



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: March 19, 2013

Prepared By/Phone Number: Juanita Jackson 854-4467

Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Sherri E. Fleming,
County Executive for Health and Human Services and Veterans Service

Commissioners Court Sponsor: Judge Samuel T. Biscoe

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

Approve Resolution Observing the 45th Anniversary of the TET Offensive

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

(See Attached)

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends approval of this item.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Please see attached draft.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

This item will not increase the County Budget.

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: All agenda requests and supporting materials must be submitted as a pdf to the County Judge's office, agenda@co.travis.tx.us by Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m. for the next week's meeting.

Travis County Commissioners Court



Resolution

WHEREAS, January 30th marks the launching of the TET Offensive during the Vietnam War and it is fitting to remember the nearly 4,000 American military personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice during those harrowing weeks and months;

WHEREAS, in the early morning hours of January 30, 1968, in violation of a lunar New Year truce, 84,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops launched the massive TET Offensive, attacking 105 cities and towns throughout South Vietnam;

WHEREAS, on January 31st, the bloodiest day of America's longest war, 246 Americans were killed and over 2,000 wounded in a twenty-four hour period;

WHEREAS, American troops, although taken by surprise, displayed bravery and skill in innumerable instances of bitter combat, notably in battles at the cities of Saigon and Hue and the US Marine Corps base at Khe Sanh;

WHEREAS, the attacks were eventually repelled and the Viet Cong were effectively destroyed as a fighting force, the TET Offensive cost more than 50,000 lives, including over 14,000 civilians and 3,895 American soldiers with 543 casualties suffered during a week in mid-February alone;

WHEREAS, nearly 2,000 documented cases of mass murder during the Battle of Hue City claimed the lives of many South Vietnamese businessmen, government workers, politicians, theologians, foreign missionaries, doctors, intellectuals and teachers – a tragic loss from which neither the City nor the Nation have ever fully recovered; and

WHEREAS, nearly half a century later, the courage commanded by American troops during the TET Offensive continues to exemplify the highest standards of bravery, especially by those who paid their last full measure of devotion, worthy of remembrance and honor by the country they served.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT THAT ALL CITIZENS OF TRAVIS COUNTY ARE URGED TO OBSERVE THE 45TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TET OFFENSIVE THAT BEGAN ON JANUARY 30 UNTIL APRIL 6, 1968 REMEMBERING THOSE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE SELFLESS SACRIFICE HONORED OUR COUNTRY THROUGH THEIR SERVICE.

SIGNED AND ENTERED THIS _____ DAY OF FEBRUARY 2013.

SAMUEL T. BISCOE
COUNTY JUDGE

RON DAVIS
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT 1

SARAH ECKHARDT
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT 2

GERALD DAUGHERTY
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT 3

MARGARET J. GOMEZ
COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT 4

The TET Offensive

On January 21, 1968, an intense barrage of artillery hit the US Marine base at Khe Sanh in northwest South Vietnam. This presaged a [siege and battle](#) that would last for seventy-seven days and would see 6,000 Marines hold off 20,000 North Vietnamese. Anticipating that American forces would be drawn north to the fighting at Khe Sanh, Viet Cong units broke the traditional TET (Lunar New Year) cease-fire on January 30, 1968, by launching major attacks against most cities in South Vietnam.

For the next two months, US and ARVN forces successfully beat back the Viet Cong assault, with particularly heavy combat in the cities of Hue and Saigon. Once the fighting had ended, the Viet Cong had been permanently crippled and ceased to be an effective fighting force. On April 1, US forces began Operation Pegasus to relieve the Marines at Khe Sanh. After opening the road to Khe Sanh (Route 9) with a mix of air mobile and ground forces, US troops linked up with the besieged Marines on April 8.

Aftereffects of TET

While the TET Offensive proved to be a military victory for the US and ARVN, it was a political and media disaster. Public support began to erode as Americans started to question the handling of the conflict. Others doubted Westmoreland's ability to command, leading to his replacement in June 1968, by General Creighton Abrams. President Johnson's popularity plummeted and he withdrew as a candidate for reelection. Ultimately, it was the media's reaction and stressing of a widening "credibility gap" that did the most damage to the Johnson Administration's efforts. Noted reporters, such as Walter Cronkite, began to openly criticize Johnson and the military leadership, as well as called for negotiated end to the war. Though he had low expectations, Johnson conceded and opened peace talks with North Vietnam in May 1968.