

**Town of Somers
Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 18, 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, William McGurk (Zoom), Gary Prior, Joseph Kelley, Mel Thorne, Bob Socha, Bob Thiesing (Zoom), Steven Ellis, and Town Liaison Todd Rolland.

- Members' Absent: Michael Murdza

- Members' Excused: None

- Others Present: Joshua Guertin, Architect

Chair Sherri Marquis formally seated Gary Prior as a voting member for this meeting in place of William McGurk. With eight voting members present, a quorum was confirmed. Two Zoom participants were present. Chair further noted that March is National Women's History Month and reminded us to always validate and honor the women who have served across every branch of our Armed Forces.

She also noted the upcoming observance of National Vietnam War Veterans Day on March 29. The Chair reaffirmed appreciation for active-duty personnel currently serving worldwide.

3. Opportunity to Add Urgent Agenda Items

No additions or comments were offered.

4. Approval of Minutes (March 4, 2026)

A Motion was made by Chair Marquis and seconded by Steve Ellis to approve the March 4, 2026, meeting minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously with abstentions from members absent on March 4, 2026.

5. Announcement – Chair's Resignation

Chair Marquis stated that she had submitted her resignation at the March 4 meeting but unilaterally withdrew her resignation and said that she would continue serving in the role of Chair. The Secretary was instructed to enter this statement into the official record.

6. Ratification of March 4 Communications

Chair Marquis summarized correspondence issued following the March 4 meeting:

- Hartford Foundation for Public Giving – Request to modify the use of the remaining \$5,000 of the previously awarded \$10,000 grant (only \$5,000 approved to date).
- Architect (G&G Architects) – Direction to prepare Rendition 3 incorporating design modifications as previous discussed, stressing fees NTE approved grant funds currently earmarked for planning purposes.

These communications were sent on March 10, with acknowledgment received from the Greater Hartford Gives Foundation; the decision remains pending.

Motion made by Chair Marquis to ratify the March 4, communications as summarized. Motion seconded by Vice-Chair Riccio. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Field Research Disclosure (March 14 Site Visits)

Four committee members conducted research visits to:

- Southington, CT Veterans Memorial
- East Windsor, CT Veterans Memorial
- Barn Yard /Great Country Timber Frames (custom barn designers and builders)

This disclosure is entered for transparency and FOIA compliance.

A full report (quotes, measurements, and findings) will be presented and entered into the record at the April 1 meeting.

8. Communications & Administrative Updates

8.a. Communication Protocol Reminder

Chair reiterated the importance of transparency, adherence to approved communications channels, and consistency with project phases.

8.b. Hartford Foundation Grant Scope Update

The Foundation acknowledged receipt of the March 10 request to modify the remaining \$5,000 grant allocation: decision pending.

A copy of the submission was provided to the Town CFO/Grant Administrator.

9. Project Roadmap & Documentation

The Chair issued a Project Roadmap outlining:

- Interactions among Town processes; Somers Department of Veterans Affairs, the Foundation (501(c)3), DPW, and the architect
- Project milestones
- Recommended sequencing of approvals

Committee members will review and bring questions to the April 1 meeting.

10. Old Business

10.a. Architectural Concept Development – Rendition 3 Presentation

Architect Joshua Guertin (G&G Architects) presented Rendition 3, a combined concept integrating elements from the previous two versions based on committee feedback.

Key presentation points:

- Fountain removed to reduce cost.
- Layout emphasizes a reflective, respectful space distinct from adjacent recreational areas.
- Proposal to use precast concrete for structural walls with alternate materials available
- Introduction of illuminated service-branch monument panels as an alternative to multiple individual flagpoles.
- Updated site plan accounts for floodplain elevation and utility data recently provided.
- Estimated schedule:
 - 3 weeks to complete combined concept drawings.
 - Late April release of documents for preliminary cost estimation.
 - June target for construction-ready plans (subject to permitting).

10.b. Committee Discussion

Members provided extensive feedback, including:

- Strong interest in service flags arranged around the central circle for visibility from School Street.
- Universal support for buy-a-brick fundraising opportunities, with bricks integrated into walkways or areas near monuments.
- Emphasis on low-maintenance landscaping, using pavers or crushed stone in lieu of high-maintenance flower beds.
- Desire for benches and accessible pathways, including ADA-compliant wheelchair routes.
- Support for service-branch monuments with historical context (dates, emblems).
- Interest in flexibility regarding materials (precast concrete vs. alternative options) to balance cost and longevity.
- General agreement the combined concept should retain the pavilion, six service flags, central U.S. flag prominence, and a clear, ceremonial focus.

10.c. Action – Approval of Conceptual Design

After discussion:

Motion made by Chair Marquis to approve the Phase 1 Concept Design as presented, incorporating the committee's feedback and directing the architect to produce a combined conceptual rendering reflecting the consensus. Motion seconded by Bob Thiesing. Vote unanimous. Motion carries

11. New Business

No new business was introduced.

12. Summary of Committee Actions

- Ratified March 4 communications.
- Recorded field-trip disclosure and communication protocol reminder.
- Distributed Project Roadmap.
- Approved Phase 1 combined conceptual design for the Veterans Memorial Park.
- Identified to committee and Architect that Phase 2 estimation and document preparation could proceed once approval is achieved by the BoS/Town

13. Implementation & Follow-Up Assignments

- **Chair Marquis**
 - Follow Up with the Hartford Foundation regarding the pending grant-scope modification.
 - Prepare a Board of Selectman memo summarizing actions, seek approval for design and Architects proposal /invoice for Phase 01B.
 - Continue coordination on architect proposal updates of Rendition 01B
- **Vice-Chair Riccio**
 - Present field trip research report in April 1 meeting.
- **Committee Members**
 - Review Roadmap and architect's project schedule before April 1.

14. Public Comment

No members of the public were in attendance.

15. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee will be held Wednesday, April 1, 2026, at 3:00 PM, in the Somers Town Hall Auditorium.

16. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn was made by Gary Prior and seconded by Bob Thiesing. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at **4:33 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,

David McCaffrey 
Secretary, Veterans Park Ad-Hoc Committee