

June 26, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)

CPC Chair Chris Foss led this monthly meeting at Caroga Town Hall from 6:00 to 7:15 PM. Committee members present were: Chris Foss, Rachel Simonds, Anita Long, Jim Hale, and Doug Purcell. Jeremy Manning, Dave Cummings, and Kim Walker were unable to attend.

1. Prior Meeting Minutes

- The committee waived reading and accepted 04/24/2025 monthly meeting minutes.
- The 5/29/2025 meeting was cancelled, and so no minutes exist for May 2025.

2. Town Board Action

- On April 11, 2025, the Town Board passed a Resolution of Support and Consent to apply for the 2025 NYS DOS Smart Growth Community Planning Program Grant (see Resolution below).
- For application instructions, see <https://dos.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2025/05/rfa-25-opdsg-11.pdf>.

3. 2025 Community Survey

- The Survey is open through August 15 at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6YKGPTZ> with links from <https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com> and <https://caroga.town> (and paper at Town Hall).
- Postcard invitations were mailed to 1642 families from Caroga's tax roll list. Given recent deaths, moves, and seasonal forwarding, 136 were returned (40 were undeliverable, 96 personally delivered).
- Associations for West Caroga Lake, East Caroga Lake, and Canada Lake have included survey invitations in their 2025 newsletters. Notices were posted for Pine Lake and Stoner Lake Associations.
- Postcard invitations have been placed in local stores, restaurants, venues, churches, and museum.
- Postcards were also delivered to Wheelerville School for each staff member and were sent via email. (Heather Insogna said the Transportation Superintendent is leaving—not the School Superintendent.)
- In addition, postcards and paper surveys were placed regularly in the Caroga Lake Post Office.
- On 6/26/2025, 435 surveys have been completed. That is 26% to date, with 50 days yet to respond.

4. Tentative Vision & Table of Contents

- Committee members discussed the *Vision & Table of Contents* (agreeing to defer *How to Get There*).
- A possible draft revision of the 2011 *Vision* was proposed as follows:
"[In 2050], the Town of Caroga will continue to be a...[friendly] rural town where... [people have strong connections to each other and the region. In the years ahead,] [r]esidents and visitors will have available various year-round outdoor recreational opportunities,... [community buildings, housing options, visitor] accommodations, diverse restaurants [,and other locally-owned businesses]. [Caroga's Hamlet will feature]... a strong commercial [hub that includes]... Town Center... [—] located near and around... Sherman's... Park [—]... [with] walkable, integrated, open-air, multiuse development,...[which integrates] streetscapes and landscapes...[to enhance local experiences and] uses...[Caroga's Route 10 / 29A Hamlet corridor will] be the most diverse [land use] area of the Town. The Town will be recognized... [as an attractive place to work, learn, and raise a family, surrounded by] natural beauty, [abundant lakes,] rich history, [vibrant music,]...and year-round outdoor recreation opportunities."

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- The Committee also discussed other possible ideas for the vision, contents, and themes. This included a basic Smart Growth inspired framework organized around: (1) The Caroga Experience, (2) Our Natural Environment, (3) Our Built Environment, and (4) Our Economy.
- In addition, an initial “background” section might possibly include an introduction along with summaries of “where we are” and “where we want to be”. A final “targeted impacts” section might possibly include “vision, priorities, & strategic plans” and “outdoor recreation & hamlet/infrastructure revitalization”, along with a brief practical guide for “implementation & accountability.”
- Possible wording to introduce a redeveloped vision and/or guiding themes might be:
 - “The Town of Caroga envisions its enduring Adirondack wild character, irreplaceable outdoor recreation, and central hamlet revitalization as essential to its vibrant community experience, natural environment, built environment, and economic opportunities.”*
 - “Phase1 preliminary planning has revealed Caroga’s enduring Adirondack wild character, irreplaceable outdoor recreation, and central infrastructure revitalization as essential themes for the town’s vibrant community experience, natural environment, built environment, and economic opportunities.”*
- To improve readability, the Committee also explored different options for developing summaries and highlights in the plan itself, while moving (versus not moving) some 2011 Plan content details to appendices (like other plans in the region). For example, Appendices might include: Table Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Priorities; Town of Caroga History; Demographic Details; Municipal Properties List; Natural Assets List; Local Businesses & Rental Properties Lists; Points of Interest Map; Land Use Maps.
- The Committee seeks a community-inspired plan that incorporates fresh Smart Growth principles.
- Ongoing discussions and input about the vision, contents, organization, and structure are welcome.

5. 2025 NYS DOS Smart Growth Community Planning Program Grant Application

- Committee members discussed the proposed draft cfa-questions_caroga_2025sgcp_2025-06-16.pdf.
- Members expressed agreement with the Town Board about submitting the 2025 grant proposal.
- Members agreed to work together on revising and editing questions, with Anita Long submitting CFA.
- Barb DeLuca reached out to clarify details and to express support with the Committee for the grant.
- Chris Foss said that he would share his notes and input points via email.
- Doug Purcell read the grant proposal. He offered focused input and discussion about use of the term “hamlet.” Ambiguities will require either using a different word (e.g., “downtown” or “highway corridor”) or defining the term Adirondack “hamlet” in keeping with “APA Hamlet Land Use Area”, as tentatively discussed during the 4/24/2025 meeting (see minutes “Town Center” & “Hamlet Center”).
- Rachel Simonds read the grant proposal and shared specific points of discussion and edits.
 - P. 28 Q_17708. Edit tone about NYS DEC “neglecting” UMP for Ferris Lake Wild Forest.
 - P. 29 Q_17709. Edit to add more details about “priorities” and projects, based on survey input.
 - P. 31 Q_17711. Edit to add more about “transportation”, especially emphasizing pedestrian-friendly spaces, parking, and green landscapes, like those noted in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan.
 - P. 40 Q_15216. Edit “preliminary work” to include Survey Monkey tally to date from Rachel.
 - P. 41 Q_13013. Edit wording to clarify the “press-ready description.”
- Rachel also shared helpful detailed written feedback and edits about the draft grant PDF via email.
- The Q_575 “Project Description” (P. 14, 1200 characters) will be edited to clarify and update details.
- Overall efforts with editing will revise tone at specific points and broaden local community examples.

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6. Community Input

- Jed Potocar of West Caroga Lake shared specific suggestions for the Committee to consider about:
 - (1) facilitated **focus groups** to help guide the planning process,
 - (2) **regional municipal cooperations** to seek opportunities for government efficiencies, and
 - (3) **detailed implementation guides** to improve the plan's deliverables and accountability.
- West Caroga Lake residents also welcome reviews of options for phased wastewater solutions.

7. Action Items

- This coming month, each Committee member will continue to contribute to wording for a revised:
 - (1) **Vision Statement** and (2) **Table of Contents**.
- We aim to develop a revised **Vision** and **Table of Contents** to guide work, and then revise again later.
- For the grant, each Committee member will review the proposal and contribute input for revisions.
 - Anita Long sent the proposal (including draft responses and budget) to Town Board & Committee.
 - Chris Foss will reach out and communicate with planners to get input about the proposed budget.
 - Jeremy Manning shared support letter contacts, & Anita Long will send requests for support letters.
 - After the 7/22 meeting and with Committee approval, Anita Long will work with others on revisions, and submit the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) before 7/31/2025.
 - Committee members will share grant input via email, and Anita Long will send a revised draft PDF, so that the group can work together to review and approve the final grant proposal submission.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting at Town Hall will be on the FOURTH TUESDAY July 22, 2025 at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Anita McMartin Long
CPC Member and Secretary

2025 NYS DOS Smart Growth Community Planning Program **Town of Caroga Resolution of Support and Consent**

Whereas, the Caroga Town Board aims to demonstrate committed local leadership and strong support for Smart Growth Community Planning;

Whereas, on June 12, 2024 the Town Board appointed a Comprehensive Planning Committee to work with the Fulton County Planning Department to prepare an updated Comprehensive Plan, pursuant to NYS Town Law Section 267-a Article 16 Zoning & Planning and Environmental Conservation Law Article 6 State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act;

Whereas, on April 9, 2025, the Town Board executed the State's Pro-Housing Resolution and the Town Supervisor has actively pursued Pro-Housing Communities certification;

Whereas, for many years, the Town of Caroga has advanced specific steps to support sound infrastructure planning, energy-efficiency projects, a housing rental policy, a smart growth mountain bike trail program, a smart growth lake stewardship program, town center revitalization, age-friendly youth and senior programs, and other initiatives;

Whereas, the Town is committed to basing the updated Comprehensive Plan on a robust, inclusive and creative public engagement process to empower residents and stakeholders in the planning process and to ensure that a full range of perspectives are represented in the plan;

Whereas, the Town of Caroga envisions its enduring Adirondack wild character, epic outdoor recreation, and central hamlet revitalization as essential to its vibrant community experience, natural environment, built environment, and economic opportunities;

Whereas, the Town of Caroga aims to refine priorities for targeted goals and to show readiness to deliver projects, informed by Smart Growth principles and related best practice standards to achieve comprehensive and sustainable impacts that are community-focused, environmentally-sound, financially-viable, energy-efficient, and action-oriented;

Whereas, the Town of Caroga has demonstrable local need and indicators of economic distress, justifying the essential value of discretionary grant funding;

Whereas, the Town Board aims to contribute and has provided local budgetary support for comprehensive planning and engineering planning consultations and seeks to comply with discretionary state funding requirements to advance priority projects and programs;

Whereas, the Town of Caroga is ready to move forward;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Caroga Town Board supports and consents to submitting a 2025 Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning Grant through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application. If awarded, the State will cover 90-percent of costs, with 10-percent coming from the Town for planning and engineering consultations and services.

**Passed unanimously on June 11, 2025 by the Caroga Town Board
Supervisor Ralph Palcovic and Council Members Barb Deluca,
Jack Glenn, Matt Cooper, and Rick Sturgess**