

Summary of the Planning Meeting for Town's 250th Anniversary Parade and Old Home Day Event - Nov. 10, 2025

Participants:

In person: Bill Rideout, Kym Craven, Jeff Willet, Jerrilyn Bozicas, Karen Clement, Jock Snaith, Dale Gates, James Gates, Chris Barnacoat, Eileen Barnacoat

Zoom: Bob Ellis, Irene Congdon, Leslie Rauhala, Dave Funiole (TCAM)

Event Overview

- **Event:** Town's 250th Anniversary Parade and Old Home Day Celebration
- **Date:** June 20th 2026 (significant historical date tied to the town voting to support the American Revolution)
- **Parade Start Time:** 11:00 a.m. (Step-off from Scales Lane)
- **Route:** Parade from Scales Lane down Main Street to the Town Common - possible end at Sterilite (permission needs to be requested)
- **Occasion:** Low-key, community-focused celebration inspired by past historic events, especially the 275th parade and Townsend's celebration of Lexington and Concord's 250th anniversary.
- **Participation:** Local groups, families, youth groups, businesses, and community organizations encouraged to join.

Key Historical Context

- June 20th was chosen because it marks the date when the town voted in support of the American Revolution at a town meeting.
- The town's meeting house is the last surviving building in Massachusetts where this historic vote took place.
- The event is distinct and separate from the traditional July 4th celebrations.

Event Structure and Activities

- The parade will feature **marching groups, decorated floats, and non-motorized vehicles** (bikes, wagons, carriages).
- The **Common** will host Old Home Day festivities, including games, food, historical exhibits, and a **time capsule** ceremony.
- A **time capsule** will be symbolically closed on June 20th, with photos from the parade included before final sealing in July. The capsule will be stored in a THS for 50 years.
- Community groups are encouraged to participate either by marching or setting up activities at the Common.
- The **Squannacook Greenways** group plans to set up bike decorating at the parade start to encourage children and adults to decorate their bikes or wagons.
- The **Ball Game** and other traditional games such as three-legged races are planned as part of Old Home Day activities.
- Historical reenactments and period-costumed characters, including a possible Minute Man or colonial figure, will add to the atmosphere.

Participation and Outreach

- Over 50 community groups were contacted, with some response but overall participation is still being encouraged.
- Youth groups like Scouts (Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts) and local sports teams are targeted for involvement.
- The **Daughters of The America Revolution** and other heritage groups may participate by carrying on historical traditions.
- The Model T Club and local fire department are invited to contribute with vehicles and displays.
- The Lions Club is hoped to provide food services.
- Volunteers are needed to run games, act as marshals during the parade, and help with setup and logistics on the Common.
- A website, **townsend250.org**, has been created for signups and event information, including a group registration form.
- A QR code linking to the website is to be included on event placards for easy access.

Logistics and Planning Details

- **Parade Route Length:** Approximately 1.1 miles
- **Float Assembly and Dispersal:** Discussions about where floats and groups will assemble and end. Sterilite parking lot was used previously for staging.

- **Police Detail and Safety:** Police presence required for crowd and traffic control, which is one of the main expenses.
- **Budget:** Limited funds available (~\$600 currently), fundraising and sponsorships needed for essentials like police, portable restrooms, and entertainment.
- **Entertainment:** Marching bands are considered critical to the parade's success. Military and high school bands are potential participants, but costs are significant (e.g., a military band costs ~\$1,100).
- Local bands, youth groups, and informal musicians might be engaged, potentially on a volunteer basis.
- Other entertainment ideas include clowns, jugglers, and Shriners, some of whom have performed for free in the past.
- Consideration for animals (horses, cattle) and tractor displays to add variety.
- **Fundraising approaches:** Business sponsorship packages with advertising opportunities, selling time capsule kits, raffle proceeds, and grant applications (e.g., Amanda Dwight fund, state funds related to the 250th anniversary).
- Advertising may include banners along the parade route or on floats, yard signs to promote the event, and printed programs for attendees.
- Canva is suggested as a platform for creating promotional materials collaboratively.

Contingency and Weather Plans

- The event is planned as **rain or shine** due to contracted entertainment and logistics.
- Alternate indoor locations identified include town halls, churches (Congregational Church, St. John's), and the Meeting House for speeches, activities, and shelter.
- Potential indoor games and contests will be adapted if needed.
- Food service could be moved indoors if weather is poor, but large exhibits or reenactments might require tents or cancellation in heavy rain.

Communication and Coordination

- Plans to send out follow-up emails with meeting notes and encourage groups to sign up online.

- A running participant list with logos and descriptions to be maintained on the website to showcase involvement and encourage others.
- Suggestions to include a suggestion box on the website for further ideas from the community.
- Personal outreach to businesses and nonprofits will begin between Thanksgiving and Christmas to leverage end-of-year giving.
- Teams of volunteers will divide outreach to approximately 100 businesses for sponsorship and participation.
- Face-to-face visits, letters, and follow-ups are planned to maximize engagement.
- Local libraries and senior centers will serve as drop-off points for time capsule items and information hubs.
- Creative resources such as local librarians (Stacy) and senior center coordinators (Elise) will help groups develop ideas for floats, costumes, and activities.

Key Challenges and Considerations

- **Budget constraints:** Need for fundraising to cover essentials, especially police detail and entertainment.
- **Securing bands and entertainers:** High costs and scheduling challenges with schools and military bands due to summer breaks.
- **Volunteers:** Need for sufficient volunteers to organize, marshal, and run activities, especially youth volunteers during summer months.
- **Coordination of parade and Common activities:** Groups may want to participate in both; scheduling and logistics for setup and transitions need to be finalized.
- **Communication tech issues:** Zoom connection and muting caused some confusion during the meeting.
- **Insurance:** Liability insurance for the event and certain activities (especially involving animals) must be arranged.
- **Weather contingency:** Clear backup plans are essential for moving activities indoors and managing rain impacts.

Quantitative and Timeline Information

Item	Detail
Parade Date	June 20th, 2026 (year after meeting)

Parade Start Time	11:00 a.m.
Parade Route Length	1.1 miles
Current cash on hand	Approximately \$600
Police Detail Cost	Implied to be a major expense (exact cost <i>Not specified</i>)
Military Band Cost	Approximately \$1,100
Number of Businesses to Contact	~100
Number of Community Groups Contacted	~50
Time Capsule Seal Date	Symbolic closure on June 20th; final sealing in July
Next Scheduled Meetings	Smaller committee meetings early next year; business meetings in late November/December

Summary of Participant Suggestions and Roles

- **Squannacook Greenways:** Coordinate bike decorating and support for bike riders in the parade.
- **Lions Club:** Food service and possibly cooking at the Common.
- **Library and Senior Center:** Time capsule drop-off and community engagement.
- **Local Bands & Musicians:** Provide musical entertainment in parade and Common activities.
- **Historical and Heritage Groups:** Period costumes, reenactments, and educational presentations.
- **Fire Department:** Display fire trucks (old and new) and possibly open vehicles for public viewing.

- **Scouts (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts):** Participation in the parade and volunteer support.
- **Businesses:** Sponsorship, floats, advertising, and potential fundraising contributions.
- **Volunteers:** Marshals, game operators, setup/teardown crews.
- **Event Coordinators:** Manage registration, communication, fundraising, and logistics.

Promotional Strategies

- Use of website towns250.org with online registration and information.
- QR codes on physical placards for quick access to event details and signup forms.
- Printed brochures and programs distributed at events and through community locations.
- Yard signs and banners along parade route and public spaces to increase awareness.
- Social media and community Facebook groups to spread information and encourage participation.
- Personal outreach to businesses with tiered sponsorship options and advertising opportunities.

Conclusions and Next Steps

- The event is shaping up as a community-driven, festive parade and Old Home Day celebration with historical significance.
- Active recruitment and engagement of groups and businesses are critical in the coming months.
- Fundraising and sponsorship efforts must ramp up to ensure essential services and entertainment can be funded.
- Detailed planning for parade logistics, Common activities, and contingency plans are ongoing.
- Clear communication channels and resources will support groups in planning their participation.
- The organizing committee intends to continue periodic meetings, with a focus on outreach and finalizing details early in the new year.