

Caroga News Flash

Town Board Meeting Highlights

April 16, 2025

TownOfCaroga.com contains all issues of the ***Caroga News Flash***.

This Town Hall work session from 5:30 to 6:39 PM had the 5 Council Members plus 10 others.

Trail Manager Jeremy Manning followed up on his April 9, 2025 report to the Town Board:

Wheelerville Trails Update and Development Plan (see p. 2).

He summarized 2025 trail work plans and proposed 3-year grant proposal. His work advances trail building, maintenance, and management for existing trails and ones to the south. His efforts and leadership could bring \$324,000.00 of development funding into the Town of Caroga.

Mr. Glenn introduced a **Golf-Only Policy** to restrict land use near the golf course “exclusively” to golf, rather than “inclusively” for other recreation. The Board discussed and tabled it (see pp.3-8).

Resolutions:

- 1. Wheelerville Trails — (5-0 vote)**
 - The Board authorizing the Town of Caroga to apply for the \$324,000.00 *2025 Municipal Parks and Recreation (MPR) Grant*: “Wheelerville Trails: Maintaining Accessibility” Project.
 - Board members proposed holding another work session in May 2025 about trail plans.
- 2. Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course — (5-0 votes)**
 - Council Member Glenn moved to discuss a new land use policy restricting recreation. Following review and discussion, the Board tabled the Golf-Only Policy proposal (pp. 3-8).
- 3. Highway Department New Plow Truck — (5-0 vote)**
 - Reviewed alternative proposals and advanced a 10-year \$80,000.00 annual payment plan for one \$326,091.00 Kenworth truck and Henderson stainless steel sander (see 2/26/2025)
- 4. Comprehensive Plan Committee Public Input Survey Postcard — (5-0 vote)**
 - Approved spending up to \$2,000.00 to print and mail survey postcards inviting public input (see <https://caroga.comprehensiveplan.wordpress.com> & <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6YKGPZ>)
- 5. Lakes Management Committee Mailer — (5-0 vote)**
 - Approved funding not to exceed \$1,200.00 (with \$600.00 from Town and \$600.00 donations from lake associations) to send mailings to all Caroga taxpayer addresses

Announcements:

- * **5/13/2025 5:30 PM:** Lakes Management Meeting with Cyanobacteria Review at Town Hall
- * **5/17/2025 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM:** Tops Off Jeeps Poker Run starting from Lakeview Store
- * **5/18/2025 2:00 PM:** Dam It! Beavers! at Glove Theatre (<https://www.theglovetheatre.com>)
- * **Memorial Day Weekend:** Caroga Tourism’s Town of Caroga Parade
- * **Starting 5/24/2025:** Caroga Arts 2025 Events at Sherman’s (<https://carogaarts.org/events>)
- * **7/31/2025 7:00 PM:** *100 Years on Top: The Kane Mountain Fire Tower* Museum Reception
- * **8/14 to 8/17/2025:** Fire Tower Centennial (https://www.carogamuseum.org/?page_id=4849)
- * **8/23 to 8/24/2025:** 4th Annual Mountain Bike Fest (<https://wheelervilletrails.com>)

Upcoming Meetings and Events: <https://TownOfCaroga.com/calendar>

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Issue #07– 2025

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WHEELERVILLE TRAILS UPDATE AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN- 4/9/25

2025 Trust for Public Land Study- Economic impact of mountain biking on rural communities

- Analyzed 13 trail locations throughout US
- MTB Tourists spend average of \$416 per visit (lodging, retail, restaurants)
Range of \$100-1000
- Trails boost local economies while improving community well being
- Properties in these communities saw property value increases
- Kingdom Trails VT saw \$10.3 million in local economic impact

2025-2028 Goals

5 new trails (beginner and adaptive	Covered pavilion for events/daily use
Maintain existing trails	Improve accessibility
Power in parking area	Connect trail users with local businesses

MUNICIPAL PARKS AND RECREATION GRANT – CFA MAY 2, 2025

State grant, administered in NYS Parks.

What's Funded?

-Ongoing Management-

-Maintenance- 3 re-treads/year. Preservation of trails standards and design.

-New Construction- 5 new trails. (2 intermediate, 3 beginner).

Built to Adaptive MTB accessibility standards

-Parking Areas and Signage- Improvements to parking areas and improved trails signage.

COST

TOTAL:	\$360,000
GRANT AMOUNT:	\$324,000
LOCAL MATCH:	\$ 36,000 (can be match, in-kind volunteer services, donations, etc)

TOWN OF CAROGA RECREATIONAL REVITALIATION PLAN- A planning tool designed to identify and prioritize specific recreational development goals in Caroga. Useful for many grants and helpful in securing future funding. Projects would be linked together in funding efforts.
(Resolution?)

ACTION ITEM:

-Resolution authorizing the Town of Caroga to apply for the *2025 Municipal Parks and Recreation (MPR) Grant Program* in the amount of \$324,000 for the "Wheelerville Trails: Maintaining Accessibility" Project

The Board questioned existing grant contracts and trail plans. The 2024 trail grant contracted to build a connecting trail to Town Center businesses from the 1737 NY-10 Park, via Town land.

<https://www.townofcaroga.com/bike/caroga-local-trails-plan-2023.pdf>

They were briefed on New York's Forest Preserve laws and policies. Trying to push new trails onto the State Forest Preserve risks grant funding and trail building setbacks for more than a decade. DEC officials have made clear that Caroga's current trail building must be on Town-owned land.

https://www.townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/town_land_2025.pdf

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Issue #7– 2025

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Council Member Glenn's 4/16/2025 Proposed Golf-Only Policy

RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING Policy for the Use and Development of the Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course Property

WHEREAS, the development of recreation and tourism is part of the comprehensive plan, and

WHEREAS, that it is the goal of the Town to create a viable, growth-oriented community by providing recreational experiences, promote health and wellness, increase cultural unity, protect our natural resources, strengthen community image and sense of place, increase tourism, and support economic growth, and

WHEREAS, the Town Board of the Town of Caroga recognizes the need for a viable and prosperous Municipal Golf Course to help the goals of the Town and the comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, the Town has created a Caroga Tourism Committee, formerly named the Parks, Lakes, Recreation and Tourism Commission whose objective is to promote the recreational activities in town, and

WHEREAS, in 2024 a petition signed by X golfers was submitted to the Town objecting to the construction of a bike trail on the Nick Stoner Municipal Golf Course property (Golf Property), and

WHEREAS, an email sent to the Town, dated December 10, 2024, by Dennison Fincke, whose family donated a majority of the golf property to the Town, concurred and supported the objections of the petition and to further inform the Town that the donation of the golf property states in the deeds that the use of said property is exclusively for golf and golf-compatible activities and associated development to support and enhance golf. In the event that the Town should try and sell the property or use the property for a purpose other than golf, the heirs of the donor shall take possession of the property along with any improvements (see Exhibit A), and

WHEREAS, architectural design plans currently exist to use undeveloped Golf Property for future development of the golf course including buffer zones, and

WHEREAS, the Town deems walking paths, bike paths, natural trails, tennis courts, pickle ball courts and other similar activities on said property to be incompatible and disruptive activities that will detract from the enjoyment of playing golf and hurting the economic viability of the course, and

WHEREAS, the use of the property in any capacity other than golf and golf-related activities, will subject the property to legal action based upon Exhibit A.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Town Board of the Town of Caroga that the Board does hereby adopt a policy that prohibits the development and or use of the property during the golf season from April 1 to November 31 for any other purpose other than golf and golf related activities.

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One-page "EXHIBIT A" Presented with the 4/16/2025 Resolution

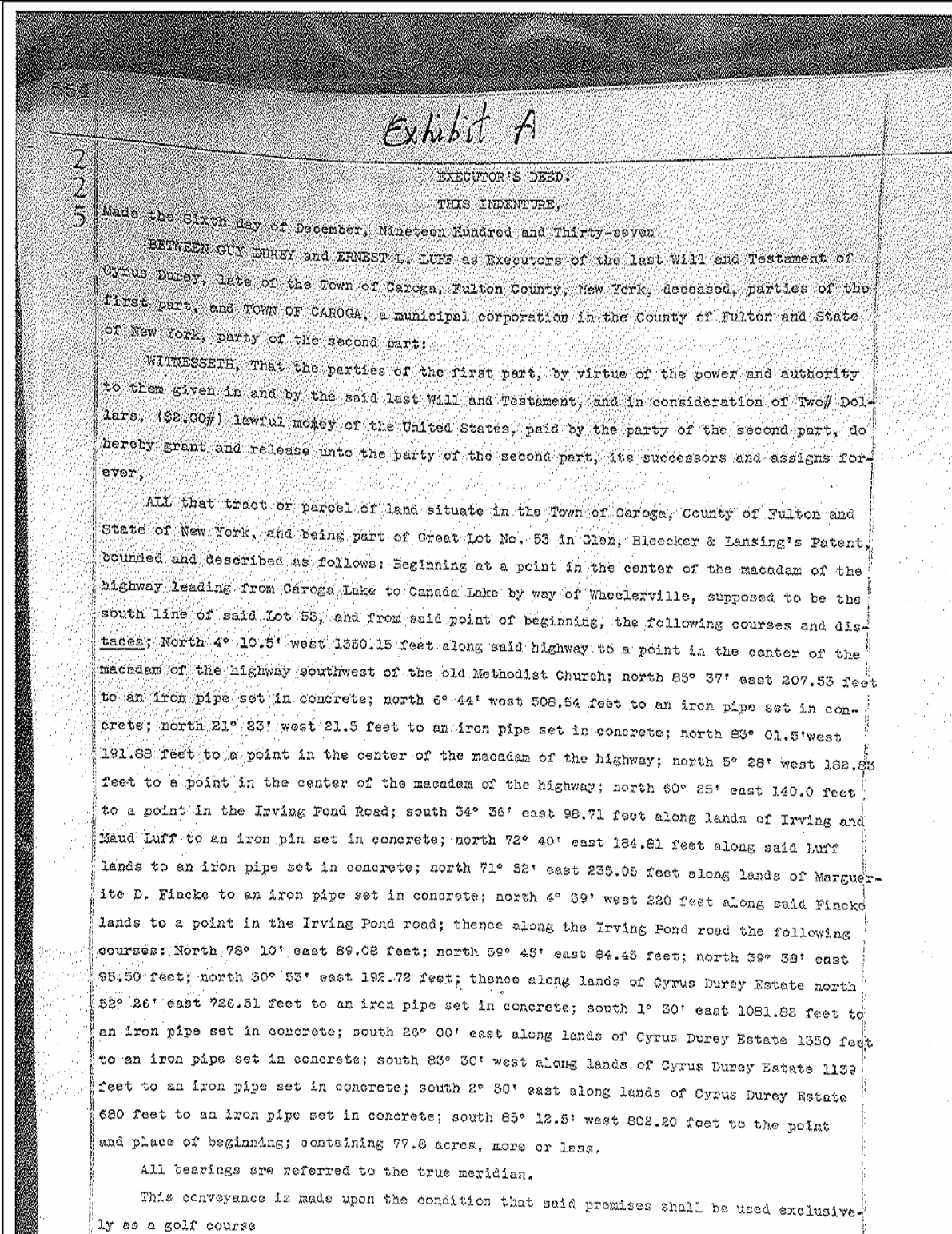


Exhibit A selectively edited "and for other recreational purposes..." (see pp. 6-8).

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Town Board Discussion of 4/16/2025 Draft Golf-Only Land Use Policy

Councilman Glenn stated, “I so move.” Councilman Sturgess added, “I second for discussion.”

Councilman Glenn emphasized that he aimed “to put this out there” to “get reactions.”

Mr. Sturgess noted the clear **history of diverse uses** and **questioned land parcels** involved:

- First, “This is going to tie us against the wall for (1) boat wash station, (2) snowmobiling, (3) cross-country skiing, (4) the park across the street, and so on... There’s a lot of things that already happen on that property that we know don’t disrupt the golf course. I know we’re not going into the bike connector trail right now, but I don’t want to tie our hands with all things that affect the golf course.”
- Second, “I’m not sure what SBL number that deed is to? I don’t think we can consider this without all SBL numbers... There’s extensive research that has to happen here. There’s a lot of parcels that were **not** donated by Denny Finck’s family. We need to know them.”

Council Member DeLuca pointed out, “This [Exhibit A Deed] is not the whole copy of the deed... We do not have all the terms here... Also, there were a number of small parcels that were added to what was **donated for the golf course primarily by Cy Durey and his heirs.**”

Supervisor Palcovic added, “The Harris Park was consolidated into the other golf course parcels. That is verified... Plus, we know that there used to be tennis courts there for a long time.”

Council Member DeLuca also emphasized perspectives about the proposal’s **inconsistencies**: “The first few paragraphs about development of recreation and tourism for the community make me see that Caroga recognizes needs for ALL these things. It is in our comprehensive plan.”

- **“We want people in the community to enjoy ALL that, like we all do.”**
- **“Now, you want to say that we’re restricting land only to the golf course, and you don’t want to add any other uses to it?”**

“What you resolve is contradictory with the first part to what you said there.”

Council Member Cooper proposed, **“We need to see the whole set of deeds and all the components of it before we make any bad decisions.”**

Supervisor Palcovic added, **“It’s overly restrictive. That’s huge.”**

The board moved, seconded, and approved a motion to **table** proposed land use restrictions.

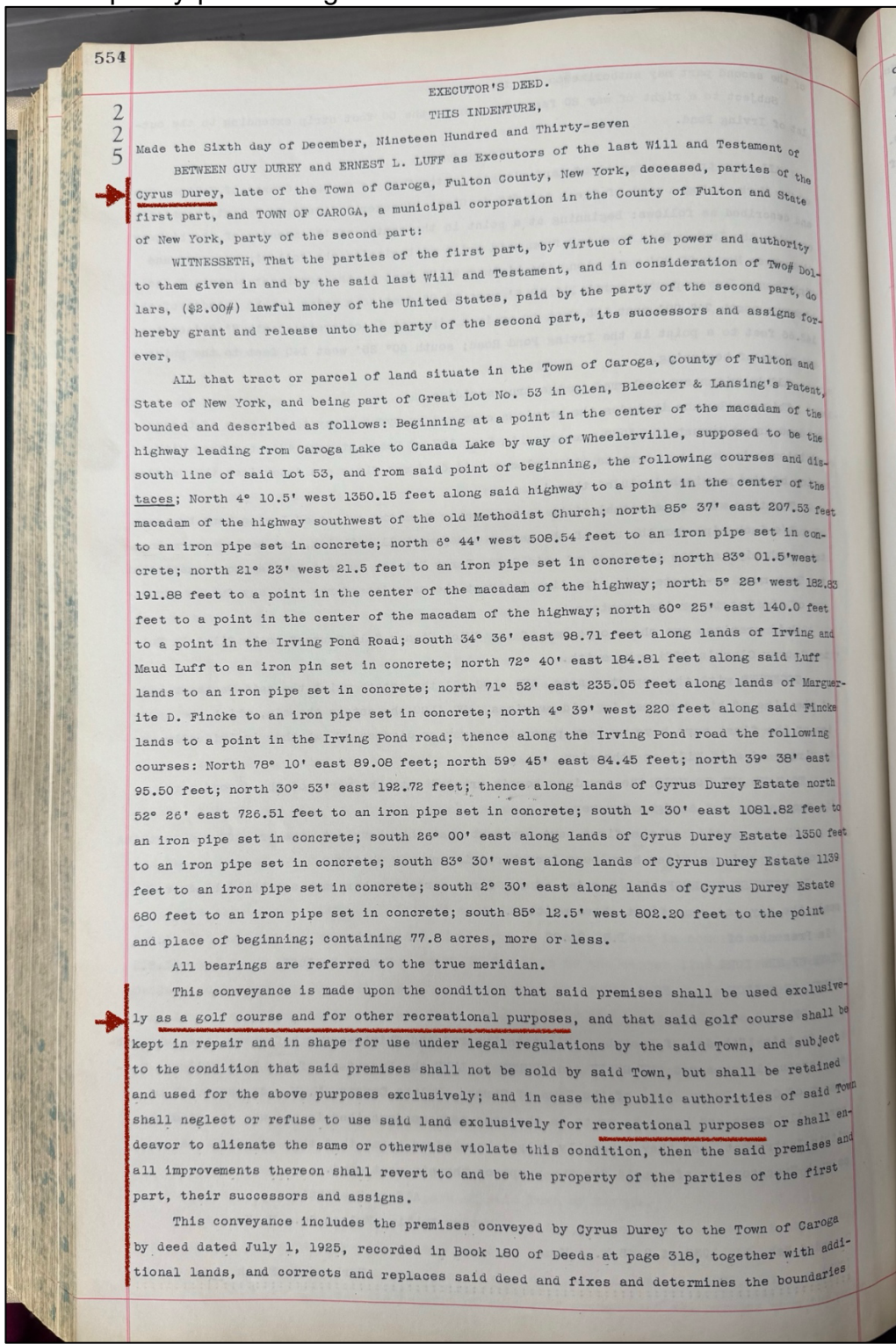
The Board proposed to schedule another work session next month, after May’s monthly meeting.

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1937 Deed from Fulton County Clerk's Office (Page 1 of 2)

This Deed donation from the Estate of Cyrus Durey required "other recreation purposes."
Any resolution or policy prohibiting inclusive recreation violates the Deed's conditions.

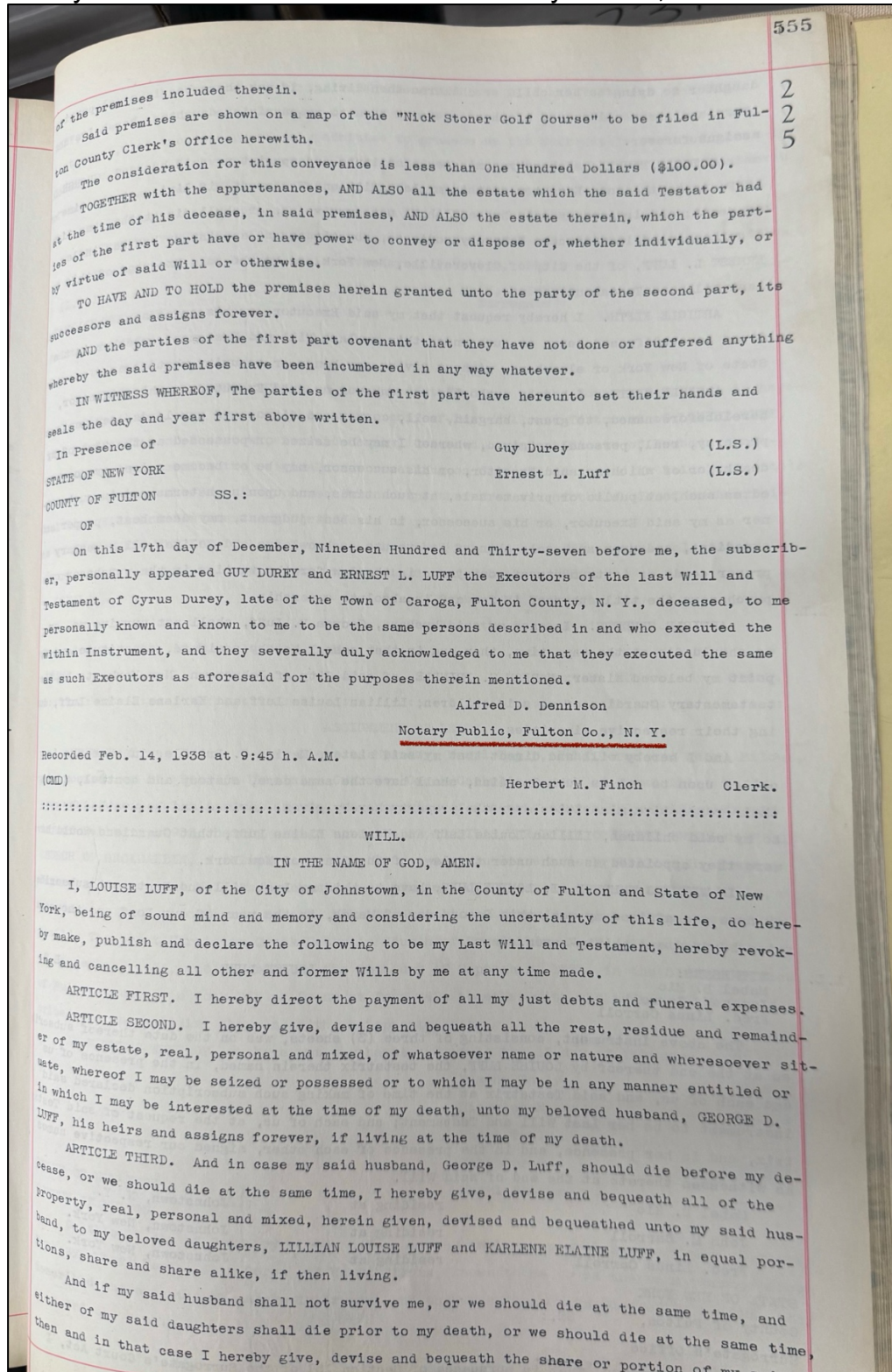


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1937 Deed from Fulton County Clerk's Office (Page 2 of 2)

Attorney Alfred D. Dennison was the Notary Public, not the land donor.



555
2
2
5

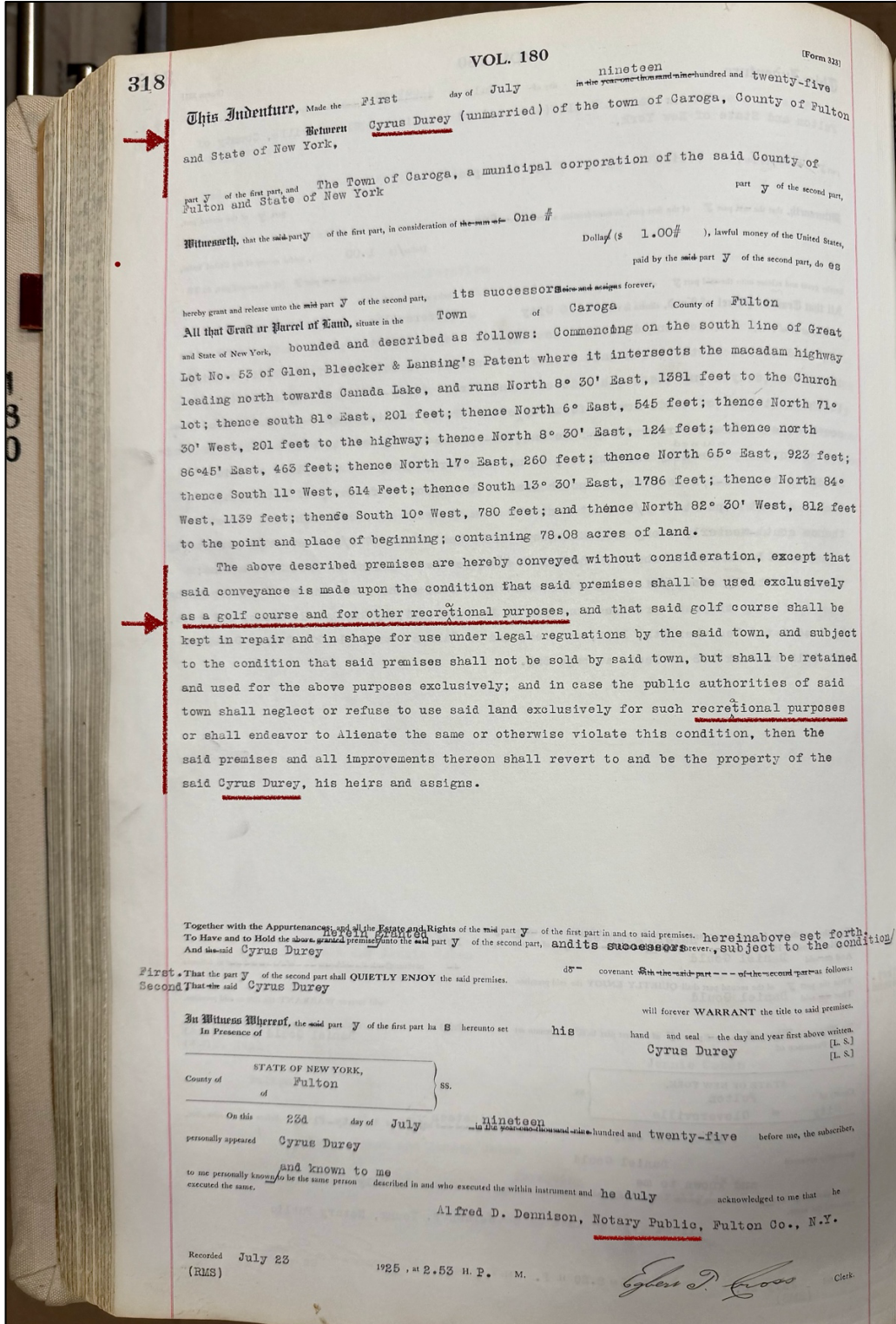
of the premises included therein.
Said premises are shown on a map of the "Nick Stoner Golf Course" to be filed in Ful-
ton County Clerk's Office herewith.
The consideration for this conveyance is less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00).
TOGETHER with the appurtenances, AND ALSO all the estate which the said Testator had
at the time of his decease, in said premises, AND ALSO the estate therein, which the part-
ies of the first part have or have power to convey or dispose of, whether individually, or
by virtue of said Will or otherwise.
TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the premises herein granted unto the party of the second part, its
successors and assigns forever.
AND the parties of the first part covenant that they have not done or suffered anything
whereby the said premises have been incumbered in any way whatever.
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, The parties of the first part have hereunto set their hands and
seals the day and year first above written.
In Presence of
STATE OF NEW YORK Guy Durey (L.S.)
Ernest L. Luff (L.S.)
COUNTY OF FULTON SS.:
OF
On this 17th day of December, Nineteen Hundred and Thirty-seven before me, the subscrib-
er, personally appeared GUY DUREY and ERNEST L. LUFF the Executors of the last Will and
Testament of Cyrus Durey, late of the Town of Caroga, Fulton County, N. Y., deceased, to me
personally known and known to me to be the same persons described in and who executed the
within Instrument, and they severally duly acknowledged to me that they executed the same
as such Executors as aforesaid for the purposes therein mentioned.
Alfred D. Dennison
Notary Public, Fulton Co., N. Y.
Recorded Feb. 14, 1938 at 9:45 h. A.M.
(CMD) Herbert M. Finch Clerk.
WILL.
IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN.
I, LOUISE LUFF, of the City of Johnstown, in the County of Fulton and State of New
York, being of sound mind and memory and considering the uncertainty of this life, do here-
by make, publish and declare the following to be my Last Will and Testament, hereby revok-
ing and cancelling all other and former Wills by me at any time made.
ARTICLE FIRST. I hereby direct the payment of all my just debts and funeral expenses.
ARTICLE SECOND. I hereby give, devise and bequeath all the rest, residue and remaind-
er of my estate, real, personal and mixed, of whatsoever name or nature and wheresoever sit-
uate, whereof I may be seized or possessed or to which I may be in any manner entitled or
in which I may be interested at the time of my death, unto my beloved husband, GEORGE D.
LUFF, his heirs and assigns forever, if living at the time of my death.
ARTICLE THIRD. And in case my said husband, George D. Luff, should die before my de-
cease, or we should die at the same time, I hereby give, devise and bequeath all of the
Property, real, personal and mixed, herein given, devised and bequeathed unto my said hus-
band, to my beloved daughters, LILLIAN LOUISE LUFF and KARLENE ELAINE LUFF, in equal por-
tions, share and share alike, if then living.
And if my said husband shall not survive me, or we should die at the same time, and
either of my said daughters shall die prior to my death, or we should die at the same time,
then and in that case I hereby give, devise and bequeath the share or portion of my said

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1925 Deed Donated from Cyrus Durey to Town of Caroga

Like the 1937 Amended Deed, this conveyance was conditional upon inclusive use for "golf" and "other recreational purposes."



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Caroga News Flash Email for May 14 Meeting

Good evening. Here's the latest from the Town of Caroga.

Wheelerville's epic trails build connections. Discover more at <https://www.fccrg.org/infectious-nature/>.

Meeting Notes

Read the *Caroga News Flash* PDFs for the Town Board's April 9 monthly meeting and April 16 work session at https://www.townofcaroga.com/news_flash.

The meetings featured trail grants and recreation restrictions.

Trail Grants

At the April 16 meeting, the Board approved submitting a new grant proposal for Wheelerville Trails.

- Founder and trail manager, Jeremy Manning, wrote the grant proposal that could deliver a new \$324,000.00 investment to our Town.
- The proposed work aims to maintain and manage existing trails as well as build new trails accessible for all.
- It also could grow the Town's capacity to do more grant-funded projects of all kinds.

Mr. Manning's service inspires gratitude for his technical skills, hard work, and spirited leadership to do community projects that create new recreational resources (<https://bikeborderlands.com/ride-with-gratitude/>).

This momentum could propel the Town forward, but only if the Town first fulfills its 2024 trail grant contract obligation.

- That signed contract funds construction of the Wheelerville-Caroga Connecting Trail that the Town Board approved back in 2023 (<https://www.townofcaroga.com/notes/caroga-local-trails-plan-2023.pdf>).
- The valuable new trail connects Town Center businesses and the Wheelerville Trails Mountain Bike Park, via Town-owned woodland behind the golf course (<https://www.wheelervilletrails.com>).

Caroga's widely-recognized trail plans build essential connecting trails on Town land while honoring golf integrity, in order to benefit community life quality, drive the four-season recreation economy, and boost grant investments.

Recreation Restrictions

On April 16, the Board then moved to consider a hot-button **Golf-Only Policy** to restrict most recreational uses on Town Land. The proposal was put forth by Councilman Glenn, (who now stands as your only candidate for Town Supervisor in the June 24 primary election).

- This new policy proposal would govern Town land use and all forms of recreation.
- His draft resolution starts lightly with shared goals for Caroga's "recreational experiences."
- In contrast, it ends darkly with restrictive rules that "prohibit the development and/or use of the [Nick Stoner Golf Course] property...for any purposes other than golf."
- To read the full text, see above.

Let's look closely at the middle part based on the 1937 Deed, and ask four key questions.

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Question 1: Check out the land Deeds, and then ask, “*What exactly are the land donation conditions?*”

- The bottom of Policy Exhibit A (see above) reads, “This conveyance is made upon the condition that said premises shall be used exclusively as a golf course” and cuts off the rest.
- Who cut off the rest?
- We all can see that the complete Real Property Deeds plainly continue with, “**and for other recreational purposes**” (https://TownOfCaroga.com/notes/golf_deeds_2025-04-16.pdf).

The Golf-Only Policy Exhibit sliced the Deed wording in half. Wow!

What uses do the Deeds require? In fact, both the Town's original 1925 Deed and 1937 Amended Executors' Deed provide the same answer.

- Donations require public use for **both** golf and “**other recreational purposes.**”
- Any policy prohibiting “**other recreational purposes**” obviously violates the Deeds' clearly-stated conditions.

Our **Caroga Recreation Park** (as it was titled at the time of the original 1925 Deed donation) is deeply rooted in a century of inclusive public recreation, including golf **and other recreational purposes.**

Question 2: Look at the Real Property Deeds, and then ask, “*Who donated these Town lands?*”

- The Golf-Only Policy claims that Attorney Alfred Dennison's (1880-1962) “family donated a majority of the golf property” and erased the real donor.
- Who was the real donor?
- We all can see, as the complete Real Property Deeds plainly show, that the late Cyrus Durey (1864–1933) donated the vast majority of this land.

Cyrus Durey disappeared in a cloud of smoke. Amazing!

What was Dennison's role? He was the notary public, **not the donor.**

- Fulton County records show **no** Dennison-family donated parcels among Town-owned lands (https://townofcaroga.com/comprehensive_plan/town_land_2025.pdf).
- Thus, Dennison family heirs have **no legal standing here.**
- Any claims of the Dennison family as golf “heirs” obviously violate the Deeds, and the Deeds prove such claims to be baseless.

A century ago in 1925, Cyrus Durey gave his initial 78-acre land gift to the Town. Thus, 2025 is a great time to celebrate Cyrus Durey's major land donation to the Town of Caroga.

Question 3: Read the middle of the above Golf-Only Policy, and ask, “*What ultimate ends does it state?*”

- The essential clue was the December 10, 2024 letter from the “heir to Alfred Dennison” with two demands and one threat.
 - Demand One: Build the golf clubhouse and storage barn “in 2025 and no later” (https://www.townofcaroga.com/news_flash/flash_2024-12-11.pdf).
 - Demand Two: “[P]ass a resolution forbidding bike trails and any usage other than golf” (https://www.townofcaroga.com/news_flash/flash_2025-04-16.pdf).
 - Threat: Or else, face “possible very costly litigation.”
- To what purpose? We all can see that the resolution reads, “[I]n the event that the Town should try to...use property for things other than golf, the heirs of the donor shall take possession of the property along with any improvements.”

Our public lands could disappear into private hands. Unbelievable!

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To what end? In fact, the above evidence shows that the Dennison family **has no legal standing** to seize any town lands.

- The 1925 Original Deed (<https://www.townofcaroga.com/notes/1925deed.jpg>) specifies that land reverts to heirs “of the said **Cyrus Durey**” if the Town reneges on its responsibilities “to use said land exclusively for such recreational purposes.”
- Likewise, the 1937 Amended Executors’ Deed (see above) states that if “public authorities...refuse to use said land exclusively for recreational purposes or shall endeavor to...[sell] the same”, then said premises “shall revert to...the parties of the first part”, that is “Guy Durey and Ernest L. Luff as Executors” for “**Cyrus Durey**.”

Therefore, the 2024 letter to the Town Board — that demanded the Golf-Only Policy and threatened Town land seizure — turns out to be **baseless nonsense**.

Question 4: Will the debunked Golf-Only Policy be approved or withdrawn?

On April 16, your Town Board started the public conversation, by focusing on trail building and the Golf-Only Policy. Their first move was to invite discussion and table a policy resolution, for now. Basically, they began by asking for “more information” before continuing and making a “bad decision,” noting that the draft resolution was “overly restrictive” and inherently “contradictory.” Also, they aimed “to put this out there” to “get reactions.”

Now What?

Public participation matters. Want to share your reactions? You can write to your Town Board about the Golf-Only Policy (see email contacts at <https://www.townofcaroga.com/misc/directory.htm>).

Want new leadership? You can run for Town Supervisor or Town Board by filing a short independent candidate ballot petition with the Board of Elections before May 27.

Learn more about running and voting at <https://www.fultoncountyny.gov/information-candidates>.

**ATTEND THE MONTHLY TOWN BOARD MEETING:
WEDNESDAY MAY 14 AT 6:30 PM AT TOWN HALL**

You can find the May 14 meeting agenda at <https://www.townofcaroga.com/agendas/index.htm>.

Thanks for spending part of your evening with the *Caroga News Flash*.

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