

State of New York
County of Fulton
Town of Caroga

Minutes of a Caroga Town Board work session held on Monday June 27, 2015 at 4 pm on site at the Sherman's property.

In attendance were: Supervisor Ottuso, Council Member Sullivan, Council Member Sturchio, Council Member Glenn. Council Member Frasier was absent. Approximately 35 member of the public also visited the property this afternoon.

It was noted that Mr. Parenti had garage sale items on the tables in the pavilion. He needs to remove them. Supervisor Ottuso pointed out an old cigarette machine in the main pavilion. Those present observed peeling paint, a broken beam upstairs, broken windows, sagging rafters all in the main pavilion.

At the outdoor (bumper car) pavilion kids have removed board for skate board ramps. The roof is sagging; the floor was wet on the south end of the building.

Carousel – the windows have been all redone and need to be put in. Supervisor Ottuso met with a state inspector who pointed out that all of the uncovered light bulbs need to be changed to plastic bulbs or covers put over the existing glass bulbs. There was one electrical connection that was only taped together. That needs to be properly connected with wire nuts. Mr. Parenti or others who have run the carousel need to train anyone who run it. Dave Richards former building maintenance person is interested in looking over the property.

At 4:50 pm the onsite inspection of the property ended and the meeting was reconvened to Caroga Town Hall.

At 5:05 pm the roll was called:

Supervisor Ottuso – Here
Council Member – Sullivan – Here
Council Member Frasier – Absent
Council Member Sturchio – Here
Council Member Glenn – Here

Supervisor Ottuso opened the meeting by asking "what did everybody think of Sherman's? Any comments?" Mr. Bishop stated the boards need to be taken care of at the outside pavilion before any kids get hurt. Mrs. Smith stated it was beautiful and a lot of work.

Tim Mitchel – in the pavilion on the second floor the old side of the roof is not sound there are really big sags in it. There is a broken rafter. If you look at the alignment it seems the whole roof should be rebuilt. In The newer part of the building (after the fire) there are trusses that are really big and once you get part way across then you can see the bottom was cut and you shouldn't cut a truss that big on the bottom cord without doing some very specific engineering work. He also noted as you walk up the stairs the sheetrock was coming apart. He thought a

structural engineer should look at the trusses. He guess is the trusses were cut and scabbed together.

The Carousel Building – Mr. Mitchel noted that the clerk pointed out a piece that holds the shroud of the turret is not fully connected. There is a bunch of rods coming off of it at least one of the rods was not connected. Supervisor Ottuso wondered if when the state does their inspection if they look at things like that.

The last time the buildings were open was in 2004 or 2005. The chamber has in the past couple of years used the property and had the carousel going. Supervisor Ottuso wants to bring Mr. Parenti in to talk about the infrastructure and how things run. He thought the town should pay him \$20 or \$25 per hr. The supervisor noted there definitely has to be some maintenance going on down there. It is going to take some money he noted.

Council Member Sturchio did some research on the cell tower. The town was offered \$200,000 if we had two others on the tower we could get \$36,000 a year and it would only take 6-7 years to make what we've been offered. Andrea Armstrong will be at the next town board meeting. She stated to the supervisor that they make the town an offer on what is there now and then if someone else goes on the town would get 60% of the revenue they collect. That is in the contract supposedly or they will make you another offer. Everything Mr. Sturchio read said don't give up your rights because you can make more money on your own. He has an article he found on the internet by just searching with google. He will print it for the board.

It was asked if the grant had been applied for yet. Supervisor Ottuso responded yes it is in the process. He just received a sample letter... the board received copies. Council Member Sullivan was not in favor of the resolution in the packet that gives the supervisor full reign over the entire process. The resolution would authorize the supervisor to have complete control over the grant. Council Member Sturchio noted it says the board signs over all their rights to the supervisor to make decisions on it. He was not comfortable with that either. Supervisor Ottuso stated we can change anything the board wants. It has to be in by the 6th. Supervisor Ottuso just wants to see the town get the grant. Council Member Sullivan stated that is debatable too. He is not necessarily in favor of the town getting the grant. "You are selling your soul to the state. The state will have complete control forever."

Mr. Manning asked what the plan was. Supervisor Ottuso noted one of the things that needs to be done is to secure the carousel building. He meant what was the plan in the grant. It is basically they've got it for Parks and Recreation. Mr. Syden said to basically look for parking and town beaches, maintenance on the buildings, restrooms. Once they get it set they (Labarge) will send us a copy of what we are asking for. Verbiage is an important thing in grants. The more you put into it and hit various aspects you get it. It is a corner stone project. He is almost certain the grant will come through. It will include lighting and walk ways; it is available for the public to review.

What we are applying for is forever, if we open a beach or bathrooms, we have to maintain this. Council Member Sullivan wants to have the ability to say yes or no. He asked the supervisor what it was going to cost us on an annual basis. Supervisor Ottuso stated that is something we

have to figure out. Council Member Sullivan thought we needed to know that before we even get to that point. (Clapping breaks out) Council Member Sullivan asked as a businessman would you do a plan like this and not know what it was going to cost as an end result.

Supervisor Ottuso stated as a businessman he likes to move forward with things. He wanted no grandstanding just to talk as a board. Supervisor Ottuso noted we only have this year to apply for this half million dollar grant. Council Member Sullivan noted we are going to have to spend money every year – forever to maintain this. Supervisor Ottuso responded “of course.” If you have a town beach it costs every year. Council Member Sullivan noted some have gotten out of it. He was not willing to make that step in that direction.

Supervisor Ottuso thought the board should work on any aspect of getting money for this project.

It was asked who decided it is in the best interest to open a beach? Supervisor Ottuso stated, “We just felt it was something that the people need around here.” Who is we? Supervisor Ottuso noted we haven’t decided to do anything yet. Mr. Manning noted the application says there will be a beach. Supervisor Ottuso stated we’d have money for a beach.

Eric Manning was under the impression that before this even got to that step where you have a letter in hand from Labarge saying what the project was that there would be a public meeting whereby we all sat down and talked about it to say what we wanted to do. That is what Council Member Sullivan voted on when Labarge was hired. Supervisor Ottuso stated yes we did hire Labarge. The board is responding to an already finished application. At this point there is no what do you want, what would be good, you are just saying we are doing this and if you don’t like it then you are a naysayer.

Supervisor Ottuso stated at the next meeting we can vote on it –whether we are going to do this or not.

Mr. Bishop was concerned about the liability. If it is in the grant then you have a lifeguard and are covered. It was noted that the beach is not open. A sign was going to be made by Barney’s. They are busy.

Mrs. Morris asked if through this whole process have you listened to what the majority of the people want. She is not talking about the 100 people who signed a petition in March to have the original stipulations rescinded from the original donation. She has been out talking to people on all financial spectrums. She has had grown men with tears in their eyes say they are worried about being able to keep their homes because of a tax increase. She noted the APA has not ruled on anything yet. They could put a kibosh on the whole project. She noted the beaches in this town are not filled on hot days. She stated that a lot of people have pools. The expense of a beach is astronomical and goes on year after year. This has to be what the whole town wants not 5 people. She wants the town board to take a step back and listen to people and what they are saying. Supervisor Ottuso has spoken to a lot of people. They want to see something done with Sherman’s, everybody in this room does. He believed this is the town boards main goal to make something happen and do our town center.

Mr. Voght from the Planning board stated a beach was written into the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Member Sullivan stated that just because it is part of the Comprehensive Plan doesn't mean that is our goal that this is what we have to go for, that this is a grand plan. We have to know what it will cost the town and what the costs will be in the long run. There is a 2% tax cap. Council Member Sullivan noted we have to pay the cost up front and get reimburse from the state. Where is that money going to come from? The cell tower Supervisor Ottuso responded. There are 5 people to make a decision on this. Council Member Sullivan stated this has been what you have wanted right from its inception. Supervisor Ottuso stated, "I think Sherman's is the greatest thing for this town that they have ever seen besides our golf course." It is one of the best things we could invest into and make something happen.

Mr. Mitchell stated the town does not want to be encumbered forever with no idea how much it is going to cost. No one has any idea. Now we don't have to maintain it forever but if get into this grant we have to maintain a beach forever. What can we do with the property can we lease it to the music company? Supervisor Ottuso stated the property can be leased with this grant. Mr. Manning interjected that he spoke to the state the property can't be leased. Supervisor Ottuso stated it can, he spoke to Ben (Syden) there can be a concession agreement that is it Mr. Manning stated – not a music school. The grant writer said it can be leased for weddings. He can be brought back to answer these questions. Mr. Manning thought it would be better to get the Jean Egenhofer from the state here – they are making the decisions – not the person trying to sell the grant to the town.

Mr. Manning stated once we accept the grant the entire thing becomes parkland – really the state's land. We can't put a town hall there or buildings, everything has to be recreational. They want to see a 20 year return on the money. We are locked in unless there is an act by the legislature.

Mr. Manning asked what is the actual cost of the project that you are applying for in the grant. Supervisor Ottuso stated you do have to put money up front to get your money back. He said during budget time we would find a line item for Sherman's and start putting money away money for Sherman's to get work done on Sherman's.

Mike Manning stated that people think if you apply for a grant the town gets a check. This is a reimbursement grant Jeremy Manning noted. You spend the money the state sends you a refund. Supervisor Ottuso stated you can get bonded – loans. Jeremy Manning noted the state won't pay you back the interest.

Eric Manning asked do you know the exact cost of the project. Supervisor Ottuso did not know.

Supervisor Ottuso stated that Labarge told him that the value of the property which we need to do an appraisal is our up-front money. Or we could use George Abdella for his appraisal. Jeremy Manning stated if you get a grant then you have to get two more appraisals.

Eric Manning noted the land is used as a credit. If we have a \$500,000.00 project that the town wants to apply for it. You can't use the land value as matching funds but for a credit. We still have come up with cash to fund the project which is then reimburse. Supervisor Ottuso took

Mr. Syden to say that our in kind money was from the value of the property – the town would not have to come up with the money.

Council Member Sturchio stated when we signed the contract with Mr. Abdella the people were so against it. Then when the board rescinded it there was a sigh of relief. Now we are going after a grant that is more encumbering.

What is the rush? There is other grant funding. What about the Collaborative Music School this would make Caroga Lake international. Supervisor Ottuso asked if they have backing. Can they restore it? They would be a nonprofit and have access to various grants. Mrs. Morris did not want this to become too much of a hardship on the town. If we accept the grant we can't sell it.

Mrs. Holliday did not want to be in that same boat as before. She noted that for the past 30 years we have needed a new town barn. The golf course club house needs to be improved. Even town hall which we've owned for 20 years the roof still leaks. We need a salt shed. Supervisor Ottuso noted there is a building fund. We put money away every year.

Mr. Delesky wondered if the town could sell half of the property. Supervisor Ottuso stated he has a lot of information here from this meeting. He will call Ben Syden and then have him individually call each board member. Supervisor Ottuso will call Jean Egenhofer to see if she can email the town something – not that he does not take the word of Mr. Manning. We still have to deal with the APA thing. They wanted plans and blue prints and the stream mapped. Chris Voss is supposed to be doing that. Supervisor Ottuso contacted him after the meeting. The septic plans were already reprinted (with extra copies) by the county.

Council Member Sullivan asked if an inventory had been conducted to know what is ours. That has not been done yet. He would like one done. Everything on the tables is Mr. Partenti's. Council Member Sullivan asked if the locks had been changed – still the same was the response. He asked if we had access to the blue building yet. "No." Security was put in by Mr. Woods – he would like to update it for the town. Remote access is now available.

Mr. Bishop asked that the boards be moved so the kids don't make ramps with them.

Mr. Manning asked when the state will submit their report on the inspection of the carousel. Supervisor Ottuso noted the insurance company needed the ID # off the carousel. The inspector did indicate a couple of concerns he had – once we got the permit it would be 30 – 60 days to comply. They don't like to see breakable lightbulbs. When asked, Supervisor Ottuso did not anticipate that it would be running this summer.

Mike Manning asked about insurance - Supervisor Ottuso stated that George used to have liability insurance but for anybody to use it they had to get their own insurance. If someone were going to use it for a fundraiser they would have to have a copy of their insurance naming the town if anything happened it would go against their insurance.

Mr. Morris noted when he ran the rides he had to have load tests done every couple of years. Nothing has been mentioned to the Supervisor about this. Supervisor Ottuso stated the inspector

was passing by to check on a restaurant and saw Mr. Ottuso there so he stopped in. It was not an actual appointment. Supervisor Ottuso did notice a certificate with load capacity on it. The inspector did say if it was going to be run that they had to be by an experienced or trained operator.

Eric Manning wondered if the plan was to put money into this project to gain income from a beach and weddings. Basically it is to create an environment where people can come to was Supervisor Ottuso's response. Could a ride company come in and set up for the summer and pay one lump sum. It was asked if this was in the Comprehensive Plan – it wasn't.

Mrs. Morris asked if the grant goes through and we get money to open a beach. How do we pay for it? Supervisor Ottuso noted a beach costs the town of Mayfield about \$35,000.00 a year to run a town beach. Revenues were \$8,000.00. He noted the summer rec. programs costs money each year. One resident thought we should keep the cell tower to pay for the beach. Mayfield sells beach permits. The days it is closed people swim at their own risk. The premium is \$750.00 per year for the replacement cost of the buildings at Sherman's. She did not think that was right. Supervisor Ottuso noted it cost Mr. Abdella \$12,000.00 a year. She asked to read the policy. He noted we are with NYMIR and Fulton County started it 20 some years ago. The board has seen the policy... Council Member Sullivan stated he had not this year. Supervisor Ottuso went on to say we have umbrella liability insurance, we are covered. Mrs. Morris was told she could call NYMIR anytime she wants. Council Member Sullivan wondered if it made a difference if it was designated as a beach vs non designated area. He is speculating.

Supervisor Ottuso noted there is a blight committee meeting at 6 pm tonight.

At 5:55 pm Council Member Glenn made a motion to adjourn, Council Member Sturchio seconded the motion. All board members were in favor of the motion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda M. Gilbert, RMC, CMC
Town Clerk