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/News052821>. Link to the submission form:
<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/FallenHeroesForm.pdf>.
- g. Update on Memorial Day:
- The Chair thanked the commissioners who participated in the Memorial Day ceremonies. Commissioners Blum and Avery gave speeches at the ceremonies on Sunday and Monday, respectively. Commissioner Branch gave the invocation at the ceremony on Monday.
- h. Columbia Lake Monument:
- Lisa Terry announced that Howard County has pledged \$50,000 toward the monument, and the State will put up \$350,000 in bonds.
 - On 09 June, at 1030 hours, at Millie Bailey Park, the County Executive will announce the funding pledges.
- i. Hometown Heroes Banner:
- The Chair asked if anyone has been submitted a request for a banner. Lisa Terry thought that family and friends of Marine Corp Colonel (ret.) Lou Schott will be getting the Colonel a banner.
- j. Rotary Club Participation:
- Lisa Terry said that she has submitted a proposal to the Rotary Club for \$2,000 to support the Veterans Day Parade. The grant will support transportation for the high school bands and JROTC students to get to the event.
 - Any organization that wants to participate in the Veterans Day Parade can register by filling out a form at: <https://howardcountyveterans.org>
- k. Status of Jerry Wykoff's County Council Approval for Commission:
- On 07 June, Jerry Wykoff will be testifying in front of the County Council for his nomination to the Commission.

10. Business “On Hold” Due to the Pandemic



- Update on the potential Veterans Home Exploratory Committee for Howard County.

11. New Business

a. Update on the Veterans Day Parade:

- The next meeting is 09 June.
- John Spain noted that the VSOs would be participating in the River Hill 4th of July Parade. The rally point is Pointers Run Elementary School at 0830 for participants.
- Local VSOs will support the Howard County Fair.
- John Spain connected with Commissioner Griggs regarding outreach to veterans at HCC.
- John Spain will contact Commissioner Avery about the American Legion school award that HCPSS may be interested in.

b. New Business from Commission Members:

- Lisa Terry reminded the Commission that June is PTSD month.
- Lisa Terry would like to host an outdoor viewing of the documentary “Bastards Road.” The film features a U.S. Marine veteran who walks across America to raise mental health awareness to those who served. Link to the trailer here: <https://www.bastardsroad.com/>.
- 2021 Howard County Veterans and Military Families Resource Guide: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/VeteransGuide2021.pdf>
- New Howard County Office of Veterans and Military Families website: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/veterans>

c. Dates of Importance:

- 06 June D-Day (06 June 1944; 77th Anniversary)
- 14 June Flag Day
- 14 June U.S. Army Birthday (14 June 1775; 246th Anniversary)
- 27 June National PTSD Awareness Day
- 27 July Korean War Armistice Day (27 July 1953; 68th Anniversary)
- 04 August Coast Guard Birthday (04 August 1790; 231st Anniversary)

12. Next Commission Meeting Date(s)

- The next Commission meeting will be held on 02 September starting at 1900 hours. Plan for the meeting to take place in person.
- There will be no Commission meeting in July or August. Commissioners are expected to support two of the 3 following activities: the 4th of July Parade in Clarksville, the Flag Retirement Ceremony on July 17th in Ellicott City, and the Howard County Fair on 07 August in West Friendship.

13. Adjournment:

- The Chair adjourned the meeting at 2024 hours.

The Commission stands in adjournment until
02 September 2021.



Minutes were taken by Steven M. Bolen.

J. Greg Jolissaint
Presiding
Chair, HCCVMF