

Port council endorses Honor Flight group's effort to build World War II monument on coal dock

The Port Washington Common Council on Tuesday gave concept approval to plans to build a replica of the Wisconsin pillar at the World War II memorial in Washington, D.C., on the coal dock.

"We couldn't imagine a better spot for this," Ald. Joe Dean, chairman of the Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, told the council.

The actual pillar at the World War II Memorial has become a gathering place for the veterans who travel with the Honor Flight to Washington, D.C., Dean said.

"The vets just flock to this pillar to have their picture taken," he said.

The replica pillar, which will be about 17 feet high and 4 feet wide, will be constructed on the northeast end of the coal dock.

The Stars and Stripes Honor Flight will sell engraved bricks that will be used to create a pathway around the monument to fund the project, Dean said.

A sign will also be erected at the site containing a replica of the stars found at the Washington, D.C., monument, Dean said. The star, which memorializes those killed in the war, would be placed so that the pillar shadows it at 11:11 a.m. on Veterans Day, Nov. 11, he said.

Dean said he believes the monument, which will be lit at night, will serve as an educational tool and draw people onto the coal dock.

"It truly is us paying homage to the Greatest Generation," Mayor Tom Mlada said. "It's certainly going to be something to draw people out there onto the coal dock."

"This is very cool," Ald. Dan Becker said. While praising the project, he questioned whether consideration had been given to placing the memorial at Veterans Memorial Park.

Ald. Jim Vollmar also questioned why the memorial was for World War II veterans instead of all veterans, particularly those from Port Washington.

"Has there been any thought to incorporating all the sons and daughters of Port Washington into this?" he asked. "I think it'll cast a shadow over those who served in Korea (and subsequent wars)."

Dean noted there are other veterans memorials in the city, including those in Veterans Memorial Park and at the Justice Center, and said organizers were struck by the setting at the coal dock, which lends itself to reflection.

Aldermen back plan for lakefront memorial

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He said organizers would look at ways to honor all veterans at the site, perhaps through signage.

Plans call for the memorial to be dedicated on Veterans Day, but to meet that deadline, crews need to begin putting in the foundation by Oct. 12, Dean said.

The memorial concept still needs approval from the Plan Commission before that work can begin.

The commission is expected to hear the proposal at 6 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11, and make a recommendation to the council. The council will meet immediately following the commission meeting to act on the recommendation.

In other action Tuesday, the council approved a change to the design of the bridge that will span the We Energies intake channel and link the north and south coal docks.

Originally, the mesh sides of the bridge were to be 4-1/2 feet, but We Energies wanted the span to be fully enclosed to prevent anyone from falling over the side and being swept under by the strong current, Public Works Director Rob Vanden Noven said.

A compromise was reached that calls for the mesh sides of the bridge to be 8 feet tall, Vanden Noven said.

The change will add \$8,400 to the cost of the bridge, half of which is expected to be paid by the Department of Natural Resources.