



CITY CELEBRATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES FROM August 20, 2025
Huntington Beach City Hall

Call to Order at 5:34 PM

Roll Call

- Committee Members: *(Present) Delaine Bailey, Ellen Kuhnert, Patricia Pappas, Yolanda Campos, Julian Douglas, Michael Latham*
- Council: *None*
- Staff Liaisons: *Julie Toledo*
- Public: *Amory Hanson, Kelly Mandic*

Public Comments (3 minutes per speaker)

- *None*

Approve minutes from July 16, 2024 meeting (*Ellen Kuhnert, 2nd by Michael Latham*)

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

1. 2025 Celebration Calendar Themes

- a. January – “Founder’s Legacy – Celebrating Huntington Beach’s Origins”
- b. February – “Shop & Dine Locally”
- c. March – “Honoring Huntington Beach – Celebrating Community Service & Volunteerism”
- d. April – “Appreciating Huntington Beach’s Ecological Legacy”
- e. May – “Exploring Public Art”
- f. June – “History of Independence Day & What it Means”
- g. July – “Surf City Showcase – Highlighting our Lifeguard Legacy”
- h. August – “Huntington Beach Pier – A Long History”
- i. September – “Celebrating Aviation”
- j. October – “Horses, Cows & Dogs, Oh My!”
- k. November – “History of our Military – Honoring Important Military Dates”
- l. December – “California History”

2. Proposed Events for 2025

- a. **August – “HB Pier – A Long History”**
 - Julie provided an update on results of the Pier Photo Contest. Nearly 30 people submitted 75 photos total to the three categories. Mayor Burns selected with winners that will post to social media week of August 25. All participants have been invited to the next Mayor’s Spotlight Awards on September 23 to receive certificates. Julie will invite the Committee to attend as well.
- b. **September – “Celebrating Aviation”**
 - Patriot Day Event at Pier Plaza
 - Other events were not discussed for September but the Air Show is happening first weekend of October.



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c. **October – “Horses, Cows & Dogs”**

- Yolanda Campos researched volunteer opportunities at the OC Humaine Society at Newland Street. While they do not serve City of HB directly, many of their volunteers are HB residents. There is a need for blankets, food, towels, etc. that we could coordinate.
 - Julian Douglas suggested a digital campaign.
 - Michael Latham suggested spotlighting them with tips to calm dogs during the Air Show
- Julie announced initial group tour to the Equestrian Center on Thursday, August 28 at 5:30pm. In addition, the Center is interested in hosting a public tour in late October (after Oct. 19).

d. **November – “History of our Military – Honoring Important Military Dates”**

- Michael Latham suggested promoting Lake Park Military Car Show
- Julian Douglas inquired about banners. Julie said the City has a Hometown Heroes banner program.
- Patti Pappas recommended doing something with kids and their love for HB

e. **December – “California History”**

- It was discussed that Chris Epting host another event at the Central Library Theater with the focus on California History/HB History and discuss Shell Beach, Pacific City, etc. It was also brought up that Councilman Andrew Gruel could say a few words as well.
- Julian Douglas brought up the Historical Society and Amory Hanson discussed the City's Historic Resources Board. Amory to give the Committee a list of where all the plaques are in the City. Possibly Mark Zambrano to do a lecture on California surfing history.
- Yolanda Campos suggested how California has played a role in the Reagan and Nixon libraries. Focus on Presidents that have a history in California (Hoover).
- Patti Pappas talked about the National Park Service and the seven national parks in California. Ellen Kuhnert brought up highlighting the City's 79 parks.

f. **Other Ideas**

- Delanie Bailey brought up the Patriot Academy and showing different videos.
- Find ways for kids/schools/library to get involved next year. It was suggested that Marisa Rodriguez from the library join an upcoming meeting.
- Michael Latham suggested laying a wreath at Patriot Point.

3. **2026 Semiquincentennial**

- Julian Douglas presented the following plan:

Opening Statement

With America's 250th anniversary coming up in 2026, Huntington Beach has a special opportunity to celebrate not only our nation's history, but also our own. We've always been a



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city proud of our patriotism, our veterans, and our community spirit, and the themes prepared here are designed to honor that legacy and bring people together in meaningful ways.

January – Foundations of Freedom

Core Theme: Connect the founding ideals (Constitution, Declaration of Independence, Inauguration) of the United States while tying them to Huntington Beach's own founding eras (Shell Beach 1889, Pacific City 1903, Huntington Beach 1909).

- Kite Festival: Families fly kites at the beach as a symbol of soaring freedom, tied to the Wright Brothers' first flight in 1903 (the same year the city was renamed Pacific City).
- Public Art/Murals: Commission local artists to create patriotic murals reflecting the Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and HB's own founding milestones (Shell Beach → Pacific City → Huntington Beach).
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: 'Foundations of Freedom' with imagery of the Constitution, quills, HB founding dates (1889, 1903, 1909).
- Also of historical relevance: 1889 President Benjamin Harrison was inaugurated and the Oklahoma Land Rush began. Although 1910, the Boy Scouts of America was created.

February – Remembering Iwo Jima

Core Theme: Center the month on Huntington Beach's ties to the Battle of Iwo Jima, especially Huntington Beach veterans, while incorporating Presidents Day.

- City Hall Ceremony: Dedication event with a plaque/and or wreath honoring HB's three Iwo Jima veterans – Joe Bush (shot down by a Kamikaze pilot), Bruce Bender (first Marine platoon to land and only one of three to survive in his unit), and William "Bill" White (passed away in 2022 at 106 years of age and served as an HB Police Officer). Could include family members, veteran groups, and Marines representatives.
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: Feature the iconic flag raising at Iwo Jima alongside portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, connecting Presidents Day.
- Flag Display: Large U.S. flag display downtown to tie the theme visually to remembrance.

March – Valor & Sacrifice

Core Theme: Honor Huntington Beach's Medal of Honor recipients and military K9s. K-9 Veterans Day (March 13), National Medal of Honor Day (March 25), and Vietnam Veterans Day (March 29).

- Medal of Honor Recognition: Public ceremony highlighting HB's two recipients: John Philip Baca (Vietnam) and Chris Carr (WWII). Share their stories and connect them to the parks named in their honor.
- K9 Demonstration for K9 Veterans Day: HB Police Department partners with military K9 veterans' organizations to showcase demonstrations at City Hall or Pier Plaza.
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: Display Medal of Honor imagery and silhouettes of K9s in service.

April – Civil War Heritage

Core Theme: Honor HB's Civil War legacy, including local veterans buried here, reenactments, and the historic GAR encampments at Tent City.

- Ceremony & Wreath Laying: Roll call of Civil War soldiers buried in HB cemeteries, with city leaders placing a wreath and plaque that can later be moved to the cemetery. John B. Bushard (Union's 2nd Minnesota Infantry/Hatch's Calvary Battalion) buried at Fairview Memorial Park. 14 other soldiers are buried at Good Shepherd Cemetery.



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- Civil War Reenactment Weekend: Expand the existing HB Civil War reenactments into a themed fair — with camps, exhibits, and living history presentations.
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: Showcase Civil War iconography (Union regiments, GAR symbols) alongside HB's Tent City legacy.

May – Military Appreciation Month

Core Theme: Recognize Armed Forces, veterans, and Memorial Day while connecting HB's strong patriotic traditions.

- Memorial Day Ceremony: Build on HB's established Pier Plaza event — continue the roll call, 21-gun salute, and wreath laying as the centerpiece.
- Armed Forces Tribute: Community showcase at Pier Plaza or City Hall with participation from local bases (e.g. JFTB Los Alamitos, Camp Pendleton) and HBPD/HBFD. City Hall illuminated in red, white, and blue for Armed Forces Day (May 16). Also, Victory in Europe Day (May 8).
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: Highlight each military branch with 'HB Thanks Our Armed Forces.'

June – Countdown to America250: Honoring Our Symbols & Sacrifice

Core Theme: Build excitement for July's Semi-quincentennial while honoring major June milestones, D-Day (June 6), Flag Day (June 14), and the U.S. Army's Birthday (June 14, 1775).

- D-Day Beach Landing Reenactment: A military unit performs a symbolic landing at Pier Plaza beach — visually powerful and community engaging.
- Flag Day Ceremony: Community flag-raising event at City Hall or Pier Plaza.
- Army Birthday Recognition: Small tie-in acknowledging the U.S. Army's founding.
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: Countdown-style banners – 'America250: One Month Away!' with patriotic imagery.

July – America250

Core Theme: Celebrate America's 250th Birthday with HB's renowned Fourth of July festivities.

- 4th of July Weekend: HB hosts one of the largest Independence Day celebrations west of the Mississippi, including parade, fireworks, and pier festivities — centerpiece of the month.
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: America250 logos, patriotic colors, HB pride imagery.

August – Honor & Valor: Honoring the Purple Heart & Coast Guard

Core Theme: Recognize HB's Purple Heart recipients and celebrate the U.S. Coast Guard's Birthday (August 4).

- Purple Heart Day (August 7) Ceremony: Honor recipients like Noel Sumner (in memoriam, passed 2020) and Bob Laizer (living), (who both rode in the 2018 Rose Parade). City leaders could unveil a plaque/wreath and/or hold recognition at City Hall.
- Coast Guard Birthday: Celebrate with HB's Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 6-2 at Huntington Harbour, tying in HB's maritime traditions.
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: Purple Heart medal imagery alongside Coast Guard insignia.

September – Patriotism & Remembrance

Core Theme: Honor the 25th anniversary of September 11th, recognize the U.S. Air Force Birthday (September 18), Constitution Day, while building anticipation for October's Pacific Air Show and honoring POW/MIA Recognition Day (September 18).



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- Patriot Day Ceremony: Major remembrance event at City Hall with flag display, reading of names, and possible parade (given 25th anniversary significance).
- Constitution Day (September 17) Recognition: Civic moment honoring the Constitution's importance.
- POW/MIA Ceremony: Spotlight HB residents who served as POWs or remain missing, if confirmed. Could include candlelight vigil or symbolic empty chair display.
- Air Show Tie-In: Teaser banners and visuals previewing October's Pacific Air Show.
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: 'HB Remembers 9/11 – 25 Years' plus POW/MIA symbols.

October – Wings of Freedom

Core Theme: Celebrate the Pacific Air Show (America250 edition), while honoring the U.S. Navy's legacy, and recognize First Responders.

- Pacific Air Show: The main draw — expanded for America250. Include military flyovers, demonstrations, and heritage planes.
- Navy Birthday (October 13) & Navy Day (October 27): Invite nearby installations (Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station, NB Coronado, NB Ventura County, NAS Lemoore) to participate with ceremonial units or displays.
- First Responders Day (October 28): City ceremony honoring police, fire, lifeguards, EMTs alongside military, highlighting community protectors.
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: Aviation imagery, Navy pride, and first responder visuals.

November – Honoring the Brave: Saluting Our Veterans

Core Theme: Elevate Veterans Day as a flagship city event and celebrate the U.S. Marine Corps Birthday. Showcase HB's deep commitment to honoring its veterans during America250.

- Veterans Day Ceremony: Expand Pier Plaza's traditional ceremony, perhaps with military band, veteran recognition awards, or parade.
- Marine Corps Birthday (November 10): Local acknowledgment (HB Marines community ties).
- Citywide Illumination: Red, white, and blue lights on landmarks for Veterans Week.
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: 'Saluting Our Veterans – HB Remembers.'

December – Season of Remembrance & Reflection

Core Theme: Close America250 with solemn remembrance and a forward-looking tradition. Pearl Harbor Day and Wreaths Across America.

- Pearl Harbor Day (December 7) Ceremony: Flag-lowering at City Hall, wreath at veterans' memorial, moment of silence for HB residents who served in WWII.
- Wreaths Across America: Partner with HB cemeteries to lay wreaths at veterans' graves, aligning HB with the national movement.
- America250 Time Capsule: HB seals a time capsule at City Hall to be opened in 2076 (tricentennial).
- Banners/Digital Spotlight: 'HB Remembers – From Pearl Harbor to America250.'

Adjournment – 7:04 PM

The next scheduled meeting is scheduled for September 30, 2025 at 5:30 PM.