

## August 1, 2024 Organizational Meeting Minutes

### Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)

CPC Chair Chris Foss led this organizational meeting at Caroga Town Hall from 6:00 PM to 6:51 PM.

Committee members present were: Chris Foss, Rachel Simonds, Anita Long, Jeremy Manning, Doug Purcell, Dave Cummings, and Jim Hale. Town Board Liaison Barb Deluca also joined the meeting.

#### 1. Meeting Structure and Public Comment Period

- Consistent with NYS Open Meetings Law, meetings will be open to the public with advance notice.
- Discussion noted the value of giving people a way to communicate in person with the Committee.
- The Committee agreed that meetings will include an open Public Comment Period, where residents will be invited to write their name, summarize their comment, and speak for up to three minutes.

#### 2. Comprehensive Plan Committee Officers

- On 7/10/2024, the Town Board passed a resolution appointing Chris Foss as Chair.
- Rachel Simonds will serve as Vice Chair, and Anita Long will serve as Secretary.

#### 3. Planning Process Discussion

- Discussion explored different options for structuring Caroga's comprehensive planning process.
- Chris Foss proposed starting initially by reviewing section-by-section the 2011 *Town of Caroga Comprehensive Plan* (see [https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive\\_plan/](https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/)).
- Anita Long noted that we have four different process examples to follow. Three are from Caroga's prior planning processes in 2011, 2002, and 1978. A distinct fourth option aims to increase practical impacts and grant investments for essential planned municipal projects. Specifically, New York State has best practice guidelines and a sample workplan for Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning. Setting up for a near-term community planning grant and positioning for long-term state and federally funded infrastructure grants require closely following such guidelines and workplans: (see <https://dos.ny.gov/smart-growth-community-planning-and-zoning-grant-program-24-opdsg-5>; [https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive\\_plan/sample-work-plan\\_comprehensive-planning.pdf](https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/sample-work-plan_comprehensive-planning.pdf); [https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive\\_plan/cfa\\_questions\\_sgcp2024\\_2024-07-07.pdf](https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/cfa_questions_sgcp2024_2024-07-07.pdf)).
- Given that the Town Board did not approve submitting the July 31 Smart Growth Community Planning grant application, the grant options to bring money into to the Town are now deferred.
- Jeremy Manning added, "We probably don't know yet if we want to go that route... We'll go through this and get to a preliminary point where we're either going to keep what we currently have; or if we want a larger overhaul, then we can look at a funding direction at that point. Maybe in the interim, we can start by doing more of a review... There might be a point where we want to redirect and take a new approach to make it consistent, if we decide as a group that we want to go for a larger plan that sets us up for funding better in the future....At some point, it may be clear we have to do that."
- Doug Purcell noted, "If we go through the *Comprehensive Plan* from 2011 and start to look at what the vision was, and you say to yourself, 'Why didn't that vision happen? What stopped it from happening?' If that starts pointing in the direction of funding, then it becomes more apparent that we ought to give some consideration to that process as well."
- The Committee agreed to start initially by: (a) reviewing sections of the 2011 *Plan*, (b) updating demographic data with County Planners, and (c) interviewing key stakeholders from the community.

#### 4. General Plan Comments

- Chris Foss invited discussion about what is missing from comprehensive planning done back in 2011.
- Identified Priorities, Tangible Goals, & Actionable Steps:

Jeremy Manning said, “I’d love to see...tangible goals and actionable steps that could be utilized with funding opportunities to hit goals and priorities. Now there’s a bunch of ideas and next page... When I write grants,... that’s a question we get a lot: Is this project a priority in your *Comprehensive Plan* (reference page numbers and show exactly where it is)? Whatever the project is, they want to see that it’s really targeted...so that this is what you want to do and the Town Board endorsed that.”
- Public Participation Plan:

Council Member Barb DeLuca noted, “One thing that stood out the most for me was that it’s a *Comprehensive Plan* from the Town of Caroga and something like 7% of the population had a say. Look at how they communicated with the public. That is important. This group must find ways to reach out. I have a whole bunch of things that I’m willing to help with to get the public involved. I think it’s important that everybody has a say, and not just a very small group of people.”

Anita Long agreed and said, “I would also add that a Smart Growth process requires a Public Participation Plan—which at a minimum includes a community survey, informational meetings, public workshops, stakeholder interviews, and a website [with links to announcements, presentations, and documents prepared during the planning process]. Having robust public participation helps to justify project priorities, based on evidence of what town people want to do... So, writing a Public Participation Plan is important, after initial Plan reviews and Profile updates.”
- Initial Stakeholder Interviews:

Chris Foss continued, “That’s one of the things I’d intended to do. So, one of the big ideas of the last *Plan* was the Town Center idea [around Sherman’s Park]. Well, a lot of that has radically changed, because nobody had any idea at the time that **Caroga Arts** would be in town and running a music festival there. So, I spoke with Kyle Price, the head of the music festival, to have him come to talk with us at the next meeting while he is in town. That’s my plan. Along with him, there are some other [community stakeholder] people—like Jake Tennis who is the new owner of **Royal Mountain**, Jeremy Manning at **Wheelerville Trails**, people at the **Golf Course**, administrators at **Wheelerville School**, and a number of other people—who are trying to do things in Town that are interesting...We want to know where they want to go.”

Barb DeLuca agreed and said, “It’s important that people like that are involved in this discussion either individually or in workshops for **businesses and other groups**.”

Jeremy Manning noted, “That kind of alignment with anybody who has a project going or planned helps them out a lot to point to that and say that projects are referenced in the *Comprehensive Plan* and it’s something that the Town is supporting and advocating for strategically. Get as many people as you possibly can to put something out, like, ‘If you have a business in Town or are involved in any way, reach out to us with your long-term vision.’ Getting them all aligned is really important.”

Anita Long added, “Another stakeholder is the **Adirondack Park Agency (APA)**. So, maybe Robyn Burgess or Kate-Lyn Knight, given that we have an Agency-Approved Local Land Use Plan (ALLUP).”

Chris Foss noted, “I’ve also had a couple conversations with a couple people at the **Fulton County Planning Department**—Scott Henze and Aaron Enfield—and the **County Tourism Committee**.”

Barb DeLuca continued, “**Caroga Tourism...**and the County Tourism as well.”

Dave Cummings asked, “Is Kolbe still there [with County Tourism]?”

Jeremy Manning answered, “Yes. She’s the County Tourism Coordinator: Carla Kolbe.”

The Committee will continue to work together to develop a target stakeholders list.

- Demographic Profile:

Chris Foss said, “In the next week or so, I will connect with County Planners to discuss updates from recent census data, so when we get to that point, we will have that information.”

Dave Cummings introduced himself and said, “Getting the demographics is the first step. The second step is getting people’s input...Strategic planning is always 20 years ahead, and you’ve got to stay true to your mission, and it does not include budgeting, just keeping an eye on project funding but I wouldn’t do a project if there wasn’t agreement that this is a good thing to do.”

- Websites:

Rachel Simonds emphasized the value of a website either at <https://Caroga.Town> or another site, and she suggested public outreach with QR codes to send links to go right to a target webpage.

Jeremy Manning said, “It’s not just a website. It’s getting people to it. Websites just sit there. You have to get people to go to it. We need to explore how it is presented, so that people see it.”

Barb DeLuca said that as a starting point, she will try to work with technical staff to setup a specific folder and menu link on the Town website (e.g., [https://Caroga.Town/comprehensive\\_plan](https://Caroga.Town/comprehensive_plan)).

- Comprehensive Plan Budget:

Questions exist about basic funds needed to support comprehensive planning in 2024 and 2025. The 2024 Town of Caroga Budget includes \$1,000.00 for Comprehensive Planning plus \$2,400.00 for Planning Contractual Expenses. On 7/10/2024, the Town Board approved a 2025 Fulton County Planning Contract for \$1,500.00 of comprehensive planning assistance with additional hourly service.

## 5. Next Meeting

- Rachel Simonds underscored the importance of a regular long-term meeting schedule.
- Barb DeLuca said that meeting more than once per month is too much. She also noted:
  - Meeting notice needs to go to Town Clerk Linda Gilbert who is webmaster of <https://Caroga.Town>.
  - The meeting Agenda should be distributed to the Committee at least 5 days prior to each meeting.
  - Meeting minutes must be done, approved by the Committee, and posted publicly on the web.
  - A Monthly Town Board Report must be sent to the Board the week before each Board meeting.
- For now, CPC meetings will be at Town Hall the last Thursday of each month starting at 6:00 PM.
- **The next meeting date will be August 29, 2024** to discuss the 2011 Vision and to begin stakeholder interviews. Mr. Foss will invite Caroga Arts Artistic & Executive Director Kyle Price to the meeting.