

**City of Wichita**  
**City Council Meeting**  
July 21, 2009

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**SUBJECT:** Vietnamese/American Memorial. (District VI)

**INITIATED BY:** Department of Park and Recreation

**AGENDA:** Unfinished Business

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**Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the memorial donation be approved by the City Council as it was presented on April 15, 2009 to the Design Council *and the resolution be adopted*. Private funds are being raised to fulfill their commitment to partner with the Park Board to complete this project. The placement of the memorial will not be in John Steven's Veterans' Memorial Park, but on city property on the riverbank.

**Background:** On August 14, 2006, members of the Wichita Vietnamese/American Community presented a concept plan to the Park Board to create a memorial. The motion passed 7-0 *to recommend approval of the memorial*. Though the memorial was approved, another meeting on September 11, 2006 was held to receive additional feedback and information from the citizens concerned about the memorial. Additional comments from the public were made the following day during the public agenda session for a City Council meeting on September 12, 2006.

On January 16, 2008 the concept plan was presented to the Design Council for initial feedback. At that time, the Design Council made the motion that the design be approved with the exception that the donor hires professional design assistance for refinement. Subsequently, the plan was taken back to the Design Council for final review and was approved on April 15, 2009.

**Analysis:** The proposed memorial has been reviewed and approved by the Park Board and Design Council. The schedule for actual development is not yet known, pending fundraising for the memorial. However, the donor has provided due diligence with city staff and others for approval. Staff recommends that the memorial donation be approved as it was presented on April 15, 2009 to the Design Council.

On June 9, 2009, the City Council deferred action on the location of the memorial, requesting that the City Manager meet with representatives of the Wichita Veterans and Vietnamese communities. The City Manager held three meetings; one on June 25, 2009, the second on July 7, 2009, and the third on July 15, 2009.

In addition to meeting with the concerned groups, the City Manager commissioned research to be done determining if any governing body, City Council or Board of Park Commissioners, specifically stated that only U.S. Military personnel could be recognized within Veterans' Park. No conclusive documentation was found specifically stating that only U.S. Military personnel would be recognized or honored within Veterans' Park.

The outcome from these meeting discussions resulted in the following compromise:

1. A memorial to the United States, South Vietnam and allied soldiers that fought in the Vietnam War and to the United States citizens that have supported the South Vietnamese community would be constructed ~~in a City park on city property~~, located north and west of the existing Veterans' Park. The memorial would be *visually* buffered from the Veterans' Park by a berm, *minimum of six (6) feet tall*, and landscaping. Access for the ~~park memorial~~ would be provided from the riverfront trail. The suggested location and buffering are depicted in the attached drawings. Signage directing visitors to Veterans' Park will be installed *at the upper walkway at the south end of the proposed berm at the pedestrian traffic way pointing east* to clearly define John Steven's Veterans' Park from other city properties.
2. ~~Additional park ground would be dedicated to the Veterans' Park for Future memorials. All land currently owned by the City of Wichita which is contiguous with Veterans' Park to the Arkansas River, as well as the remainder of land acquired from Westar north of Veterans' Park, will be utilized in conjunction with Veterans' Park.~~
3. Any land acquired by the City from Westar Energy in the future ~~would be added to~~ *will be utilized in conjunction with the Veterans' Park*, if it is adjacent to the park.
4. The City and Veterans' Memorial Park of Wichita, Inc. would develop a master plan for the future development of the park. *All memorial requests will be reviewed by a joint committee of city officials and members of the Veterans community. The City's Park and Recreation Director will serve as the designated contact person for assisting Veterans groups with long range planning and the addition of Veterans Memorials.*
5. The City Council ~~would be asked to~~ *will designate the current Veterans' Park, and lands identified in item two (2) above, as a memorial park dedicated to memorialize the service of the United States Military.*
6. *The City will adopt a resolution that provides no future alterations or changes will be made to this plan; to in effect make the proposed South Vietnamese Memorial appear to be a part of Veterans Memorial Park.*

**Financial Considerations:** None. Development for this project will be provided with private funding. Staff recommends that a maintenance agreement for the memorial be provided by the Wichita Vietnamese Community.

**Goal Impact:** The memorial will provide citizens a memorial to honor and recognize both American and South Vietnamese soldiers who worked together during the Vietnam War.

**Legal Considerations:** The Law Department has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

**Recommendations/Actions:** Staff recommends that the memorial donation be approved by the City Council as it was presented on April 15, 2009 to the Design Council. Private funds are being raised to fulfill their commitment to partner with the Park Board to complete this project. Additionally, it is recommended that the compromise elements listed above be approved *and that the resolution be adopted.*

**Attachment:** Site plan and details for the Memorial