

October 30, 2025 Meeting Minutes Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC)

Minutes summarize details of the meeting, and endnotes cite source links for readers' reference.

CPC Chair Chris Foss led this monthly meeting at Caroga Town Hall from 6:00 to 7:10 PM.

Committee members present were: Chris Foss, Rachel Simonds, Anita Long, Jim Hale, and Doug Purcell.

Committee members Jeremy Manning, Dave Cummings, and Kim Walker were unable to attend.

Tina Evans, a member of the public and business owner, also attended the meeting.

1. Prior Meeting Minutes

- The Committee voted unanimously to approve 9/25/2025 meeting minutes (see <https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/meeting-minutes/>).

2. Town Board Actions

- After Chris Foss received a revised EDR proposal, he sent it to Supervisor Ralph Palcovic for approval. At the next Town Board meeting on 11/12/2025 at 6:30 PM, the Town Board will review the request to approve the revised pre-grant EDR contract for their hourly planning services (for details, see 9/25 CPC minutes). This follows the 2026 Budget request of \$10,000 for hourly planning regardless of grant funds (see 2026 Town Budget at https://townofcaroga.com/finances/2025-10-22_2026-adopted-budget.pdf).
- Supervisor Palcovic approved help from County Planners for grant Request for Proposals & Contract.
- The 2025 *Community Survey Report* was well received, and the Board asked for 50 color copies for the Town Clerk to distribute (see <https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/survey/>).

3. Town Center Road Reconfiguration

Chris Foss invited discussion of the proposal to reconfigure the 595' section of the Shore Road and Bath Ave through Sherman's Park. He asked the group, "Is this something we want to weigh in on?"

- Rachel Simonds replied, "My opinion is, No... We're not there yet."
- Doug Purcell and Anita Long asked, "Why not?" and aimed to address Committee members' concerns.
- Doug Purcell noted that the current 2011 *Town of Caroga Comprehensive Plan* features Town Center and Sherman's Park, including this priority project that improves safe access and walkability (p. 5, <https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/2011-town-of-caroga-adopted-comprehensive-plan-1.pdf>). He noted past temporary road closures for events at Sherman's, where safety is an ongoing concern. He also noted that Caroga Arts is pivotal to community growth and supports benefits for everyone.
- Jim Hale said, "I think it's going to pass, but I'm personally opposed... As far as CAC, I support them, but... I want music shows other than flutes and violins... They're doing their own thing... I just want 3 or 4 other shows for other people to come, not just come and leave town... I want it to be inclusive."
- Chris Foss noted the variety of shows, including various rock, folk, jazz, country, and tribute bands, including Bacon Brothers, War and Treaty, Laufey... "They've had a ton of different stuff all summer."
- Chris Foss also pointed to commerce benefits (food, lodging, etc.) of events like reunions & weddings.
- Anita Long noted that Caroga Arts has an ongoing collaborative and inclusive process for all. The road project improves the public space to be more walkable and pedestrian-friendly. Sherman's is a community gathering place owned by a community organization, like the museum, lake associations, snowmobile club, fire company, fish & game club, and so on. These volunteers and organizations add value to our Town (see <https://carogaarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Special-Loon-call-print-3.pdf>).

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- As a community member sharing public input, Tina Evans described hearing both sides of the debate. As a newcomer and owner of Logged Inn, she supports all the businesses, eateries, and organizations.
- Anita Long expressed support and emphasized needs to address concerns and misunderstandings.
 - Public records show planning details. Caroga Arts has openly engaged the community for years.
 - Recently on 8/5/2025, Caroga Arts hosted a public discussion. The team detailed how to deliver the Town's 2011 plan to reconfigure the 595' section of West Caroga Lake East Shore Road and Bath Avenue through Sherman's Park. Doing so improves safety and pedestrian-friendly access, at no cost to the Town or taxpayers (see https://townofcaroga.com/news_flashes/flash_2025-08-05.pdf).
 - Caroga Arts' leaders (Kyle Price, Stephanie Price-Wong, and Rick Ruby) have followed up with officials to get additional constructive input about how to make plans the best they can be.
 - Procedures must follow NYS Highway Law §171(2). In October, Caroga Arts submitted a written request to the Highway Superintendent and Town Board for a road use discontinuance order on land Caroga Arts owns. The request included more than 200 community signatures of support.
 - In this Highway Law §171(2) approval process, community feedback is valuable. However, no statute authorizes an advisory referendum, so Court authority prohibits an advisory referendum. The Highway Superintendent and Town Board cannot delegate their governmental responsibility.
 - The Town's official policy and decision guide is the *Comprehensive Plan*, per *Town Law Article 16*.
 - Plus, the project aligns with Smart Growth "Complete Street" strategies. So, working together to approve and complete this project shows Smart Growth capacity to help get future Town grants.
 - Approval has many benefits. For example, it calms traffic, improves walkability, enhances year-round recreation and fulfills long-standing community planning goals. Whereas, the status-quo alternative means maintaining a known safety hazard (as detailed by Sheriff Giardino on 8/5/25). More delays only forfeit public benefits, increase crash risks, and add town liabilities. With many advantages and no cost to residents, there is no downside to approving the proposed project.
- Chris Foss concluded, "Because we're not all together now, let's hold off on it, and when we get to that section, let's do it at the proper time... When we discuss that Town Center part of the plan, then we can do that at that time." Committee members present agreed to defer input.

4. Draft Vision and Table of Contents

- Chris Foss advanced to discussion about drafts of a redeveloped *Table of Contents* and *Vision*.
- Previously, the Committee discussed a revised *Table of Contents*. One aim was to organize it to be more readable. Another aim was to align with a four-part Smart Growth Planning Framework:
 - (1) Community Experience, (2) Natural Environment, (3) Built Environment, & (4) Economy.
- This framework worked for presenting the *2025 Community Survey* Results. It also could be used to organize 2026 Public Workshops, and perhaps to redevelop and write the *Comprehensive Plan* itself.
- As previously discussed, a possible *Table of Contents* had a core *Comprehensive Plan* section with 4 chapters (*The Caroga Experience*, *Our Natural Environment*, *Our Built Environment*, *Our Economy*), an initial *Background* section with 3 chapters (*Introduction*, *Where We Are*, and *Where We Want to Be*); a final *Targeted Impacts* section with 3 parts (*Vision*, *Priorities*, & *Strategic Plans*; *Outdoor Recreation & Hamlet Revitalization*, and *Implementation & Accountability*); and Appendices with supporting info.
- Rachel Simonds suggested editing the "*Targeted Impacts*" section to be less specific at this time, with the following chapters: 8. *Vision & Priorities*, 9. *Strategic Plans*, 10. *Implementation*. Others agreed.
- A working draft *Table of Contents* is on the next page for review and approval at the next meeting.

(DRAFT) Table of
CONTENTS



Attributions & Foreword

BACKGROUND

- Chapter 1: Introduction**
- Chapter 2: Where We Are**
- Chapter 3: Where We Want To Be**

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Chapter 4: The Caroga Experience**
- Chapter 5: Our Natural Environment**
- Chapter 6: Our Built Environment**
- Chapter 7: Our Economy**

TARGETED IMPACTS

- Chapter 8: Vision & Priorities**
- Chapter 9: Strategic Plans**
- Chapter 10: Implementation**

APPENDICES

- Exhibit A. Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Priorities*
- Exhibit B. Town of Caroga History*
- Exhibit C. Demographic Details*
- Exhibit D. Municipal Properties*
- Exhibit E. Natural Assets*
- Exhibit F. Local Businesses & Rental Properties*
- Exhibit G. Points of Interest*
- Exhibit H. Land Use Maps*

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- Previously, the Committee also discussed a draft to focus and streamline the 2011 *Vision* 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."
- Discussion questioned the word, "Hamlet", given confusion about its meaning and local ambiguities. Other options might be "Town Center" or "Downtown." Chris Foss suggested "Central Business District." Others agreed to replace with word "Hamlet" and to get more public input in the future.
- Anita Long noted that prior ambiguities in Caroga include "Hamlet" referring to 2 different areas. On the one hand, the Town of Caroga has a Zoning District called "Caroga Hamlet." At the same time, Caroga is subject to "APA Hamlet" from the State's Adirondack Park Act Private Land Classification¹.
- Doug Purcell added, "Development in APA Hamlet is entirely in the purview of the Town of Caroga. Whereas, areas outside of the APA Hamlet allow the APA to provide input if the Town deviates from the Zoning Ordinance, such as with providing building variances...or Site Plan Review approval."
- Anita Long noted, "A problem with the prior plan was that they seemed unaware of what the APA guidelines were, so APA refused to approve the proposed 2011 Map... That's why it is dated 2018."
- Chris Foss added, "The APA has minimal density requirements...As far as Rural Use, that's 8.5 acres." [Resource Management Use is 42 acres. Low Intensity Use is 3.2 acres. Moderate is 1.3. APA Hamlet has no intensity guide.] "It doesn't necessarily mean you cannot have a smaller lot. It just means if you take a smaller lot out of a bigger piece, you've got to leave some to keep that density level."
- Anita Long noted, "It's a way to balance development with natural resource management...A way that APA and NYS are going is something called 'conservation design', so there's actually a bill that was passed in the NY Assembly and is now in the NY Senate. Conservation design includes clustering, with open space around it. If the APA Act is revised, there may be more of that clustering approach... In Caroga, we have not spelled out subdivisions. We've just been dealing with old development. If Caroga does grow, then we need a clear and concise statement about how to do subdivisions...We don't want sprawl. We want to plan, so we can address environmental needs and build the tax base."
- Chris Foss noted issues near Saratoga with subdivisions, where there has been more development.
- In Caroga, questions remain about revising the 2011 "Town Center" *Vision & Land Use Map*. Anita Long expressed wishes to help businesses and people who are here, especially if we look ahead to defining a central district for a NY Forward or DRI grant application to bring in resources for everyone. In Caroga, it's exciting that most businesses and organizations are locally owned and operated. So, another option might keep the "Town Center" District as a community hub in and around Sherman's Park, while also featuring a new boundary for Caroga's "Central Business District" that includes the whole "APA Hamlet" classification area, including more businesses and Wheelerville municipal area².

5. Action Items

A. **Hourly Consultant Services**

Chris Foss will work with the Town Board on the Committee's request to approve the contract for EDR hourly consulting (up to \$10,000) that is not contingent on the NYS DOS grant award.

B. **Planning Grant Draft Request for Proposals (RFP) & Contract**

Anita Long will work with Aaron Enfield and Scott Henze (as approved by Supervisor Palcovic) to draft the required RFP and Consultant Contract. (Award notices are expected later this year, and if Caroga is awarded, then these documents need to be approved by NYS Department of State.)

C. **Grant Preparation with Pro-Housing and Climate Smart Community Resources**

Anita Long shared info with the Committee and Town Board about needs to get certified and to participate in NYS Programs — Pro-Housing, Climate Smart, Clean Energy, AARP Age-Friendly Communities — to demonstrate capacities to help secure Smart Growth Infrastructure grants. The program also has free planning consultant services for municipalities who participate³.

D. **Ongoing Plan Review**

Committee members will review and share input on the revised draft *Table of Contents & Vision*.

6. Next Meeting

Due to upcoming holidays, the last two meetings of 2025 will be at 6:00 PM on Thursday November 20 and December 18 at Caroga Town Hall.

<https://carogacomprehensiveplan.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/comprehensive-plan-estimated-project-timeline.pdf>

Respectfully submitted,

Anita McMartin Long

CPC Member and Secretary

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Endnotes

The following source citations and links are for readers' reference about points made in the meeting.

¹ Caroga has an Agency-Approved Local Land Use Plan (ALLUP) *Zoning Ordinance* and *Land Use Map*, and the local land use plan must align with NYS's APA Act and *Land Classification Map*:

https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/cpc_2024_prior_vision_and_maps.pdf.

According to the APA Act, the Town of Caroga basically has home-rule discretion for Hamlet zoning. The NYS *Executive Law § 805 Adirondack Park Land Use and Development Plan* ("APA Act") provides:

"Hamlet areas will serve as the service and growth centers of the park. They are intended to accommodate a large portion of the necessary and natural expansion of the park's housing, commercial and industrial activities. In these areas, a wide variety of housing, commercial, recreational, social and professional needs of the park's permanent, seasonal and transient populations will be met. The building intensities that may occur in such areas will allow a high and desirable level of public and institutional services to be economically feasible. Because a hamlet is concentrated in character and located in areas where existing development patterns indicate the demand for and viability of service and growth centers, these areas will discourage the haphazard location and dispersion of intense building development in the park's open space areas. These areas will continue to provide services to park residents and visitors and, in conjunction with other land use areas and activities on both private and public land, will provide a diversity of land uses that will satisfy the needs of a wide variety of people."

² Discussion noted questions about defining a central development area for DRI planning and grant purposes, but the Town has the most development discretion within the APA Hamlet area and restrictions outside of it. Thus, one option for consideration is defining "APA Hamlet" as a possible future "Central Business District." As shown on the APA Land Map, the APA Hamlet area includes the main highway corridor along Route 10 / 29A from the State's Caroga Lake Campground to the Town's Wheelerville Trails Mountain Bike Park.

Town of Caroga "APA Hamlet" and Possible Future "Central Business District"



³ As noted, the following weblinks provide information and resources for NYS grant-related and capacity-building programs:

https://www.townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/csc_2025-10-17.pdf ,
https://www.townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/mvedd_community_visit_example_middleburgh.pdf ,
<https://hcr.ny.gov/phc> , <https://climatesmart.ny.gov/about/>