

## **Veterans Memorial Park Update July 7, 2009 (rev 3)**

Subject: Synopsis of this mornings meeting at the City Managers office between the Veterans and the South Vietnamese Community on the Veterans Memorial Park issue.

Today the Veterans and the South Vietnamese met for our second meeting at the City Managers office to try to come to some type of resolution in regards to the proposed new South Vietnamese Memorial.

### **I. Two weeks ago we had our first meeting together that resulted in (2) compromise proposals:**

1. That the current Vietnam Memorial be modified by the addition of plaque similar to the Korean War Memorial with wording that would only honor U.S. Military forces. This was rejected by the Vietnamese.
2. That a small piece of land acquired at the far north west boundary of Veterans Memorial Park three years ago be used for the new Vietnamese Memorial. This piece of land bordered Westar's property on the north and Veterans Memorial Park on the south. It was around 150 feet wide at the walkway next to the river and tapered to a long narrow triangle towards the Park parking lot. The position of the City was that the land was acquired after the incorporation of Veterans Park and was not part of the Park itself. This proposal was turned down by the Veterans for several reasons by the Veterans including.
  - a.) There were no physical or geographical distinguishing characteristics of the land in question and it was felt that any reasonable person visiting the park would assume that the proposed South Vietnamese Memorial was actually part of Veterans Memorial Park.
  - b.) Several of us reasoned that the City's acquisition of the land in question could not serve any purpose other than to be part of the Park due to the physical and geographical boundaries of the land.

### **II. Today July 7, 2009 we were offered the following proposal by the City of Wichita:**

1. That if the proposed Vietnamese Memorial is allowed to be constructed on part of the triangle piece of land referenced above, the City would construct an earthen berm around the Memorial itself to separate it from Veterans Memorial Park.
2. A long range plan and outline for Veterans Memorial Park would be developed and agreed to, including:
  - The clarification of the intent of Veterans Memorial Park to be for memorials dedicated to U.S. Armed Forces Veterans.
  - Restrict all future memorials to only forces of U.S. Military Veterans.
3. All other lands that have been purchased by the City adjacent to Veterans Memorial Park that were acquired by the City after the original establishment of the Park will be included as part of Veterans Memorial Park.

4. Any future lands purchased or acquired adjacent to Veterans Memorial Park will be included as part of Veterans Memorial Park.
5. There was a 5<sup>th</sup> point but I combined it into point #2 as they were related to each other.

Those are the unbiased facts of the current proposal. To give us time to inform the many Veterans so they can consider the proposal, the City Council vote on the issue of allowing the proposed South Vietnamese Memorial's installation in Veterans Memorial Park **has been moved from July 14<sup>th</sup> to July 21<sup>st</sup> of 2009.**

### **III. Note that the City Council Meeting on July 14<sup>th</sup> had two issues:**

1. The City Council vote on whether the proposed South Vietnamese Memorial will be allowed to be placed in Veterans Memorial Park. **This issue has been pushed back to the July 21<sup>st</sup> City Council meeting.**
2. A presentation to the City Council of the "Petition in Support of Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces where: *"We, the undersigned, support the principal that the Veterans Memorial Park located in Wichita, Kansas has been and should remain properly reserved for memorials honoring the Veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States of America and no others. We petition the Wichita City Commission to re-dedicate Veterans Park to the memory of the service and sacrifice of those men and women who have served in defense of our country as members of the armed forces of the United States of America."* **This issue is still on and will be presented at the City Council meeting of July 14<sup>th</sup>.**

**IV.** I am only presenting the facts to date on this issue and I am not going to make any recommendations regarding this proposal. My job is to represent the Veterans interests on the compromise committee in the talks with the City and the Vietnamese and I must try to remain unbiased.

Our next meeting at the City Managers office is scheduled for July 15<sup>th</sup> and we will accept or reject the City's July 7, 2009 proposal (Section II above) then. If the proposal is rejected by the Veterans at that time, it is most likely that the City Manager will conclude the compromise talks and the matter will be turned over to the City Council for vote in the July 21<sup>st</sup> City Council Meeting.

I am looking for your feedback on this proposal. Please take the time to [CTRL-CLICK] the link below and answer either **YES** to accept the July 7, 2009 proposal by the City (Section II above) or **NO** to reject this proposal. Please type your name and Post or Organization so I don't have to figure out who you are by a possibly cryptic email address. I will be the only one with access to your vote on this matter. Your vote will determine my vote at the next City Managers meeting on July 15<sup>th</sup> on this proposal.

[CTRL-CLICK (if the subject is not automatically filled in use "Veterans Park Proposal Vote")]  
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