

February 26, 2026 Meeting Minutes Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)

CPC Chair Chris Foss led this monthly meeting at Caroga Town Hall from 6:00 to 7:12 PM. Members present were: Chris Foss, Rachel Simonds, Anita Long, Jim Hale, Doug Purcell, and Arthur Wadsworth. Jeremy Manning and Dave Cummings were unable to attend. Supervisor Jack Glenn was also present.

1. Prior Meeting Minutes

- The Committee voted to approve January 12, 2026 meeting minutes (see <https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/meeting-minutes/>).

2. Town Board Actions

- At the Town Board's monthly meeting on 2/11/2026, CPC Chair Chris Foss provided the Board with an update and shared key documents about the comprehensive planning process and NYS DOS grant.
- On 2/11/2026, the Town Board appointed Arthur Wadsworth to the Comprehensive Plan Committee. CPC Chair Chris Foss welcomed Mr. Wadsworth as the CPC's liaison to the Caroga Planning Board.
- The Board also approved setting up the official email address: "comprehensiveplan@caroga.town."
- In addition, the Board authorized Supervisor Jack Glenn to seek Board input and to give official approval for the Town's DOS Grant Work Plan (WP) Contract and Request for Proposals (RFP).
- Printed and email copies of the draft RFP have been shared with Town Board members for input.

3. Planning Grant Updates

- NYS DOS Revitalization Specialists Stefan Lutter and Susan Landfried responded by email to introduce Caroga's Grant Project Manager (PM) Cassandra Leopold (cassandra.leopold@dos.ny.gov), who will help Caroga through the Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning (SGCP) process from start to finish.
- Mr. Lutter and Ms. Leopold also shared a template draft Work Plan (*Caroga SampleWPDraft.docx*, which will be a key component of the Town's eventual WP Contract with DOS) along with a template RFP (*RFP-Smart-Growth-Comp-Plan GENERIC.docx*). They suggested action items to consider taking: (1) Send CPC Committee List for DOS review and approval, (2) Ask CPC members to review required Training Course (<https://dos.ny.gov/nys-smart-growth-program>), (3) Prepare and review the Request for Proposals (RFP) aligned with the WP Contract, and (4) Share preliminary planning materials.
- On 2/12/2026 PM Leopold led a productive initial meeting on Teams with Supervisor Glenn, CPC Chair Foss, and Secretary Long (see DOS's *SGCP Project Initiation Meeting Agenda 02122026.docx* and *Caroga_Smart_Growth Principles in RFP.pptx*). As discussed during the meeting, Caroga's follow-up documents back to DOS for review included: (1) *caroga-comprehensive-plan-committee_02-12-2026.docx*, (2) *caroga_prior_plans_draft.docx*, (3) *CarogaWPDraft_02-10-2026.docx*, (4) *caroga-rfp-smart-growth-comp-plan-02-11-2026draft.docx*, (5) *Caroga_2026sgcp-budget_draft-02-13-2026.xlsx*, (6) *Caroga_2026sgcp-scope_draft02-13-2026.pdf*, and (7) *caroga_follow-up_02-13-2026.docx*.
- On 03/02/2026 at 1:00 PM, PM Leopold will do an in-person site visit led by Supervisor Glenn to review the Town's current capital projects and engineering designs. Sherman's Park videos were also shared. Chair Foss, Vice-Chair Simonds, and Secretary Long will join the site visit at Town Hall.

4. Committee Review of 02-11-2026 Draft RFP

- CPC Chair Foss led the Committee through a point-by-point collaborative review and discussion of the current draft Request for Proposals (RFP, *caroga-rfp-smart-growth-comp-plan_02-11-2026draft.pdf*).
- pp. 1 & 14: Change Contact to “CPC Chair Chris Foss” & email to “[comprehensiveplan@caroga.town.](mailto:comprehensiveplan@caroga.town.ny.us)”
- p. 2: Note change from prior draft “Town of Caroga” section. Incorporate PM Leopold’s suggestions.
- pp. 5 & 13: Change *Task 5*, Line 4 to, “Including first initiation meeting, at least 12 meetings will...”
- pp. 8-9: Edit *Task 9b*. Note points in meeting with PM Leopold & edit engineering design descriptions. CPC members also debated points and tactics of the *Smart Growth Economic Development Strategy*.
- pp. 9-10: Edit *Task 10: Draft Comprehensive Plan* deliverables, including phrasing from PM Leopold’s Power Point document PPTX (#5-6): *2/12/2026 Caroga_Smart_Growth Principles in RFP.pptx*.
- Fix minor typographical errors, and align proposed changes in revised draft 2/26/2026 RFP and WP.

5. Comprehensive Plan Participation and Stakeholder Focus Groups

- Chair Foss elaborated *RFP Task 6: Community Participation Plan* and *Task 7: Stakeholder Interviews*. CPC members will work with the yet-to-be-determined consulting firm to “identify a set of topics to be discussed with stakeholders to obtain additional relevant information, and stakeholder interviews will elicit reactions and suggestions.” This includes preparing to identify core focus group topics and to engage business owners, community organization leaders, local residents, and regional partners.
- Supervisor Glenn added that he has spoken directly with Fulton County stakeholders, including Scott Henze [Fulton County Planning Department Director and Fulton County Industrial Development Association Executive Director] and Ron Peters [Fulton County Center for Regional Growth President and CEO]. Both are following Caroga’s comprehensive planning process, and they offered to provide info and contacts, as needed (e.g., for economic development, financing, land use, housing resources). [Both Mr. Henze and Mr. Peters have direct experience with Gloversville’s DRI process and have led or facilitated many other development projects across Fulton County for decades. Mr. Henze also was directly involved in the community process with the 2011 *Town of Caroga Comprehensive Plan*.]
- Supervisor Glenn discussed project planning and grant writing. He recently communicated with Travis Mitchell of EDP. In addition, Council Members Sturgess and Cooper are working with C.T. Male. These engineering firms can contribute local knowledge and planning expertise in Caroga’s comprehensive planning process. They also may be able to assist with capital project grant proposals, as needed.
- CPC Member Jim Hale noted that Scotia contracted with grant writers. In addition, Nick Zabowski of Orion Management has contracted to do grant applications in Fulton, Montgomery, and Herkimer Counties. [In 2022, Mr. Zabowski was hired by the Caroga Town Board for a Northern Borders Grant Proposal at a cost of \$100 per hour, capped at \$4,500 for that application, which was not awarded.]
- To date, Caroga’s successful grant capacity has come from a team of resident volunteers, who built skills from NYS webinars, regional hub partnerships, and prior professional work. Local volunteers have donated time and skills to align knowledge of Caroga’s needs with state funding opportunities. [At least nine different Caroga residents have written successful grants and gained momentum with state-funded feasibility and engineering planning followed by delivery and implementation projects, for Aquatic Invasive Species, Recreational Trails, Smart Growth Planning, NYS Council on the Arts, Preservation League, Empire State Development, & Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development.]

6. Action Items

- **Edit RFP.** CPC Secretary will edit, as noted (with MS Word Track Changes enabled). Others will review.
- **Complete DOS Site Visit.** Supervisor Glenn will lead the site visit with PM Leopold at Town Hall. CPC will then proceed with DOS review and edits of draft WP contract and draft RFP documents.
- **Collaborate with PM Leopold on Work Plan (WP) Contract & RFP.** Incorporate edits for approval.
- After DOS approval, RFP will be released publicly. Consultant firms will have 1 month to respond.

7. Next Meeting:

The next CPC monthly meeting will be 6:00 PM Thursday, March 26, 2026 at Caroga Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita McMartin Long
CPC Member and Secretary