

Lois Miller's Report on the

Town Meeting on Sherman's

January 22, 2015

I wanted to let you know how the town board meeting went in regards to the Sherman's property. The meeting was well attended filling the meeting room. All board members were present.

Supervisor Ralph Ottuso invited Richard Argotsinger, supervisor for the town of Mayfield to speak. His town has opened a beach just last summer. He addressed questions from the audience and after all were done Mr. Argotsinger expressed that the opening of the beach in Mayfield has been a positive asset for the town.

Also invited to the meeting was Jim Mraz, director of the Fulton County Planning Board. Mr. Mraz explained how the acquisition of Sherman's was key to the implementation of the Town of Caroga's Comprehensive Plan. He went on to explain that a primary function for the Comprehensive Plan to work was the development of a town center (Sherman's). It was explained that once the town decides what venues they want on the Sherman's site that the current zoning ordinance will be revised.

Mr. Mraz also spoke about grant opportunities. In order to get grant monies the town will need to submit a Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). Key to acquiring grant funds for any community is that the project you are seeking funds for must be a part of the town's Comprehensive Plan. This assures the agency that the town is serious about their project. Also, engineering must be done and submitted to the CFA so that the agency has some dependable knowledge about the project.

Mr. Mraz summarized his feelings about owning municipal property by stating that the Town of Caroga is providing a service to the community and making that service as cost effective as possible. Why? You try to provide a service to the town for adults and children to enjoy. You try to make your town a better place to live and give the people of the town a place to recreate.

The agreement between Abdella and the Town states that they are not allowed to sell the property to anyone else, nor can they tear down any of the structures, so that will help preserve what is there. They are very interested in ideas the public has and want the public to be very involved in what happens with the property. Hopefully, the board will be active in their pursuit of cleaning it up and making it a really nice town center. It is going to take a LOT of work, and hopefully people with some knowledge of property management will step in and contribute.

The meeting was then open for questions. Here are the questions and answers sent to me by members of our association.

Who will maintain the beach and buildings and what is the budget for this? The town. Since this is just the planning stage there are no real figures as to how much this might cost. It was stated that Mayfield spends between \$25,000 - \$30,000.

If the beach is opened to the public are lifeguards being hired? Yes. The health department will regulate how many lifeguards are required.

What exactly is meant by the statement that the town was "given" Sherman's? The town has the deed. There are restrictions in the description of the agreement made between the town and Mr. Abdella. I asked that the town make that agreement available for everyone to read by creating a link on the town website.

Can the town sell the property? No.

Are there back taxes that the town forgave? No.

Who pays the insurance and how much does it cost, including liability? The town. Since the town already owns the property it is covered under the town's umbrella policy.

What is the annual budget for maintenance, repair and upgrade costs? There is no line item at this time for Sherman's. There are some contingency funds and monies for grounds and maintenance.

How much of the beach does the town own? The town acquired 120 feet of beach.

What is the total tax levy on the property? \$28,000.00

Is anyone paying taxes on this property? No. The town is tax-exempt.

Why did the town accept this property without any kind of public hearing? They are not required by law to have a public hearing, and they knew they needed to acquire this property in order to begin the town's Comprehensive Plan.

Did the "gift" include the property across the road which houses the septic system? Yes. Mr. Abdella did, however, keep 84 acres roughly located behind the current post office.

Why would the town want to take on the liability of the buildings and property? To make Caroga a better place to live and to fulfill the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan.

What is the actual lost tax revenue? \$1853.00

Will the buildings pass fire inspection? This question was never asked.

How much acreage is involved and can any be logged to generate some working capital? Four parcels are owned, none of which can be logged.

Have studies already been done? If so, what do they suggest? Studies have been done in other Adirondack towns and Town of Caroga was volunteered to be a part of a study. Three renderings of possible uses of the town center area (Sherman's) were presented to the town. Also the study put together summaries, drawings and suggestions for the town center.

How does the change in Sherman's ownership impact the town plan and will the plan need to be revised? The town owning Sherman's fits into the plan and is the first step in moving forward with the Comprehensive Plan.

The town is looking for any ideas or suggestions from the community. The town email is one way of making this happen: carogac@nycap.rr.com