

**Town of Somers
Veterans and Families Legacy Park Ad-Hoc Committee
Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 10, 2026
Town Hall Auditorium**

1. Call to Order

Chair **Sherri A. Marquis** called the meeting to order at **3:10 PM**. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Roll Call

Voting Members Present

- **Sherri A. Marquis, Chair**
- **Vito A. Riccio, Vice-Chair**
- **Joseph Kelley**
- **Melville T. Thorne**
- **Robert Socha**
- **Robert A. Thiesing**
- **Steven J. Ellis**
- **William J. McGurk**

Non-Voting Members Present

- **David P. McCaffrey**
- **Gary Prior**
- **Todd Rolland**

Members Absent

- **David Morgan**

Guests

- **Joan Rivard, Chair, Somers Beautification Committee**

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

3. Approval of Minutes — May 27, 2026

Motion: To approve the minutes as submitted. **Made by:** Robert Socha **Seconded by:** Joseph Kelley **Vote:** Passed unanimously.

4. Chair Remarks

Chair Marquis stated that the Committee is now in the **execution phase** of the **Legacy Park initiative**. She emphasized:

- Clear assignments
- Consistent follow-through
- Active participation
- Structured, time-managed meetings focused on actionable items

5. Communications & Correspondence

a. Four Town Fair Exhibit Booth Request

A request was submitted to the Fair Secretary for an informational booth for **September 17–20, 2026**. A volunteer sign-up sheet circulated.

b. Navy Federal Credit Union — Corporate Sponsorship

An inquiry was sent to identify the correct sponsorship contact. Navy Federal responded with instructions. Members received a draft **Executive Summary and Sponsorship Proposal** for review.

c. Zach Bryan Collaboration Proposal

A draft proposal was prepared seeking potential partnership with Navy veteran and national recording artist **Zach Bryan** for a benefit concert.

Discussion included:

- Possible venues: Four Town Fairgrounds, Somers Town Green, Stafford Speedway
- Required logistics: production company, public safety staffing, ticketing, crowd management
- Multi-year planning horizon
- Potential for significant fundraising impact

d. DG Graphics — Sign Materials Inquiry

A query was sent regarding metal options for the redesigned Town announcement sign. Updated renderings were shared with architects.

e. Architects — Pricing Documents, Schedule, and Insurance

Architects reported:

“We’re expecting the RFP from our engineers this week... Most of the work remaining on the pricing documents is fine-tuning the structural design.” “Bob Socha was nice enough to get us in touch with Ed Giza... Our plan is to form our committee this summer and then purchase P&O insurance once the Town Building Committee approves Phase 2 construction documents.”

Chair Marquis and the Committee thanked **Robert Socha** for facilitating the insurance solution.

6. Guest Presentation — Joan Rivard, Somers Beautification Committee

Ms. Rivard provided guidance on landscaping considerations:

- The Beautification Committee can provide **information**, not labor.
- Ground cover choices must align with final site design.
- Maintenance must be incorporated into all planning decisions.
- Certain plants (e.g., lily-of-the-valley, Shasta daisies) are available but may be invasive.

She noted that the Committee's involvement is **premature** until final site plans are available. Chair Marquis will provide the full site rendering for her review.

7. Extended Discussion & Committee Reports

7a. Fundraising Subcommittee Report

Vice-Chair **Vito Riccio**, Chair of the Fundraising Subcommittee, reported on the **June 5 kickoff meeting**:

- Initial review of crowdfunding and donation portals.
- Identification of major Somers donors (e.g., Douglas Stebbins, Antonacci family).
- Need for accurate mailing addresses for VFW and American Legion posts statewide.
- American Legion CT post addresses can be provided by Member McCaffrey.
- VFW headquarters is located at CT DVA in Rocky Hill; outreach may be possible through department leadership.
- Riccio noted he previously contacted the VFW Department Secretary in February; follow-up is ongoing.

7b. Community Events & Outreach

Four Town Fair

- Committee discussed logistics for a booth at the **September 17–20** fair.
- Volunteer sign-up sheet circulated.
- Discussion included:
 - Use of the **12×20 SVF event tent**
 - Possible loan of a structure from Barnyard
 - Need to confirm booth size and placement once the Fair Secretary responds

Big E – Connecticut Building

- Committee explored securing space in the CT Building at the Big E.
- CT Building is privately operated under contract; State of Connecticut is not directly involved.
- Recommendation: Contact Big E administration first to identify the correct liaison.

7c. Somers Community Fund Grant

Chair Marquis briefed the Committee:

- 2026 grant maximum: **\$8,000**
- Application deadline: **July 31, 2026**
- Entire process is now online
- SVF (as a 501(c)(3)) is eligible to apply independently
- Municipal CIP route is not applicable for this project
- Committee agreed the grant should be pursued; matter will be brought to the SVF Board

7d. Acknowledgment of Member Contributions

- **William McGurk** submitted a detailed fundraising strategy document; Committee expressed appreciation.
- **Todd Rolland** was thanked for refurbishing the Town announcement sign.

7e. Signage Strategy Discussion

Town Hall Announcement Sign

- Use of DG Graphics to print aluminum composite panels.
- Incorporation of QR codes linking to the SVF website.
- Messaging should remain concise (“less is more”).

Route 190 Roadside Sign

- Strong support for a highly visible sign on Route 190.
- Recommendations:
 - Keep sign elevated to reduce wind load
 - Use simple message: **“Somers Veterans Park →”**
 - Consider a fundraising “thermometer” graphic

Website & Social Media Integration

Chair Marquis noted:

- SVF’s Facebook page has growing reach
- QR-linked content can be updated continuously
- Future enhancements may include video, graphics, and interactive content

7f. Donation Tracking & Acknowledgment

Committee discussed:

- Logging all donors (Town of Somers, individuals, organizations)
- Maintaining a database for future acknowledgments

- Sending formal thank-you letters at project completion
- Recognizing that some donors prefer one-time contributions

7g. Additional Operational Notes

- Discussion of kiosk concepts for future Park installations
- Consideration of long-term maintenance responsibilities
- Recognition that future service eras will require ongoing updates to Park recognition systems

7h. Brochure Development & Coordination with SVF

- A new trifold brochure will be drafted for the Four Town Fair.
- Members with design experience were invited to assist Chair Marquis.
- Coordination with the **Legacy of Service: Somers Veterans Foundation** continues, including sponsorship outreach and donor engagement.

8. Motion to Delay Next Meeting Until August

Motion: To delay the next regular meeting until **August 5, 2026**. **Made by:** Robert Socha **Seconded by:** Joseph Kelley **Vote:** Passed unanimously.

9. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting. **Made by:** Robert A. Thiesing **Seconded by:** William J. McGurk **Vote:** Passed unanimously.

Adjourned at: 4:54 PM

Respectfully submitted,

David McCaffrey 
Secretary, Veterans Memorial Park Ad-Hoc Committee