

Town of South Bristol
Parks, Recreation and Beautification Ad Hoc Committee
Meeting Summary & Notes

Date: June 15, 2026

Time: 6:00 p.m.–7:04 p.m.

Location: South Bristol Town Hall

Attendance

Committee Members Present: Beth Fitch (*Co-Chair*), Jeff Liebentritt (*Co-Chair*), Meg Fuller (*Town Board Liaison, substituting for Chris Abraham*), Berna Ticonchuk, John Holtz

Members of the Public Present: Jennifer Sinsebox, Deborah Denome, Kelli Becka, Christopher Bennem

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Introductions were made by committee members and members of the public.

Scenic Overlook at Carolabarb Park

The committee reviewed proposed improvements to the Scenic Overlook at Carolabarb Park on County Road 12.

The committee's goal is to develop a clear scope of work that can be reviewed by the Town Board and provided to prospective contractors. Using one consistent scope will allow the Town to receive and compare estimates based on the same project specifications.

Members discussed the importance of the Scenic Overlook as both a community asset and a frequently visited tourism destination. The committee agreed that improvements should create a safe, attractive, accessible and lower-maintenance public space.

Proposed Improvements

The committee reviewed a preliminary list of improvements, including:

- Removing and replacing the existing pavers
- Creating a smoother and safer walking surface
- Improving wheelchair and mobility access throughout the site
- Creating a wider entrance area
- Installing an approximately six-foot-wide accessible walkway around the viewing area
- Improving access to the kiosk and binocular viewer

- Removing weeds and unwanted vegetation beyond the existing barrier
- Installing geotextile fabric and riprap to reduce future weed growth and maintenance
- Removing red lava rock, unused posts, deteriorated landscaping materials and unnecessary stone edging
- Removing the large existing flower bed
- Retaining limited grass areas to reduce the amount of hardscape and help keep the site cooler
- Installing simple, lower-maintenance landscaping near the kiosk
- Considering hydrangeas or similar plantings near the kiosk
- Considering a large self-watering planter for seasonal flowers
- Trimming vegetation that interferes with the scenic view

The committee emphasized that the design should be durable and relatively simple to maintain so that the site does not return to its current condition.

Demolition and Construction

The committee discussed whether the Town Highway Department could complete some of the demolition work.

While the Highway Department may have the equipment and ability to perform some tasks, members acknowledged that Highway Superintendent Jim Wight and the Highway Department have significant road, mowing and seasonal maintenance responsibilities.

The committee discussed asking contractors to provide separate estimates for:

1. Demolition and site preparation
2. Installation and completion of the improvements

Separate estimates would allow the Town to determine whether any meaningful savings could be achieved by performing a portion of the work in-house.

Members also noted that demolition and installation should be carefully coordinated. Removing the existing materials too far in advance could result in the Scenic Overlook remaining closed or unusable for an extended period.

Contractor Estimates

The committee plans to contact several qualified landscaping and hardscaping contractors.

Because some contractors may not respond or may not be available, the committee discussed contacting approximately seven companies with the goal of obtaining at least three comparable estimates.

The committee preferred arranging on-site walkthroughs so that contractors can review the existing conditions, evaluate demolition, grading and drainage needs, identify potential concerns, recommend alternatives, and provide more accurate estimates.

Town Board Review

Meg Fuller recommended that the proposed scope of work be circulated to the full Town Board before contractors are asked to prepare estimates.

This will allow Board members to review the proposed work, identify concerns and provide feedback before the committee and contractors invest additional time.

Veterans Memorial Stone

The committee discussed the veterans memorial stone currently located at the Scenic Overlook.

One option would be to relocate the stone to Founders Cemetery, where it may be more clearly recognized as a veteran's memorial. Moving the stone could also make it easier to pave and maintain the current location.

Before making any recommendation, the committee agreed that additional research is needed to determine:

- When the memorial was installed
- Who initiated or donated the memorial
- Whether its current placement was part of a formal agreement
- Whether veterans, families or other interested parties should be consulted
- Whether it can appropriately be relocated

Meg agreed to speak with Jim Wight, review available Town Board minutes and consult older Town records or former officials as needed.

Memorial Tree

The committee also discussed the memorial tree located near the viewing area.

Meg explained that the current tree replaced an earlier memorial tree that had died. The memorial is believed to recognize a relative of the family that donated the property.

Members noted that the tree may eventually obstruct the scenic view and may conflict with the proposed accessible walkway.

A possible alternative location near the playground was discussed. In that location, the tree could eventually provide shade and complement the existing memorial bench.

Before considering relocation, the committee agreed that the Town should determine:

- Whether the current location was requested or required by the donor family
- Whether the family or surviving relatives can be contacted
- Whether restrictions were included with the original property donation
- Whether relocation would be appropriate and respectful

Memorial and Donation Policy

The committee discussed the potential value of developing a formal Town policy for memorial trees, benches, plaques and other donated items.

A policy could clarify:

- Town specifications for memorial items
- Placement of donated items
- Maintenance responsibilities
- The Town's authority to relocate, replace or remove an item
- What happens when a tree dies or a bench deteriorates
- The anticipated duration of a memorial

Engraved bricks were also discussed as a possible future fundraising or recognition option that may create fewer long-term maintenance concerns.

Parking Lot Paving

The Scenic Overlook parking lot is expected to be paved during summer 2026 (July).

The committee requested additional information regarding:

- The confirmed paving date
- The anticipated length of the closure
- Whether other site work should be coordinated with the paving project

The Town Board previously discussed using minimal parking markings. Accessible parking spaces and required access aisles would be clearly marked, while the remainder of the parking area may remain flexible.

Directional Signage

Members discussed the need for an additional directional sign on County Road 12 for drivers approaching from the north. Drivers unfamiliar with the area may miss the entrance or brake suddenly when they recognize it. The committee suggested asking Highway Superintendent Jim Wight to contact Ontario County regarding an additional Scenic Overlook sign.

Grant Opportunities

The committee discussed possible grant funding for the project.

A New York State parks-related grant may be available, with an anticipated application deadline of July 31, 2026. The program may require a local matching contribution.

The committee also discussed tourism-related grants because the Scenic Overlook is a well-known destination used in regional tourism promotion.

Additional funding sources discussed included accessibility grants, private donations, local businesses, community members and families, and funding connected to broader recreation or trail improvements.

Members emphasized that grants should support projects the Town has already determined are important. The Town should not change its overall priorities solely to qualify for available funding.

Grant Writing

The committee discussed whether the Town should hire a professional grant writer or seek assistance from residents with grant-writing experience.

Several attendees reported experience researching, writing, reviewing or administering grants and offered to help. Brockport Research Institute was mentioned as one possible professional resource.

Before hiring a grant writer, the Town would need to determine, the estimated project cost, the size and complexity of the application, the grant writer's fee, the amount of potential funding, and whether funds are available in the current Town budget. There is not currently a dedicated grant-writing line in the Town budget.

Members noted that grants are competitive and may require repeated applications. An unsuccessful application could still provide useful feedback for a future submission.

Community Survey and Planning

The committee discussed documenting community support for improvements to the Scenic Overlook.

A project-specific survey could ask residents about:

- Support for improving the Scenic Overlook
- Preferred improvements
- Support for using Town funds
- Support for pursuing grants or professional grant-writing assistance

Meg also suggested that a broader community-wide survey could provide a stronger foundation for future planning and grant applications involving multiple Town priorities.

Members noted that South Bristol's median income may make the Town ineligible for some grant programs available to neighboring municipalities.

Multi-Year Planning and Budget

The committee discussed whether the renovation should be completed as one project or divided into phases.

Completing the project at one time may be more efficient and reduce disruption. However, financial constraints or grant requirements may make a phased approach necessary.

Because the 2027 Town budget process will begin soon, the committee agreed that contractor estimates are needed as quickly as reasonably possible.

Visitation and Use

Members discussed the significant use of the Scenic Overlook by local residents, tourists, photographers, artists, motorcyclists, and visitors viewing the Northern Lights and other scenic events.

The committee discussed whether visitor or vehicle counts could be collected to demonstrate use and support future grant applications.

Ongoing Maintenance and Volunteers

The committee discussed the importance of establishing an ongoing maintenance plan before improvements are completed.

Potential maintenance needs include mowing, weed control, pruning, seasonal planting, watering, cleaning, and maintaining walkways and accessible areas

Volunteers, Scouts, school clubs and youth organizations may be able to assist with clearly defined projects. However, regular maintenance should not depend entirely on occasional volunteers.

Possible Scout projects could include signage, interpretive displays or other defined improvements with a clear beginning and end.

Next Meeting

The committee agreed to hold its next meeting on:

Tuesday, June 30, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

The committee will also continue discussing a regular recurring meeting schedule.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.