

**Town of Somers
Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 29, 2026
Town Hall Auditorium**

1. Call to Order

Chair Sherri Marquis called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM. 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, Mel Thorne, Bob Thiesing, Steven Ellis, William McGurk (Zoom), and Town Liaison Todd Rolland.
- Members' Absent: Michael Murdza
- Members' Excused: Robert Socha.
- Others Present: David Morgan, SMSgt & Mrs. Terry L. Glusko, Sr., USAF(Ret)

Chair Sherri Marquis formally seated Gary Prior as a voting member for this meeting in place of Robert Socha. With eight voting members present, a quorum was confirmed.

3. Opportunity to Add Urgent Agenda Items

No urgent items were requested or added at this time.

4. Approval of Minutes (April 1, 2026)

The Chair noted that the April 1 minutes were distributed and posted in advance. A Motion was made by Mel Thorne and seconded by Gary Prior to approve the April 1, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Transition - Briefing

Town Liaison Todd Rolland provided a detailed briefing on the CIP process and the committee's next steps.

Key points:

- The project must be approved through the CIP process before any fundraising can begin.
- Once approved, the Town can create a restricted fund line for donations related to the Park.
- Donations may be accepted either through the Town or through the nonprofit, depending on structure.
- No additional committee meeting is required between the May 14 Board of Selectmen meeting and the start of fundraising, provided the project is approved

Todd also confirmed that funds must clearly be designated for the Veterans Memorial Park to avoid misallocation.

6. Guest Presentation – SMSgt Terry L. Glusko, Sr.

The committee welcomed Senior Master Sergeant (Ret.) Terry L. Glusko, Sr., Chairman of the East Longmeadow Veterans Memorial Committee.

He delivered an extensive presentation on:

- The eight-year development of the East Longmeadow memorial
- Fundraising strategies (dinners, dances, merchandise, grants, legislative support)
- The importance of visibility, community engagement, and strong architectural partners
- Lessons learned regarding the permitting, state fundraising requirements, and project phasing
- Cost escalation and long-term planning

His presentation included detailed cost examples, monument specifications, and insights into grant success, including over \$200,000 in legislative appropriations.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the guidance and practical advice.

7. Park Naming Process

The committee conducted the two-step naming process as outlined in the pre-meeting packet.

Step 1: Members submitted written proposals. Step 2: Secretary compiled the final ballot; members cast final votes.

Final Vote Results:

- Somers Veterans and Families Legacy Park – 4 votes
- All other options – 1 vote each

Adopted Name – Somers Veterans and Families Legacy Park

A motion to adopt the winning name was made by Bob Thiesing and seconded by Bill McGurk. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Funding Subcommittee Update

Vice Chair Vito Riccio and members of the Funding Subcommittee reported:

- Ongoing research into grants, partnerships, and stakeholder engagement
- Development of fundraising strategies pending CIP approval
- Exploration of a professional fundraising support service that offers templates, QR-code-based donation tools, volunteer coordination, and donor tracking.

Formal presentation deferred to May 13, 2026.

9. Funding Subcommittee Report

Deferred to May 13, 2026.

10. New Business

10.a. Nomination of New Alternate Member

Member David Morgan attended as a guest and expressed interest in serving as an alternate.

- David's background:
 - Experience operating cemeteries, including design and maintenance
 - Extensive veterans-related service
 - Owned and operated large cemeteries in Maine and Massachusetts
 - Past CEO of Johnson Memorial Hospital

Motion made by Chair Sherri Marquis to informally nominate David Morgan to fill the seat of Michael Murdza, pending formal acceptance of Murdza's resignation and appointment by the Board of Selectmen. Motion seconded by Bob Thiesing. Motion passed unanimously.

10.b. Meeting Schedule Adjustment

The committee identified a scheduling inconsistency in the previously published calendar. Meetings will continue on a bi-weekly schedule from this date forward. A revised calendar will be published.

10.c. Veteran's Event – May 30

Chair Sherri Marquis informed the committee that a Veterans and Families event will be held on May 30th at the Veterans Coffeehouse hosted by the Somers Department of Veterans Affairs. Informational materials will be distributed to committee members.

11. Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

12. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee will be held **Wednesday, May 13, 2026, at 3:00 PM**, in the Somers Town Hall Auditorium.

14. Closing Remarks

Chair Marquis thanked members, guests, and presenters for their contributions.

15. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn was made by Chair Marquis and seconded by Bob Thiesing. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at **4:30 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,

David McCaffrey 
Secretary, Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee