SOMERS VETERANS & FAMILIES LEGACY PARK
AD HOC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, October 28, 2026 - 3:00 PM
Somers Town Hall Auditorium

Meeting Type	Regular Meeting
Presiding Officer	Chair Sherri Marquis
Recording Secretary	David McCaffrey

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Sherri Marquis called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM and led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call and Quorum

Secretary David McCaffrey conducted roll call. Voting members present were Chair Sherri Marquis, Vice-Chair Vito Riccio, Joe Kelley, Mel Thorne, Bob Socha, Robert Thiesing, Steve Ellis, and Bill McGurk. Non-voting members present included Secretary David McCaffrey, Gary Prior, and Town Liaison Todd Rolland. David Morgan was absent. Eight voting members were present, and a quorum was confirmed.

3. Approval of September 30, 2026 Minutes

Chair Marquis confirmed that the draft minutes had been corrected to state that the Committee-Foundation Liaison position description had not been approved at the prior meeting and that the prior discussion concerned a position description rather than an appointment.

Motion: Robert Thiesing moved to approve the September 30, 2026 minutes as corrected. Gary Prior seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Public Comment

Chair Marquis welcomed community member Lori Bourgoin, who attended to learn more about the proposed Committee-Foundation Liaison position. Ms. Bourgoin stated that her principal consideration was the anticipated time commitment and noted her interest in supporting veterans. No appointment was made.

5. Communications and Recognition

Chair Marquis reviewed the member read-ahead materials and correspondence concerning the cancellation of the October 14 meeting. Members agreed that meeting reminders may be sent by text when practicable and that members should reply promptly regarding attendance so quorum concerns can be identified in advance.

The Committee reviewed progress on the Community Founders program. Chair Marquis reported that the number of founders had increased to twelve and that DG Graphics had assisted with the Founder badges and donated ten badges. Members were invited to participate in a future Founder photo opportunity and website photography.

Chair Marquis also reported continued outreach to Home Depot regarding possible in-kind landscaping support. She noted that Lowe's had donated paint for improvements to the veterans meeting room and that volunteer painting assistance had been arranged.

6. Updated POA&M and Project/Foundation Milestones

Chair Marquis presented the updated Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M), including seven Priority 1 items, and asked members to review unassigned tasks and volunteer only for work they could reasonably complete.

The Committee was advised that the Foundation submitted IRS Form 1023 on October 15, 2026. Applications or registrations involving Benevity and Blackbaud were underway to support future corporate matching opportunities. Members were reminded that the Foundation's federal tax-exempt status remained pending and that fundraising representations must accurately disclose that status.

Secretary McCaffrey reported that the Foundation treasurer had resigned to focus on family responsibilities. Foundation officers had met with a prospective replacement, and Mel Thorne had agreed to provide interim financial support. Donations continued to be deposited, but an exact account balance was deferred to the Foundation meeting after receipt of a current bank statement.

Chair Marquis reviewed draft charitable-status legends and a draft slim donor starter kit consisting of a cover sheet, donor letter, project overview, and donor follow-up form. The materials remained working drafts subject to approval by the Foundation Board. Committee members were directed not to begin independent fundraising or distribute unapproved materials.

7. Committee-Foundation Liaison Position

Chair Marquis explained that the liaison would improve two-way communication between the municipal Committee and the independent Foundation. Town Liaison Todd Rolland advised that a community volunteer may serve in a non-voting liaison capacity; a voting member would require formal appointment to the Committee.

Motion: Chair Marquis moved to approve the revised Committee-Foundation Liaison position description dated October 28, 2026, with the understanding that a non-member community volunteer may serve in the position and that the motion did not appoint any individual. Bill McGurk seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. Committee Operating Model and Member Capacity

Chair Marquis distributed a Member Capacity and Task Interest Sheet and asked members to return it by November 3, 2026. The purpose is to match assignments with members' realistic availability without requesting personal explanations. Chair Marquis proposed circulating concise written updates before meetings, using meeting time for decisions and obstacles, and assigning each action item to an identified owner who has accepted responsibility. Unassigned work will be marked "Owner Needed - Deferred."

9. Town Funding Gate and Project Readiness

Town Liaison Todd Rolland clarified that the full estimated project amount does not need to be raised before every project step may proceed. However, the money needed for a particular contract or phase must be available before the Town will execute that commitment. Professional design, engineering, cost-estimating, permitting, and construction work will occur in stages.

Mr. Rolland explained that future Town actions may include review by the Special Projects Committee, Board of Selectmen, Capital Improvement Program process, and Planning and Zoning Commission under the applicable municipal-property referral process. Because the relevant boards generally meet monthly, approvals may require several months even when the process is straightforward.

The Committee discussed whether the Foundation should contract directly for professional services or raise funds and transfer them to the Town. Mr. Rolland stated that the Foundation could potentially donate professional work product, but additional clarification would be needed for a broader Foundation-managed construction approach. Members generally recognized that transferring funds to the Town would provide a cleaner accounting path for the Foundation and preserve Town oversight. No procurement or contracting authorization was granted.

Discussion also emphasized that contributions for completion of the park may support the complete project, including design, engineering, permits, site work, construction, utilities, and landscaping, unless a donor

specifically restricts a gift. Members agreed that fundraising readiness, consistent messaging, and adequate financial controls must precede a larger outreach campaign.

10. 2027 Regular Meeting Schedule

The Committee considered the proposed 2027 schedule for regular meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at 3:00 PM, with no meetings in July or August, subject to room confirmation and official filing requirements.

Motion: Bob Socha moved to approve the proposed 2027 regular meeting schedule. The motion was seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

> **Approved dates:** January 20; February 17; March 17; April 21; May 19; June 16; September 15; October 20; November 17; and December 15, 2027. No meetings are scheduled for July or August.

11. Old Business, New Business, and Notices

Members were asked to review the Legacy Park website for accuracy and to participate, when available, in planned photography. Chair Marquis distributed information concerning the combined Somers middle and high school Veterans Day program and encouraged veterans to submit information for the Wall of Honor and attend the event.

The next regular Committee meeting was announced for Wednesday, December 9, 2026, at 3:00 PM in the Somers Town Hall Auditorium. No regular meeting will be held in November because of Veterans Day and Thanksgiving scheduling conflicts.

12. Adjournment

Motion: Bill McGurk moved to adjourn, and Mel Thorne seconded. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

David McCaffrey
Secretary
Somers Veterans and Families Legacy Park Ad Hoc Committee