

MR. NOVAK: Second.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: All in favor?

(Chorus of ayes)

CHAIRMAN BROWN: All right. We then move to the report of the Commission of Fine Arts Budget Hearing. That is today's hearing.

MR. ATHERTON: Mr. Chairman, I included this on our agenda simply to provide for its inclusion in the record of the hearing, in the official minutes of the Commission. I have nothing else to report on that.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: There will be a court record of that which will be public information when it is published.

We will move now to the Submissions and Reviews. The first is submitted by the Department of Interior, National Park Service, on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, a question of site plan for location of the sculpture and flag staff additions to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Mr. Secretary, would you like to introduce this?

MR. ATHERTON: Mr. John Wheeler, the President of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, will be the first witness to appear.

MR. WHEELER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission.

The Memorial Fund presents today solutions for placing the statute, flag, and name locator at the Memorial site. This task that has been before the Commission of Fine Arts, the Secretary of the Interior, and the National Capital Planning Commission, has been a hard one. We have faith that the decisions in this process will be the best for the country. Vietnam veterans went into battle in allegiance to the institutions of our country. The same allegiance is reflected in our trust in the design approval process established by Congress and the President.

I have some good news to announce today. Since the memorial opening three months ago, I estimate that over one million visitors have been made to the site.

Over 350,000 people came during the days of the unit reunions, vigil of names, Entertainers' Salute, National Cathedral remembrance service, and the weeks following.

Over 300,000 came during Dedication Day on November 13.

Over 30,000 visited during Thanksgiving week end.

Over 300,000 have visited at other times in November, December, January, and February.

The number of daily visitors is growing. The present daily count about equals the count at the Lincoln or Jefferson Memorials, or the Washington Monument.

Volunteers are at work fulltime each day to guide people to names.

The Park Service manages the volunteer system, and more volunteers are needed.

These figures show that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has become a new national landmark.

The reports of the Park Service volunteers are important. For example, one volunteer has written that he has no doubt that 95 out of 100 visitors leave with a favorable impression of the design. The volunteers are witness to hundreds of personal encounters each day. They say that in the presence of the Memorial voices grow softer. Visitors touch the particular names that draw them to the site. From watching the faces of so many visitors, it seems that the Memorial is a profoundly moving and contemplative place.

These developments, Mr. Chairman, since the dedication of the Memorial show that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial honors and recognizes all of us who served in the Vietnam War, those who came back alive and those who did not. The Memorial Fund, with the approvals given by the Commission of Fine Arts, the Secretary of Interior, and the National Capital Planning Commission, is accomplishing the mission given to us by the Congress and the President.