

April 30, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)

CPC Chair Chris Foss led this monthly meeting at Caroga Town Hall from 6:00 to 7:17 PM. Members present were: Chris Foss, Rachel Simonds, Anita Long, Jim Hale, Jeremy Manning, and Arthur Wadsworth. Doug Purcell and Dave Cummings were unable to attend. Also present were Supervisor Jack Glenn and Planning Board Chair Al Kozakiewicz.

1. Prior Meeting Minutes

- The Committee voted unanimously to approve March 26, 2026 meeting minutes (see <https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/meeting-minutes/>).

2. Town Board Actions

- On April 8, 2026, the Town Board passed a resolution approving public release of the consultant Request for Proposals (Caroga_SGCP-RFP_Final.pdf) with proposals due by May 13, 2026 at 2:00 PM.
- On April 8, the Board also approved release of the CPC's 3/26/2026 invitation for letters of interest to join the Committee. The goal is to bring additional voices with particular knowledge and expertise.

3. NYS DOS Smart Growth Community Planning (SGCP) Grant Budget

- The CPC reviewed the proposed budget spreadsheet (caroga-2026sgcp-budget_draft-04-30-2026.pdf) and voted unanimously to accept the budget with specified revisions, as presented and discussed.
- Discussion noted that this update includes 2 changes from the original \$145,000 budget proposal:
 - The first is merging the "Professional Planning Contract" and "Subcontracts" into one line.
 - The second is adding the "Fringe Benefits" line of \$765 (for \$10,000 in local/county services).
- The total grant award is the same, but subcontracts must be done at the discretion of consultants.
- The proposal has 7% time for County Planner Aaron Enfield to serve as professional advisory staff and 7% time for Caroga Budget Director/Bookkeeper Joanne Young to assist with grant accounting.
- CPC Secretary Long will do all NYS reporting and administration. This has a \$2,000 no-benefit stipend.
- DOS flagged the local cost as being low. The issue is Dr. Long's time is basically a volunteer donation.
- Chris Foss asked if volunteer donation time can be in-kind service for the \$14,500 15% local match.
- Anita Long noted, "Great question. I support asking Cass Leopold at DOS if it can be done and how."

4. Comprehensive Plan Committee

- The CPC discussed CPC membership, in order to make a recommendation to the Town Board.
- Chair Chris Foss reviewed the suggestion from DOS Project Manager Cass Leopold to expand the CPC to increase viewpoint diversity. She shared a list of areas of expertise/experience and potential stakeholders (e.g., people with current local/regional experience in areas including education, interagency coordination, economic growth, outdoor recreation, emergency services, & health care).
- In response to the invitation (specified in March 26 minutes), Chair Foss received 6 letters and emails:
 - Nicole Dettenrieder (Wheelerville School Superintendent)
 - Al Kozakiewicz (Caroga Planning Board Chair)
 - Chase Steenburgh (Steenburgh Consulting Engineering, PLLC, with offices in Niskayuna & Caroga)
 - Jed Potocar (West Caroga Lake Association President, Lakes Management Committee Member)
 - Scott Horton (Retired Businessman & Land Owner, Former Supervisor, Former Planning Chair)
 - Barb Deluca (EMT, Caroga Lake Volunteer Fire Company, Former Town Board Member)
 - (Additional letters could be submitted until the May 8 deadline before the Board meeting.)

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- Art Wadsworth began discussion by insisting, “I don’t think we should consider anybody that can’t be here. Summer residents shouldn’t be making any decisions. That should go in the minutes. If they’re not here, then they should not be considered. If you’re not here, you’re not committed. If you don’t show up and if people are only emailing certain people on the Committee, that’s a zero... And you only got 5 [sic] of 8 people here now... And why do you have to take it to the Town Board anyway?”
- Rachel Simonds and Chris Foss noted the basic process requiring appointment by the Town Board.
- Jeremy Manning emphasized, “Anyone who has a vested interest can help make decisions. We have a list that Department of State wants us to consider. It’s difficult to get people with all those profiles. All the voices serve the purpose and the profile of the community... Plus, once this process gets rolling, the Committee steps back and meeting frequency will change... This is not just to get more bodies in the room. It’s to add to the strength of the voices and the diversity of perspectives.”
- Art Wadsworth singled out a seasonal resident who has served dutifully as a Comprehensive Plan Committee member since 2024, “What about Dave Cummings? He hasn’t even been here yet.”
- Jeremy Manning observed, “This is only your third meeting since the Town Board decided to appoint you in February 2026. We have been doing this for two years. This is a process, not a steamroll.”
- Art Wadsworth continued to press his proposed directive about Comprehensive Plan Committee membership, “I want to get people off this Committee who don’t show up. I haven’t even seen him.”
- Chris Foss reviewed the history, “Dave was appointed, and the Town Board members knew when they appointed him that he was not in Caroga for the winter. They felt it was ok. We deal with that as we can. He gets the emails and comments.” [He also participated via zoom, until that was removed.]
- Jeremy Manning returned the Committee’s focus to the process and the task at hand, “The Superintendent of Wheelerville School fits the profile. It also sounds like Al fits the profile [as Planning Board Chair]. They have positions that align. The Town Board will make the final decision.”
- Supervisor Glenn noted, “The Town Board will most likely go with the Committee recommendation.”
- Anita Long said, “I would also add the point that it’s awesome that we have all of this interest. As a whole, the process is meant to be inclusive. There is room for everybody — part-time residents, full-time residents, anyone who is interested — to participate in the process as a whole. These people would be great for being on focus groups or having some other particular contribution. We should encourage that and welcome that. At the same time, regarding a recommendation to the Town Board, personally, I’d like to see it focused to build on the process that we have and to include people with specific expertise. So, I see value in bridging with planning and zoning, and I’ve worked with Al. His contribution and experience could contribute valuably now and also for a continuation into future zoning revisions. I also have worked with Nicole Dettenrieder on a grant recently, and she has great perspectives about the school, community, and region. She’s a team player. I agree that those two people seem first to align with the stated goal and to rise to a clear level to join the Committee. Others should be encouraged to be involved, even if not on the Committee, per se.”
- Supervisor Glenn added, “I appreciate that. Al is the head of our Planning Board, and if we can get someone from the Zoning Board it would help with where we’re going, working hand-in-hand. I think it might be good to consider #1: Al and #2: someone from the ZBA.” [Doug Purcell is prior ZBA Chair.]
- Anita Long asked, “Lynn Hollister [from the ZBA] was here at a prior meeting. Did he write a letter?”
- Chris Foss replied, “No. I have not heard from him.”
- Supervisor Glenn said, “Yes. He was on the list, the magic list.”

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- Anita Long added, “I’ve known Lynn for 25 years, and I’ve seen him on the ZBA. He’s fair-minded with good attention to detail, and a team player. I wish he had reached out with a letter.”
- Jeremy Manning noted, “The Town Board set a process for the public. If he’s interested, have him send a letter. But we cannot just take someone who has not sent a letter, when others have.”
- Al Kozakiewicz added, “The unwieldiness of any committee goes up exponentially with the number of members. It makes it harder to get through the everyday business. You’ve got really two objectives here. One is to produce a document. The other — which I consider a completely separate task — is the content of the document. I think the business of producing the document, you want to keep the people involved in that as small as possible, otherwise it becomes unwieldy. You could get 30 people in here. You would have an unwieldy committee, and you still might not have the diversity of viewpoints that you want to have for the content of the document. So, I don’t think there’s anything that stops you from soliciting input from as many people as possible. I don’t think — my opinion — you have to be a member of this group to do that, either for you to seek it or for them to provide it.”
- Jeremy Manning added, “Good points, and your point last time was valid. The position of committee members is not to advance their opinions. We’re not writing the document. The contractors will do that, and be the ones who facilitate all the public focus groups and bring in the public as well to move the process along. Your point stands. With 12 to 15 people, it gets to be a bit much.”
- Supervisor Glenn asked, “What do you see as the max number?”
- Al Kozakiewicz replied, “Seven or eight?”
- Chris Foss said, “That’s what we have.”
- Al Kozakiewicz added, “Actually, 7 or 9. You need an odd number for the parliamentary procedure. Something like that doesn’t become too unwieldy. Otherwise, you’re meeting will go 6:00 to 10:00.”
- Chris Foss recalled, “When I worked on the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Johnstown, it seems like we had maybe 13. That would have been my cap number. Part of that is that we would need more people for a quorum. With 13, we would need 7, not just 5. That being said, we’ve opened the door to these people. I think that basically this whole list is good people. They come from a wide range, including long-time residents and who have been involved previously.”
- Al Kozakiewicz suggested, “One of the things you might consider is having subcommittees. You might think of this group as being the project managers to produce the document. I’m thinking of technical projects. They always have a person who is head of the technical aspects of the project. They basically gather requirements to do designs. Hopefully, I’m not erroneously transposing a technical project onto this, but it might be more wieldy, if that’s a word, to have 1 or 2 people from this committee that, for example, gathers input from various subject matter experts. You all have experience too. I’m just cautious about the ability to get things done if everybody is responsible for everything.”
- Chris Foss agreed, “That was my concern. I voiced that to Cassandra from DOS. I guess what I would say at this point, and feel free to tell me I’m wrong (but in a nice way), is that we have this list of 6 people. That would give us 14 on the committee. Should we ask the Town Board to take this group and not pick through it? It’s possible we’ll end up with an odd number of people at meetings.”
- Anita Long noted, “I’m surprised that Barb sent a letter. I spoke to her not long ago, and she expressed interest in being part of a focus group. In the 2 years that she was directly involved, she only made one or two meetings. She always had conflicts with her demanding work schedule.”
- Jeremy Manning and Anita Long noted that Barb’s emergency management experience is important.

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- Anita Long said, “Every one of them should be engaged, thanked, and involved somehow. I guess, though, I’m not yet convinced about why every single one of them should be on the committee.”
- Chris Foss said, “My thought is that it’s hard to get people to express interest, who’s willing to do anything. If you have someone, maybe you want to grab them. But this is not my decision alone. Maybe you all want to pick and choose on this list, or maybe say that 8 people is plenty and we can have these people in other groups? I’m looking for input.”
- Art Wadsworth asked, “Do you mean focus groups?”
- Chris Foss said, “Yes. We’re going to be doing focus groups. These people can have input, certainly.”
- Art Wadsworth added, “If our target number is not that high, then why inundate the council with 15 names or 7 names, if you’re not looking for 7 people?”
- Chris Foss added, “We’ve talked about having some of these people, and others, come in and meet with us and pick their brains for a meeting, rather than all of this. For example, we talked about Nicole Dettenrieder from the school district. We mentioned Jake Tennis from Royal Mountain. Kyle Price from Caroga Arts. We talked about doing meetings where we just talk with those people or a group for a half hour at a meeting. We could do it that way. Maybe if you want, we could take people with direct knowledge, like Al and maybe Lynn (if he’s interested and sends a letter, but his work schedule gets rough too). If we’re meeting at 6:00 PM, sometimes that’s hard for people.”
- Anita Long asked, “Rachel, as Vice Chair, you were involved with the input from DOS. What’s your sense about bridging and aligning with that?”
- Rachel Simonds added, “I think that we should add a couple of them. I was thinking of this as if we were going to review their resumes and see who is the best fit, and ask what don’t we have already? So, I don’t think that we should add all of them. We can save some and know that these are people we can contact if we need a specific thing. Out of all of them, from what I was reading, ah, I don’t know Chase Steenburgh, but.”
- Chris Foss added, “He’s young, with an engineering degree. I know him and his dad.”
- Rachel Simonds continued, “He looks like someone who has been here since childhood and now has moved here and wants to be here. That’s a different perspective. He has been working professionally on this sort of municipal thing, and he seemed enthusiastic from his letter. He brings energy. If I were to pick somebody, it would be him to join, plus Nicole. We want the school to stay here and have population. Those two would bring something of value that we do not already have.”
- Jeremy Manning added, “Agreed. Plus, Al, as Planning Chair, given that this is a planning document.”
- Al said, “I won’t be offended if you don’t want me.”
- Rachel Simonds observed, “So, if we recommended adding 3, then we would be at 11. Right?”
- Supervisor Glenn asked, “Are you including Lynn Hollister in that?”
- Anita Long noted, “I like Lynn and am not opposed, but if he has work or other conflicts then that’s an issue. Plus, there’s a separate grant with DOS to revise the Zoning Ordinance. Frankly, I’d like to see the Town (and I’m willing to help) write and submit another grant to do that second piece for zoning revisions. I think Lynn should really be involved in that phase. Now? Maybe or maybe not.”
- Rachel Simonds added, “We don’t want to use up everybody’s energy and time.”
- Jeremy Manning asked, “When we have the committee, what’s the next steps? The RFP is out, right?”
- Chris Foss replied, “The RFP is out. If we can decide about the recommendation to add new members or not add new members, then the next thing is reviewing the RFP proposals from consultants.”

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- Anita Long replied, “The Town Board Meeting is May 13, and they will make the committee appointments then. On that day, the proposals from the RFP are also due: May 13 at 2:00 PM.”
- Chris Foss said, “Ok. So, we would have time after that to review proposals. The next question is, ‘Would we all meet to do that?’ Do we want a subcommittee to review and come back with top 3?”
- Anita Long said, “Can we come back to that? Here, the new members will be appointed in time to be part of the review and selection of a consultant. That’s important and valuable.”
- Jim Hale added, “I agree with Rachel about the 3 members. I don’t want to slight anyone. Jed is a fantastic guy. He’s very active in West Caroga. But he is not here for several months in the winter.”
- Jeremy Manning said, “We should definitely bring him in, and all the lake association leaders.”
- Chris Foss agreed, “I’ve not met him, but we had an interesting half hour phone conversation.”
- Jim Hale added, “He’s been here forever. His mother and family have been here forever.”
- Anita Long agreed about the value and perspective that Jed Potocar brings to the planning process.
- Al Kozakiewicz said, “Won’t your consultant write the document? Maybe the logical thing is to be talking with these people?”
- Chris Foss emphasized, “We want to keep our local input into this. I’ve seen some of these other comprehensive plans that have just been handed to a consulting firm. The City of Johnstown had one done in the 1960s, and it never got updated until the 1990s. Consultants had big plans for a major byway through the middle of the city. It would’ve killed downtown. Like what they did in Amsterdam. Here, we want to keep our input valuable. I think if we get the right consultant, then we will.”
- Art Wadsworth added, “It would be good to get an engineer on the committee.”
- Chris Foss added, “Chase Steenburgh would be good. I’ve met him once or twice. I know his father better and a couple of his aunts. They’re a good family. I’ve done some work with them. They’re around quite a bit. I run into them. He’s looking to build a business in town here... They do civil and architectural engineering... septic systems, houses, community buildings.”
- Jim Hale moved, “I’ll make a motion to recommend Chase [Steenburgh], Nicole [Dettenrieder], and Al [Kozakiewicz]. We can also keep the other names on file.”
- Rachel Simonds seconded the motion.
- Jeremy Manning asked, “We still have 2 weeks. Right? Is the door still open?”
- Chris Foss said, “If something comes up, we can run it by everybody by email. Three people puts the size of the committee at a manageable level, not too many people.”
- Anita Long noted, “The notice was open until [2:00 PM May 8] the Friday before the meeting.”
- Rachel Simonds agreed, “If needed, we can communicate by email before then.”
- Anita Long asked to clarify, “So. Do you think that Aaron Enfield should be a staff or member?”
- Chris Foss replied, “He is professional staff. In Johnstown, Jim Mraz was head of the Planning Department and a Johnstown resident. I asked him, ‘Do you want to be on the committee?’ He said, ‘No. I’ll work with you to work this thing through.’ So, Aaron is going to be paid as professional staff.”
- Al Kozakiewicz agreed, “With the Caroga Zoning Ordinance, Jim Mraz was strictly an advisor. When it came to voting on some facet of what was going to go in there, he was not involved in voting. But, honestly, he did most of the work on the current *Town of Caroga Zoning Ordinance*.”
- Anita Long agreed, “I support these 3, plus, thanking the rest, engaging to find a place to be involved. The 3 are a good recommendation, and we defer to the Town Board for the final decision.”

- Chris Foss called a vote, and the committee voted unanimously (6-0) to recommend to the Town Board adding to the Comprehensive Plan Committee:
 - **Nicole Dettenrieder** (Wheelerville School Superintendent),
 - **Al Kozakiewicz** (Caroga Planning Board Chair), and
 - **Chase Steenburgh** (Steenburgh Consulting Engineering, PLLC).

5. RFP

- The RFP was released April 9. Proposals are due May 13, 2026 at 2:00 PM (PDF plus 3 paper copies).
- Linda Gilbert and Rachel Simonds posted to Caroga.Town & <https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/>.
- Aaron Enfield posted the RFP with the American Planning Association, New York Planning Federation, and LinkedIn, and mailed the RFP and a cover letter to 27 firms, including 15 MWBE certified firms.
- Chris Foss is logging communication. He summarized questions (QR code, physical address, budget).
- We have received one proposal to date. They mostly do business plans. We are waiting for more.
- How do we want to put all of the proposals together? Do we want a subcommittee?
- Rachel Simonds noted, "I thought we would each review and score them individually with a scoring rubric and then talk about it to come to a consensus together. That would be fair."
- Jim Hale said that he agreed with Rachel, but is hoping it's not 20+ proposals. Can we pare it to 10? In some cases, three people in a room can look at it and do a preliminary sort first.
- Anita Long also agreed with Rachel about distributing, so each member can read and do a rating. Cass Leopold may also be assisting with the process and helping to prepare for interviews.
- Chris Foss said that he can distribute the PDFs to Committee members.
- Anita Long noted, "DOS does not have a rubric, beyond what is in the RFP scoring summary. I drafted and distributed with the 4/30/2026 meeting announcement [sgcp-rubric-04-28-2026.pdf](#), as a possible way to score or rate proposals. It just put wording from the RFP into a rating spreadsheet."
- The group reviewed the draft scoring table and discussed how to do that.
- Rachel Simonds said that if we want to do this really fairly, we could each do the section ratings ourselves and then send them to one person, and that one person would do the weights and create the list of who scored the highest. Rachel and Anita could do that in Excel.
- Rachel also suggested ways to simplify the draft scoring form (4B, 6B, 6D, 6E).
- Al Kozakiewicz added, "I would definitely check references. Talk to their customers. Not everyone."
- Rachel suggested, "We could do that for the top scoring ones...Not on the rubric."
- Chris Foss agreed that calling references would be a good check on things and could do that piece.

6. Action Items

- **Comprehensive Plan Committee Members:** The Town Board will appointment additional members.
- **Consultants:** Chair Foss will address questions, receive proposals, and distribute to the committee.
- **Ratings:** Anita Long will update the rubric. Each Committee member will rate consultant proposals.

7. Next Meeting:

The next CPC monthly meeting will be 6:00 PM Thursday, May 28, 2026 at Caroga Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita McMartin Long,
CPC Member and Secretary