

**Town of Somers
Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 13, 2026
Town Hall Auditorium**

1. Call to Order

Chair Sherri Marquis called the meeting to order at **3:07 PM**. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by Secretary David McCaffrey.

Members Present: Sherri Marquis (Chair), Vito Riccio (Vice Chair), David McCaffrey (Secretary), Joseph Kelly, Mel Thorne, Robert Socha, Bob Thiesing, Steven Ellis, Town Liaison Todd Rolland, and (via Zoom) Bill McGurk.

Members Excused: Gary Pryor

Members Absent: Michael Murdza

A quorum of **seven voting members** was confirmed.

3. Opportunity to Add Urgent Agenda Items

No urgent agenda items were requested.

4. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes (April 29, 2026)

A motion to approve the **April 29, 2026**, minutes as presented was made by **Bob Thiesing**, seconded by **Vito Riccio**, and passed unanimously.

5. Chairman's Opening Remarks – Fundraising Phase

Chair Marquis emphasized that the Committee is now entering a critical fundraising and public-engagement phase, following recent CIP approval. She highlighted the need for coordinated outreach, volunteer engagement, and consistent public messaging.

6. Funding Subcommittee Report – Vice Chair Vito Riccio

Vice Chair Riccio delivered a detailed presentation summarizing the **March 14, 2026, field trip** to regional veterans' memorials, including East Windsor and Southington. The presentation included:

- Comparative design observations
- Donor recognition examples

- Bench, paver, lighting, and landscaping concepts
- Buy-A-Brick program models
- Considerations for long-term durability and vandal-resistant materials

Sample engraved bricks were circulated. Discussion included pricing, engraving methods, and lessons learned from other towns' fundraising programs.

7. Memorial Day Veterans Coffeehouse – Volunteer Coordination

Chair Marquis outlined plans for the **May 30 Veterans Coffeehouse event**, including:

- Introduction of Committee members
- Informational tables for the Committee and the Legacy of Service nonprofit
- A photo backdrop and memory board honoring fallen veterans
- Volunteer assignments for greeting attendees, distributing flags, and staffing tables

A volunteer sign-up sheet was circulated.

8. Fundraising Progress Sign – Concept Discussion

The Committee reviewed a proposed public fundraising progress sign featuring:

- A large visual display with the park rendering
- A magnetic or sliding indicator showing fundraising progress
- QR codes linking to donation portals

Members discussed placement near School Street and the need to confirm legal and logistical requirements.

9. Town Liaison / CIP Update – Todd Rolland

Town Liaison Rolland provided guidance on CIP requirements, contracting, and project sequencing, including:

- All construction work must go through a formal RFP process with prevailing wage requirements
- Donated labor or materials must be identified before the RFP is drafted
- Volunteers may assist with landscaping but cannot perform construction work
- Phase 2 architectural documents will be needed before bidding
- Fundraising must significantly advance before the Town can proceed to bid

Todd Rolland also confirmed that donations may be accepted either through the Town (restricted fund line) or through the nonprofit once its banking and compliance structures are finalized.

10. Wartime Plaque Eligibility Criteria Package

Chair Marquis distributed a draft eligibility criteria package for future wartime plaques and veteran name recognition. Members will review the draft and provide feedback at a future meeting.

11. Legacy Park Logo, Branding Items, and Entrance Sign Concept

Members reviewed proposed logo and branding options for the park entrance and Committee apparel. Discussion included uniformity for public events and alignment with the Legacy of Service nonprofit.

12. Communications – Sent and Received

Received:

- Correspondence from Committeeman Bill McGurk

Sent:

- Engagement letter to G&G Architects (Phase 2A)
- Thank-you letters to:
 - Somers Board of Selectmen
 - Somers Finance Department
 - Greater Hartford Gives
 - CIP Committee
 - Architects and Committee Members (available upon request)

13. Discussion – Potential Veterans Memorial Field Trips

Members discussed additional potential field trips to regional memorials, including Thompsonville (Enfield), Ludlow, MA, and Granby, MA.

14. Public Comment

Doug Stebbins, USMC veteran, addressed the Committee regarding the Roy Newsom Memorial at Somers High School. He shared that classmates are willing to donate funds to create a replica memorial stone for placement at the new park. The Committee expressed support and requested cost information and design concepts.

15. Summary of Action Items

Key follow-ups include:

- Review of eligibility criteria and branding options
- Preparation for the May 30 Coffeehouse event
- Continued coordination with architects on Phase 2A
- Development of fundraising materials
- Exploration of progress sign construction and placement

16. Next Meeting

Wednesday, May 27, 2026 – 3:00 PM Somers Town Hall Auditorium

17. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Robert Socha, seconded by Bob Thiesing, and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

David McCaffrey 
Secretary, Veterans Memorial Park Ad-Hoc Committee

**Town of Somers
Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee
2026-2027 Meeting Calendar**

Location: Somers Town Hall Auditorium

Time: 3:00 PM

2026 Meetings

- **May 27, 2026**
- **June 10, 2026**
- **June 24, 2026**
- **July 8, 2026**
- **July 22, 2026**
- **August 5, 2026**
- **August 19, 2026**
- **September 2, 2026**
- **September 16, 2026**
- **September 30, 2026**
- **October 14, 2026**
- **October 28, 2026**
- **December 9, 2026**

2027 Meetings

- **January 6, 2027**
- **January 20, 2027**