

**Town of Somers  
Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, February 18, 2026  
Town Hall Auditorium**

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 PM by Chair Sherri Marquis. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. Roll Call**

Roll Call was conducted by the Secretary.

- Members' Present: Sherri Marquis, Vito Riccio, David McCaffrey, Gary Prior, Joseph Kelley, Melville Thorne (Zoom), Robert Socha, Robert Thiesing (Zoom), Steven Ellis (Zoom), and Town Liaison Todd Rolland.

- Members' Regrets Received: William McGurk

- Members' Absent: Michael Murdza

**Ten members present; eight were voting members.** A quorum was declared present. Chair Sherri Marquis formally seated Gary Prior was seated as a voting member for this meeting in place of William McGurk.

**3. Urgent Items**

No urgent agenda items were raised. Agenda proceeded as published.

**4. Approval of Minutes (February 4, 2026)**

Chair Sherri Marquis noted minor typographical corrections and proposed one clarification regarding references to the 501(c)3:

"The referenced 501(c)3 is an **independent nonprofit organization**, and any future fundraising activities would occur at the discretion of that organization and consistent with all applicable approvals".

A Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Robert Socha. Motion seconded by Joseph Kelley. Motion passed unanimously.

**5. Administrative Updates – Communication Protocol**

Members reviewed draft **Committee Communication Protocols** and **Official Communication Guidelines**. Chair Sherri Marquis emphasized:

- Avoiding serial communications
- Submitting materials through the Chair for distribution
- Not representing the committee when speaking externally
- Protecting member contact information

Members will review the documents before the next meeting.

## 6. Old Business – Architectural Renditions Review

Two conceptual designs previously distributed by email were discussed:

1. **Rendition 1 – Tobacco Barn-inspired structure**
2. **Rendition 2 – Circular memorial with walking paths**

An informal electronic vote resulted in a **4-4 tie**. Member comments were read into the record, including:

- Supporters of the barn cited its uniqueness, historical relevance, and utility.
- Supporters of the memorial favored its flexibility and potential for phased development.

These comments were to inform the formal vote under New Business.

## 7. Chairman’s Report

Chair Sherri Marquis summarized the committee’s memorandum to the Board of Selectmen, including:

- Recommended site: **41 School Street**
- Preliminary cost considerations
- Maintenance expectations
- Funding concerns raised by the Board of Selectmen
- Legal considerations regarding restricted donations and potential refunds
- Hartford Foundation grant requirements and timelines (“remaining \$5,000 categorized as groundbreaking/construction”).

Town liaison Rolland emphasized the importance of clear donor disclaimers to avoid refund obligations.

## 8. Town Liaison Report – Todd Rolland

Todd Rolland provided a handout to the committee providing a detailed overview of the **project approval pathway**:

1. Committee must select a final design.
2. Architect must provide refined cost estimates, including soft costs (project management, insurance, permitting, RFP preparation).
3. Project must proceed through the **CIP process**.
  - Board of Selectmen (viability approval)
  - CIP Committee (funding strategy review)
  - Board of Finance (final approval)

He noted:

“As a town body, we cannot accept any money until that process is complete.”

The Board of Selectmen has approved the architect contract (Phase 1 and Phase 2 up to \$5000). A purchase order is in progress for phase 1 payment. Possible action by Committee to request a change to the HFPG grant to use some or all of the remaining \$5K (presently designated for construction/groundbreaking) for additional effort not within architectural scope, e.g. soft/hard cost estimating, surveys, etc.

## 9. New Business

### A. Funding Subcommittee Structure

Members reviewed draft roles and responsibilities. Key points included:

- Subcommittee is **advisory only, reporting its meetings and discussions to the full Ad Hoc Committee**
- It may research grants, donors, and strategies
- It **may not** solicit funds until town project approval or manage accounts, or act on behalf of the nonprofit
- Members with dual roles in the 501(c)3 must disclose and recuse when appropriate

A quoted section emphasized:

“Members who are also nonprofit board members or officers must disclose their dual roles... and abstain from decision making if a vote could be perceived as self-dealing.”

Vice Chairman and Funding Subcommittee Chair **Vito Riccio** reported that the group had not yet held its first formal meeting but planned to do so shortly to elect officer roles as Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

### B. Architectural Rendition Selection

Members discussed preferences and the possibility of blending features. Comments included:

- The barn structure’s historical relevance and utility
- The potential to incorporate service flags or other elements from Rendition 2
- The importance of planning for a “living document” that can scale with fundraising
- The potential for corporate sponsorships and in-kind donations

After discussion, Chair Sherri Marquis called for a formal vote. Committee voting members were polled individually. All eligible voting members selected Rendition 1 – Tobacco Barn concept.

A Motion was made by Robert Thiesing to select Rendition 1 – Tobacco Barn Concept as the preferred architectural design. Motion seconded by Robert Socha. Motion passed unanimously.

## 10. Public Comment

No members of the public were present. Public Comment was closed.

**11. Next Meeting**

The next meeting the Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee will be held:

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, at 3:00 PM

**13. Adjournment**

Motion to Adjourn was made by Gary Prior and seconded by Joseph Kelley. Meeting adjourned at **4:16 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

David McCaffrey



Secretary, Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee