

Meeting Minutes from Town of South Bristol Committee for Community Engagement

Tuesday, August 25th, 2026

Attendance: Christopher Bennem & Lenore Friend, (Co-Chairs), Deborah Denome, John Holtz, Beth Thomas

Observing: Jaimie Hall (Board Liaison)

Overview

The Community Engagement Committee meeting focused on reviewing survey results about landfill closure and planning upcoming events for the town's 250th celebration. The committee discussed survey responses showing strong support for government involvement in waste management, with most participants favoring continued county subsidies for transfer stations and special collection events. They planned details for an upcoming History and Mystery Bus Tour on September 3rd, including logistics for the event at the Grange and coordination with Arbor Hill for food and drinks. The committee also addressed preparations for a costume dance as part of the 250th celebration, discussing needs for lighting, sound, and promotional materials. Additionally, they reviewed plans for a Veterans Garden rededication ceremony and discussed potential comprehensive plan revisions, including considerations for grant funding and volunteer-led efforts to update community planning documents.

Summary

Playground Tracking and Event Planning

The group discussed tracking usage of a newly upgraded playground to justify future funding requests, with a suggestion they install an information board and camera system to monitor visitor numbers. They planned an upcoming History and Mystery Bus Tour event on September 3rd, which will include a sneak peek of a new video and feature original paintings and books for sale to benefit the Historical Society. The meeting experienced technical difficulties with Jamie's audio connection, with multiple attempts to resolve the issue through different devices and settings.

Landfill Closure Survey Results

The meeting focused on reviewing results from a survey about landfill closure and waste management. The survey, created by Lenore and finalized with Judy's help, was sent to 319 people and had approximately 40 responses at the time of discussion. Key findings included support for continuing special collection events and a preference for the county to use property taxes to subsidize waste disposal and recycling. Participants expressed interest in learning more about costs, recycling options, and potential partnerships with other towns to manage waste effectively.

Lake Protection Events Planning Meeting

The meeting focused on planning upcoming events related to waste management and lake quality initiatives. Lenore reported on survey results regarding lake protection strategies, with "all of the above" being the top answer, followed by septic system education and development zoning. The group discussed logistics for an upcoming town hall event, including moderation roles for Jamie and Lenore, and confirmed speakers for a panel discussion scheduled for October 26th. They also set November 12th as the date for a future town hall meeting, though this needs final confirmation from the supervisor.

Local History Event Planning

Also discussed were logistics for the upcoming event featuring a bus tour and video presentation about local history. The group aligned on using the upstairs space for the presentation due to better lighting and existing setup, with plans to show a short video multiple times throughout the event. They decided to contact Angela at Arbor Hill to confirm catering arrangements and explore bringing browsable appetizers for 40-50 people, with Beth suggesting a popcorn bar as an affordable option. The team also discussed potentially seeking donations to cover food costs and agreed to follow up via email about catering details and explore advertising the event on the town website.

Bus Tour and Costume Dance

Plans for the bus tour and costume dance event were further discussed, noting they are halfway to their sales goal of 24 tickets with 12 already sold. For the costume dance, Beth mentioned securing two bands - Bruce McClellan and Andy Saxby's band - with funding already arranged for one band, though light and sound equipment remains a concern. They also discussed costume themes around historical decades and potential prizes, while noting that the Historical Society has taken a hands-off approach and left advertising responsibilities to the committee.

Small Town Store Support Planning

Beth discussed the need to help the historical society with the dance due to staffing issues. The group identified several action items for an upcoming event, including finding a lights and sound provider (with plans to contact Rick Constantino), securing food and drink services through Angela, and creating promotional materials. Judy also noted the need for additional help with crowd control and parking, and mentioned potentially asking BHHS for startup money to cover design costs for a poster, estimated at around \$100.

Veterans Garden Rededication Planning

The group discussed plans for the Veterans Garden rededication event as part of the 250th celebration, scheduled for October 12th at 5:30 PM, 30 minutes before the town board meeting. One proposal involved including the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in the event and suggested taking

photos of the garden to promote it, with Lisa potentially making red, white, and blue cupcakes to enhance attendance. The discussion also touched on highlighting Revolutionary War soldiers buried in South Bristol and the relocation of Veterans Rock to a new site.

South Bristol Comprehensive Plan Review

The Co-chairs thanked the team for their work on creating community engagement events and presented materials for revising the comprehensive plan, including potential timelines and approaches depending on whether they receive a \$100,000 grant. The team discussed the challenges of a rapidly aging population in South Bristol, with 48% of the population being 60 or older, and considered how to address housing, transportation, and other needs while supporting both aging residents and attracting younger people. The team will review the comprehensive plan materials before the next meeting to discuss potential recommendations and decision-making processes regarding the grant application and timeline.