

3. Reasons to update the policy

Let's update the policy rather than remove it entirely.

Here's why: The Town Green is Bristol's civic heart—the site of 150+ years of band concerts, Vermont's oldest parade, and countless community gatherings. Removing all guardrails could allow a well-intentioned Selectboard to make changes that future boards or residents regret. The policy provides useful transparency and protects against incremental encroachment.

What an updated policy should address:

1. **Distinguish between permanent and temporary/seasonal structures**
 - A seasonal portalet: explicitly allowed during high-use periods
 - A bike repair station: small-footprint utility amenity
 - Both are functionally different from monuments or buildings
2. **Create categories with different approval processes**
 - Major permanent structures (memorials, buildings): strictest review, possibly requiring public hearing
 - Utility infrastructure (EV chargers with trenching): moderate review, Selectboard vote
 - Minor amenities (benches, bike racks, repair stations): administrative approval
 - Seasonal/temporary (portalets, event structures): Recreation Department authority
3. **Add flexibility mechanisms**
 - Remove the rigid "one-for-one replacement" rule
 - Instead: set a maximum total footprint (maybe 15-18% to allow modest growth) with annual review
 - Allow exceptions for accessibility, public health/safety, or utility infrastructure
4. **Address what's missing**
 - Temporary event structures (you need this flexibility given Bristol's event calendar)
 - Maintenance and removal standards
 - Underground utilities and infrastructure
 - Emergency situations
5. **Clarify Recreation Department authority**
 - Give them clear authority over seasonal amenities and temporary structures under certain parameters
 - Require Selectboard approval only for permanent additions or major projects