

Ancram Comprehensive Plan Nears Completion

Ancram, November 1 – The Ancram Comprehensive Planning Committee announced today that they will schedule informal Community reviews of the completed draft plan in December and January 2009, and plans to schedule public hearings on the Comprehensive Plan in February, 2009. “We’ve spent the past six months developing recommended strategies, programs and policies needed to implement the Town’s 2030 Vision and Goals,” said Committee Chair Art Bassin. “We are focusing in on the things the Community told us were important.”

“The people of Ancram want to preserve Ancram the way it is today, with a few changes to make things better. To do this, the Comp Plan Committee has been reviewing the alternatives to identify what changes make sense to implement the community’s 2030 Vision and Goals.” We have learned”, commented Bassin, “that to keep things the way they are, we will have to make some changes, and to fix things, will also have to make some changes.”

The Vision and Goals describe where the Town of Ancram wants to be in 2030. They were mailed to the Community and were supported unanimously by the Townspeople at meetings in April and May. The Vision and Goals were based on public input from community workshops and a survey of Townspeople completed by December 2007. The strategies and programs the Committee is now working on describe specifically how the Town plans to achieve the Vision and Goals.

“We are finding ways to protect farming, farmland, open space, groundwater and the environment, while accommodating needs for residential and commercial development and affordable housing”, Bassin said. “We are also looking for ways to develop better community services for seniors and teens, and pay more attention to preserving our historic places. And we are tackling the challenge of fixing up the center of Ancram as a way to kick start the community and economic development process.”

The Comp Plan will also include strategies to help Town Government be more transparent and responsive, to improve communications, and provide better Town services.

“One of our key strategies supporting a range of these goals is getting grants to accelerate our progress. We went after and got two grants already,” Bassin added.

A \$21,000 Community Development Block Grant was awarded to Ancram last summer by New York State to launch a planning project focused on the revitalization of the Hamlet of Ancram. This is a first step in a multi-phase effort to stimulate community and economic development and attract businesses and affordable housing. If Ancram qualifies, it could be eligible to apply for CDBG construction and renovation funds for as much as \$400,000 per year to help implement the changes needed to improve the center of Ancram.

In August, Ancram received a \$25,000 Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan grant from the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. In addition to adding detail to the agriculture and farmland protection part of the Comp Plan and identifying necessary zoning changes, this project will develop plan to foster new agricultural enterprises in Ancram and to enhance the profitability and viability of the Town’s existing farms.

The Ancram Comprehensive Planning Committee meets every Monday at 7 pm at the Ancram Town Hall, often has guests with particular information or expertise participate, and is always open to the public. For more information, contact Art Bassin, Chair, at 329-0921 or abassin@aol.com.