

****Somers Veterans & Families Legacy Park**

Ad-Hoc Committee Regular Meeting Minutes** September 30, 2026 – 3:00 PM Somers Town Hall Auditorium

1. Call to Order

Chair **Sherri Marquis** called the meeting to order at 1500 hours and led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Approval of Minutes – September 16, 2026

Chair Marquis reviewed several factual and clerical corrections to the draft minutes, including corrected spellings, clarification that the Committee approved the June 11 minutes rather than August 5, correction of references to the Somers Department of Veterans Affairs, and clarification that no engineering contract was approved at the prior meeting. She also noted that IRS Form 1023 has not yet been submitted, though the Connecticut Charitable Solicitation Certificate has been received.

Secretary McCaffrey confirmed all corrections had been incorporated. Chair Marquis moved to approve the September 16 minutes as corrected, and **Bill McGurk** seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Communications & Correspondence

Chair Marquis reported continued community support for the “Coming Soon” sign and landscaping, mentoring correspondence received from **Bill McGurk**, and follow-up outreach to Enfield Home Depot regarding materials in-kind. She also noted the need to verify email distribution lists after a missed photo-shoot notification.

The Committee recognized the first ten Community Founders, including William McGurk, Robert & Mary Thiesing, David McCaffrey, the Marquis Family, Stephen Marquis, Sherri Marquis, Somers Public Works, Guertin & Guertin Architects, Grower Direct, and DG Graphics. DG Graphics is considering donating the first ten laminated Founder badges.

5. Project Status Update

Chair Marquis distributed the updated Plan of Action & Milestones (POA&M) and organizational chart outlining the Town authority structure, Committee responsibilities, supporting roles, and communication expectations. Members were asked to review the materials and identify areas where they can assist.

6. Engineering & Planning Update

Town Liaison **Todd Rolland** provided an update on engineering and planning. He confirmed that the previously discussed \$26,000 engineering proposal is consistent with typical project costs and reiterated that no RFQ or engineering action should occur until fundraising reaches sufficient levels. Remaining Hartford Foundation planning funds (~\$2,300) are insufficient for engineering work, and Todd recommended allowing the grant to expire naturally and reapplying later when construction funding is viable. The Committee concurred.

7. Fundraising & Foundation Coordination

Chair Marquis reviewed the September 16 action dissolving the Committee's fundraising subcommittee and reaffirmed that **Legacy of Service: Somers Veterans Foundation** is the sole authorized fundraising entity. Committee members may assist only as authorized volunteers, and all messaging must remain consistent, particularly regarding the Foundation's non-yet-approved 501(c)(3) status.

Secretary McCaffrey reported significant fundraising news: a local organization has expressed willingness to donate a sizable sum, with potential matching funds. The donation will not be accepted until Form 1023 is submitted for 501(c)3 and pending status is achieved.

8. Committee–Foundation Liaison Position

Chair Marquis distributed a draft liaison job description for review. After brief discussion, she moved to table the approval of the job description for the liaison position until the next meeting, and **Bill McGurk seconded**. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Compliance Status – IRS Form 1023

Secretary McCaffrey reported that Form 1023 preparation is nearly complete, with submission expected no later than Sunday (targeting Friday evening). Once submitted, the Foundation may identify itself as "501(c)(3) – Pending." Connecticut Public Charity Registration is already approved.

10. Fundraising Materials & Outreach Package

Chair Marquis described ongoing development of the fundraising brochure, information packet, volunteer authorization forms, talking points, and donor presentation materials. Members will review these items once Form 1023 is submitted to avoid duplicative revisions. Volunteers are needed to assist with assembly and quality review.

11. Website & Communications Update

Chair Marquis presented updates to the Legacy Park website, including a new landing page, photo integration, sponsorship listings, and donation links. Members were asked to review the site weekly for accuracy and functionality. The site address is www.LS-SVF.org.

12. Site Maintenance – “Coming Soon” Sign

Public Works continues watering and maintenance. No immediate issues were reported, though the Committee noted potential vulnerability to vandalism due to roadside visibility.

13. Community Founder Badge & Photo Project

Founder badges are in production. A volunteer is needed to update the sign from “0” to “10” and coordinate a photo session with the Community Founders. Photos from the September 11 shoot are pending due to photographer illness.

14. Old Business

No outstanding items were raised.

15. New Business

The Committee discussed reducing meeting frequency beginning January 2027. Chair Marquis moved that the Committee adopt monthly meetings starting in January, and **Mel Thorne seconded**. The motion carried unanimously.

The Committee also discussed repositioning Public Comment earlier in future agendas. Chair Marquis moved to place Public Comment immediately after approval of minutes, and **Joe Kelley seconded**. The motion carried unanimously.

16. Proposed 2027 Meeting Schedule

Town Liaison **Todd Rolland** submitted a recommended meeting schedule for calendar year 2027, consisting of monthly meetings on the **third Wednesday at 3:00 PM**, with no meetings scheduled for July or August. Chair Marquis noted that only three meetings remain in 2026—**October 14, October 28, and December 9**—and that the Committee will vote on the proposed 2027 schedule at the next regular meeting.

17. Veterans Notices & Community Events

Chair Marquis provided updates on upcoming veterans events, including the Veterans Coffee House, East Longmeadow Veterans Day Dinner, Somers Congregational Church Veterans Holiday Breakfast, Somers High School Veterans Day Breakfast, Wreaths Across America, and the State/UConn Veterans Property Tax Exemption Study.

18. Next Meeting

The next regular meeting is scheduled for **October 14, 2026, at 3:00 PM** in the Somers Town Hall Auditorium.

19. Adjournment

Chair Marquis entertained a motion to adjourn. **Bill McGurk moved to adjourn**, and **Vito Riccio seconded**. The motion was carried unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at **4:38 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,



David McCaffrey

Secretary

Somers Veterans and Families Legacy Park Ad Hoc Committee

Proposed 2027 Meeting Schedule

Submitted by Town Liaison Todd Rolland (To be voted on at the next regular meeting)

**Somers Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee 2027 Regular Meeting Schedule Third
Wednesday of each month – 3:00 PM Somers Town Hall Auditorium**

- January 20
- February 17
- March 17
- April 21
- May 19
- June 16
- **July – No Meeting**
- **August – No Meeting**
- September 15
- October 20
- November 17
- December 15