

Town of Garner
Veterans Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 9, 2025
9:00 am, White Deer Park Nature Center

Attendees:

Committee Members: John Foster (Chair), Matt Pedone (V Chair), Jeff Hicks (Sec), Don Searles, Robert Gregory, Tim Stevens, Brian Rietvelt

Ex-Officio: Bob Carter (VFW) (excused), Willis McKoy (DAV), Phil Mathews (ToG Mayor Appointee)

Town Staff: Maria Munoz-Blanco (Director PRCR), Shelby Paustian (Events), Colleen Bockhahn (White Deer/Lake Benson Park Rec Program Mgr), Terri-Jones (ToG Attorney), Nevaeh Haddock (ToG Attorney Intern)

Public: Gerry La Chance

- I. Call to Order: 9:00 am, John Foster - Chair
 - a. Approval of Agenda Motion: Don/Willis. (unanimous)
 - b. Approval of Meeting Minutes (March 10, 2025) Don/Willis. (unanimous)
- II. Petitions and Comments from the Public (none)
- III. Introduce new members and guests: Phil. Brian new member, USA/USNG (ret), State Trooper (ret). Gerry La Chance, USAF (ret). Terri Jones and Navaeh Haddock (ToG, legal) attending for bylaws amendments.
- IV. Report from Standing Committees and Staff
 - a. Observances
 - i. Veterans Day Observance: November 11, 2025 at 11 am, Aversboro Road Baptist Church
 - Keynote for 2025 - BG Samuel Meyer.
 - Tim to confirm ARBC.
 - Tours 9-1 at GVM. Ushers at ARBC 9 am.
 - Shelby lead from ToG.
 - ii. Wreath Across America and Gold Star Families: December 13, 2025, 10 am, at GVM. Additional advertising requested.
 - Optimist Club to provide tree, PW to install.
 - 7 wreaths, PW to install.
 - Tours 9-12.
 - iii. Salute to Troops May 2, 2025: Screening of: PTSD The Invisible Enemy at GPAC. Well attended and received. Thanked Tim Stevens.
 - iv. Memorial Day Observance: May 26, 2025, 9:30 am.
 - Shelter 1 used.
 - Good Speaker, Col Williams.

- Signage requested from town when location moves due to weather.
- Phil updated on gates for GVM pathway status (in country, enroute)
- Gerry brought up advertising which date is for whom (Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Armed Forces Day).
- v. July 3rd Independence Celebration at LBP 5-10:30.
 - Tours GVM, 5:45 - 7:45 pm. Tents, tables, chairs (dozen), water. Place adjacent to trees near entrance of Memorial.
 - Parking passes not available yet. Additional passes will be at Garner Rec Center.
 - Parking off site:
 - a. John brought up parking at Thompson Park, people blocking each other. ToG for action.
 - b. Jeff brought up ToG Police directing ADA parking to Bonica Creek with no designated area there or access to sidewalk from street. ToG for action.
- vi. General Note: Willis asked who is in charge (VAC members) of each event. John to address later in meeting.
- b. VFW, Aux - NTR
- c. AL, SAL, Riders, Aux
 - i. AL sponsoring American Legion Baseball (Senior division, Nationals)
 - ii. Riders auctioning off donated Harley Davidson from Garner resident.
- d. DAV
 - i. Block grant from State renovating building in Knightdale.

V. Old Business

- a. New officers installed. Nominations closed (Don/Willis). Elected: John Foster - Chairman, Don Searles - Vice Chairman, Jeff Hicks - Secretary.
- b. Memorial brick order - Colleen Bockhahn - 4 orders to date. New orders close 7/15/2025.
- c. Tim to provide draft design for Memorial to War Dead who died in Garner but were not from Garner (ex: WWII Plane Crash ivo Garner Road and Vandora Springs).
- d. Lake Benson Master Plan
 - i. Focus is on moving boat house, installing bathrooms at North end of park.
 - ii. No committee appointed yet for public planning/input.
- e. Cleaning of benches @ Rose Garden donated by Veterans (bird feces)
- f. There is a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier traveling exhibit. Committee to investigate this for future booking.
- g. Tim brought up a 5k/10k race at White Deer Park and surrounds, not crossing roads, to attract younger veterans' attention to the Veterans Memorial and events. Dates/course TBD.

VI. New Business

- a. Add planning meetings 3 weeks in advance of Memorial Day and Veterans Day due to their scope and impact on committee.

- i. 3 Mondays in advance of Vet Day this year is 10/27/2025
 - ii. 3 Mondays in advance of Memorial Day 2026 is 5/4/2026.
 - iii. Meetings will be at WDP NC, 0900. Attendance TBD.
 - b. (Brian) Garner to have its own Veterans Day parade outside of the Wake County Parade or in lieu.
 - i. Town (Maria, Terri) - it will have to be organized by a third-party vice the town. Ex: Optimist Club on the Christmas Parade.
 - ii. Too late for planning for 2025, 2026 is achievable.
 - c. Bylaws changes brought up by Terri (ToG Attorney) and distributed. Additional changes and vote for recommendation to ToG at September meeting.
- VII. Meeting adjourned at 10:34 am.
 - a. Next Meeting: September 8, 2025 - 0900, 2nd Monday of the month (every third month), White Deer Park Nature Center.