

Bristol Festival policy / Park grounds rental policy

Park property equipment and facilities

The Bristol Park properties, equipment and utilities are owned by the Town of Bristol. The Park Department manages the Park properties. Rental agreements exist for all park facilities including insurance requirements for certain activities. In addition, festivals or other large events will require approval of the Park Board and the application will be reviewed by the Town Marshall and Fire Department chief. The rental fee may be waived by the Town Clerk or Town Manager for non-profit organization sponsored events. The cost of electric use and water use is covered by the Town. If an event requires park equipment to be moved, approval to move the equipment must be received from the Street Department manager. For large events, a site plan is required as part of the rental agreement. The Town staff is available to assist in moving equipment during normal work hours if requested. All equipment must be returned to the original location after the event.

Large gatherings that include food vendors, fireworks, or bands may require the sponsoring organization to acquire additional permitting from County or State Departments. The Town staff can assist in guiding that process.

Street Closures

Coordination with Police Department and Bristol Street department at least 90 days in advance of event is necessary. Closures that involve more than a couple blocks of town streets will require festival organizers to contract with a barricade provider. Town Hall or the Street Department can provide contact information. Closure of a State Road will require contracting with a barricade provider. Closure of a State Road requires a permit from INDOT. The Town Manager can assist in acquiring the permit.

Trash

Each event is responsible for planning the management of trash generated by the event. For small crowd events, organizers are encouraged to coordinate trash management with the Street Department manager.

Clean-up

Event organizers are responsible for clean-up of the park grounds after the event.

Town Staff assistance

One or two members of the sponsoring event will have two phone numbers to use to contact a Town Staff person anytime during the event. Staff are available to troubleshoot electrical issues, traffic issues, or any other problems related to the Park's equipment or buildings.

2026 Homecoming recommendations from Town of Bristol.

These recommendations have been developed and approved by the Town Staff, Town Marshal, Bristol Fire Department and Town Council.

1. Parade. The INDOT project scheduled to begin spring of 2026 does not allow for a parade on Main Street. After considering possible alternatives, our recommendation is the parade be canceled for 2026. The INDOT project is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2027 and the parade can resume in 2027. If the Homecoming committee has an idea they would like to be considered for relocating the parade in 2026, the Town is open to reviewing the ideas.
2. Fireworks. The consensus is the fireworks should remain in Hermance Park. A variety of issues related to public safety have led to this decision. Cummins Park will remain as a backup in instances of flooding in Hermance.
3. Clean up. If clean up is done Saturday night after the festival, a follow up walk through is needed on Sunday after all vendors have left to ensure all trash is picked up and park equipment is returned to its original location.
4. The bridge will remain open during fireworks. The consensus is the orange pylons worked well to keep pedestrians on the sidewalk and off the street. The Town will continue to provide this safety measure.
5. Garden Tractor pull. Elkhart Street is scheduled for complete reconstruction. The construction date has not been set, it could be late fall this year or next spring/ summer. However, regardless of the timing, our engineers are telling us we should not be holding this event on the new street. We need to find a new location for garden tractor pull. Our suggestion is to use Maple Street north of Earthway. If Robert Weed is supportive, there will plenty of room for staging and people to watch the event. The Town also now owns vacant land on the east side of Maple in this area. We are open to other suggestions. New asphalt is the primary limiting factor.
6. For future parades. The Town has always needed to borrow barricades from either Niblock or the County Highway department. The caveat with our benefactors has always been if extra barricades are available. While we have not experienced a year where we didn't have enough barricades to get by, a larger issue is surfacing for the Town. It takes significant time for our departments, both police department and street department, to pick up barricades, distribute, setup, and then after the parade collect and return. The staff time involved in this activity can become an issue depending upon the level of normal duties which need to be accomplished. The Town is recommending barricades be acquired and delivered by a third-party contractor. Our staff can assist before the parade in setting up barricades, monitoring traffic during the parade, and then taking down barricades after the parade. The Town will continue to cover the overtime cost incurred for the Saturday responsibilities.