

Old Business: Bicentennial Square (update)

At the meeting of the Patriotic Commission on Nov 28th Peg Burns was asked if she had invited our Mayor to attend this meeting to discuss Bicentennial Square. She replied that she did not get an answer but thought that the Mayor would attend.

Presently the Patriotic and Veterans Affairs Commissions agree on the following:

Recommends that the name be changed to "Fallen Heroes Bicentennial Square

That separate areas be dedicated for Veterans, Police and Fireman who died in the line of duty

In addition the following is a listing of those who also are in favor of this recommendation.

The Police and Fire Chiefs

All town officials who were approached said they would favor it.

Also the following veteran organizations who are well represented in East Hartford and whose mission is to support, assist, and help all veterans and their families will definitely support this request.

Disabled American Veterans - The American Legion

Veterans of Foreign Wars - Korean War

Vietnam Veterans of America - Iraq/Afghanistan

This brings all of you up on the current status of Bicentennial Square.

Bicentennial Square

Since the day Bicentennial Square was dedicated it has been the only gathering area chosen to pay tribute and respect to all of our town's brave military individuals who were killed in action defending the freedom we enjoy each and every day. This takes place each Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Attendance at these functions are minimal.

The majority of residents of East Hartford have no idea where Bicentennial Square is located nor its purpose. Some individuals believe it is a dog park. Currently at Bicentennial Square the names of East Hartford residents who served and were killed in the wars of Korea, Vietnam and Iraq have their names in place for all to see. The Iraq war with the name of Sgt Richard L Ford was dedicated Memorial Day 2011. The names of World War I and World War II killed in action should also be placed at Bicentennial Square. Consideration should be given to add the names of Police and Fire Department personnel who died in the line of duty. This would then become a central location to honor all our fallen heroes. It would certainly attract a lot more attention and would become a area where residents, teachers and students can gather. Students would have an opportunity to read the names of our East Hartford residents who gave their lives for the Town of East Hartford.

Bicentennial Square could then become **Fallen Heroes Bicentennial Square**. A name change could enable the town to apply for and receive grants to improve the area. In addition it would allow us the time to formulate plans for these improvements at minimal or no cost to the town, yet should attract the attention of its residents and visitors. In the separated veterans, fire, and police sections a walkway made of bricks would be sold that would contain the name, rank and service of the individual. A custom engraved Commemorative Brick is a special way to honor and pay tribute to the service of all veterans, firemen or policemen. It is a known fact the individuals and their families belonging to the groups above will purchase the bricks being sold. The cost for the brick will be determined if and when this suggestion is approved. A large gazebo and a few more benches would attract residents and would be our gathering point when the town honors our fallen heroes.

A committee could be formed that would come up with ideas to fund this project at minimum or no cost to the town. As previously mentioned the towns only functions held at Bicentennial Square takes place each Memorial Day and Veterans Day with a few in attendance. Major funding is not a requirement to implement this request for the improvements outlined. This is a project that will take additional planning and time to accomplish. The end result should be beneficial to our town and its residents.

This is an opportunity to both improve and get more use of Bicentennial Square by our residents. Status Quo as an area not known to the majority of the town should not be an option. The location and purpose of Bicentennial Square should be known by the majority of East Hartford residents as a place where the heroes of East Hartford are honored.