

**Town of Somers
Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 1, 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, David McCaffrey, Gary Prior, Joseph Kelley, Mel Thorne, Bob Socha, Bob Thiesing, William McGurk (Zoom), and Town Liaison Todd Rolland.

- Members' Absent: Michael Murdza

- Members' Excused: Vito Riccio, Steven Ellis

- Others Present: None

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

3. Opportunity to Add Urgent Agenda Items

No urgent items were requested or added.

4. Approval of Minutes (March 18, 2026)

The Chair noted that the March 18 minutes were distributed and posted in advance. A Motion was made by Bob Socha and seconded by Gary Prior to approve the March 18, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Administrative Updates – Chair

Chair Marquis reviewed updates related to project planning, communications, and process clarification. She noted:

- The request submitted to the **Hartford Foundation** to use the remaining \$5,000 in grant funds (originally \$10,000) **for design-estimation purposes was denied.**
 - The Foundation reaffirmed that expenditures must align with **tangible site-related improvements**, as originally approved for the construction phase.
- The committee previously attempted to secure **CIP funding** for planning tasks, but that approach was not approved.
- The Foundation remains supportive of the project's direction and progress.

Committee members received a multi-page packet explaining the funding structure, design-to-fundraising sequence, and nonprofit coordination.

6. Correspondence and Communications

- The Chair confirmed receipt of the Foundation's written response regarding the funding-scope change.
- Todd Rolland provided context regarding the planning limitations and available pathways for continued progress.

7. Project Updates

7.a. Architectural Concept Development – Final Concept (Rendition Three)

Chair Marquis confirmed that the architect has:

- Completed **Phase 1: Conceptual Design**, incorporating committee feedback.
- Provided the finalized concept (Rendition Three), including updated drawings and visualizations.
- Suppressed major cost items (such as the fountain) per committee guidance.
- Aligned the concept with floodplain considerations and site-utility information.

All committee members received printed plans, and a digital version will be provided by the Secretary to members following the meeting.

Committee Review & Discussion

Members reviewed the design packet, including the visual diagrams prepared to reflect previously agreed upon modifications.

Key points from member comments included:

- Appreciation for the updates and incorporation of committee vision.
- Confirmation that the conceptual design is understood as a **living document**, subject to change during estimate and CIP stages.
- Clarification that concerns regarding naming conventions (Veterans Memorial Park & Healing Garden) can be addressed at the Board of Selectmen (BoS) level during title-related approvals.

No objections were raised to the finalized concept package.

7.b. Project Roadmap & CIP Transition

Chair Marquis and Town Liaison Rolland jointly explained:

- The project has **completed the design phase** and is now entering **CIP consideration**, which is the next required step for any capital project in Somers.
- The **preliminary construction estimate** is approximately **\$400,000**, subject to change as materials and phasing are refined.
- The CIP submission will:
 - Establish formal project recognition

- Permit future budget considerations
- Provide a placeholder for fundraising alignment
- Support Town acknowledgement of the design phase completion
- Todd Rolland will submit the **CIP request** for the April 16 BoS meeting at **6:00 PM**.
- The architect submitted an **invoice of \$1,000** for Rendition Three; the Chair noted this reflects substantial donated effort beyond billed time.

Committee members expressed appreciation for clarification of the process.

8. Funding Update

- Approximately **\$2,400** remains in the planning funds; however, due to grant restrictions, these funds **cannot be used for additional design work** beyond what has already been completed.
- The previously discussed **\$5,000 construction phase allocation** remains restricted for site work only; if not extendable, it may need to be returned following expiration.
- Further progress is now contingent on CIP review and Town direction.

9. Funding Subcommittee Report

Vice Chair Riccio was unable to attend, but provided:

- A **full field trip report** summarizing site visits on March 14 to:
 - Southington Veterans Memorial
 - East Windsor Veterans Memorial
 - The Barn Yard / Great Country Timber Frames (regarding pavilion options)

The Chair distributed the report to committee members.

Discussion items such as sponsorship tiers, donor recognition, and buy-a-brick program planning were **deferred** until after the CIP process, when they will align properly with town approvals and schedule.

10. New Business

10.a. Acceptance of Conceptual Design & Preliminary Estimate

Motion made by Chair Marquis to accept the finalized conceptual design (Rendition Three) and the preliminary construction estimate of approximately **\$400,000**. Motion seconded by Bob Thiesing. Discussion. Clarification offered regarding estimate range (\$400k-\$500k) as details evolve. Motion passed unanimously.

10.b. Recommendation to Advance Project to the Board of Selectmen

Motion made by Chair Marquis to recommend that the Board of Selectmen acknowledge the conceptual design and preliminary estimate and consider advancing the project into the **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)** process. Motion seconded by Bob Thiesing. Motion passed unanimously.

11. Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

12. Summary of Committee Actions

The Committee:

1. Acknowledged completion of **Phase 1 Conceptual Design**.
2. Accepted the **preliminary project estimate**.
3. Supported advancement of the project into the **CIP review process**.
4. Reviewed funding limitations and clarified next-step responsibilities.
5. Received and filed the March 14 field trip report.

13. Next Meeting

Motion made by Bob Socha and seconded by Gary Prior to **cancel the previously scheduled April 15, 2026, meeting**, as no active agenda items will require action before the CIP review. Discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

The next meeting of the Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee will be held **Wednesday, April 29, 2026, at 3:00 PM**, in the Somers Town Hall Auditorium. (Subject to change if a Special Meeting is required based on CIP timing.)

14. Closing Remarks

Chair Marquis thanked the committee for their diligence, acknowledged the complexity of transitioning to the capital project phase, and wished all a Happy Easter holiday.

15. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn was made by Chair Marquis and seconded by Bill McGurk. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at **3:37 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,

David McCaffrey 
Secretary, Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee