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Vietnam Honor Roll battle shows no signs of subsiding

By Margo Sullivan
Staff writer

ATKINSON — Carol Grant is just \$409.24 short of the total needed to pay for the Vietnam Honor Roll.

But politically, she has come no closer to finding common ground with people who still oppose placing the tablets near the existing Vietnam Monument in front of Town Hall.

This week, the opposition grew as Selectmen Chairman Philip V. Consentino has now added his name to the list of people who will fight to stop the Honor Roll from going near the Vietnam Monument.

Consentino also told Grant not to contact him again.

Grant later said Consentino called her home the Thursday before the meeting and threatened to cut off contact with her if she criticized the way he handled the Vietnam Honor Roll.

Consentino could not be reached for comment.

The exchange started with his broad hint the location for the Honor Roll was far from being settled.

Consentino was replying to a question from Dale Childs, an East Road resident.

"So where is this monument going now, because it moves," Childs said. "I get confused."

"It's in committee," Consentino said. "We're going to try to figure out the best way to handle this."

Childs then said she would contribute one dollar — but only to save the town the expense of cutting a check for the \$1 which the townspeople voted to raise and appropriate for the

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This article from 200506



HOMES
NORTH

Jody Watts
Participating Agent

monument.

Grant, who was at the meeting, has stressed she still aims to place the Honor Roll in front of Town Hall. She and Childs quarrelled over the dollar. Grant had asked selectmen for the dollar as only a formality, she said earlier in the meeting.

Grant finally slipped the single bill in her pocket and said she would write it down as a donation.

"It's not a donation," Childs said. "I want it back."

Grant patted her pocket and said she wanted the four names of veterans who, Childs said, deserved to be included on the monument.

"Give the four names up," Grant said.

Childs said she never said anything about knowing of additional names that should be engraved on the Honor Roll.

Grant also protested when Consentino hinted the selectmen would decide where the Honor Roll would go.

"Phil, you keep doing this," she said. She said Consentino had capitulated to pressure from veterans Una Collins, of Academy Avenue, and David Weymouth, of Summit Avenue.

Grant dashed off a handwritten note to Consentino, complaining he was ignoring Town Meeting and the ballot vote, if he changed the location of the Honor Roll.

"Conduct your business with these two selectmen," he said, pointing at selectmen Fred Childs and Jack Sapia.

Childs, who is married to Dale Childs, quickly added, "She'll have to discuss it with Mr. Sapia."

Grant, who has organized the drive to buy two marble slabs engraved with names of the Vietnam-era servicemen from Atkinson, has maintained she has authority to go ahead with the project because the voters passed a ballot question March 8.

However, selectmen said the voters also passed a citizen petition to leave the Vietnam Monument as is.

Grant, a former selectman, sought an opinion from Don Borrer, of the state Department of Revenue Administration. Borrer said he believed Grant could honor the intent of both ballot questions as long as she did not locate the new slabs in the area inside the flagpoles by the existing monument.

Sumner Kalman, the town counsel, delivered a similar opinion, but Kalman also said he believed selectmen should seek an independent opinion if the controversy continued.

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