

**Town of Ancram
Community Development Block Grant Project Team Meeting
December 17, 2008**

Members Present: Art Bassin, Will Lutz, Jim MacArthur, Libby Mckee, Clara Van Tassel; **Absent** Suzanne Bressler, Lucy Eldridge, Donna Hoyt, Mary Ann Roche, Kit White

The minutes of the 10/15 and 11/19 meetings were approved. During the review of the 10/15 and 11/19 minutes and the meeting that followed, the following issues were discussed:

- 1. Define Rural Character** -- Ms. McKee asked what “rural character” was, and suggested it be carefully defined.

- 2. Need a Short Term Plan** -- Ms. McKee also commented that many of the ideas coming out of the CDBG effort were long term in nature, and while good, were not immediately actionable. Ms. McKee suggested that the Town needed a “short term plan” of things that could be done right away – like fixing the 82/7 intersection, developing an emergency preparedness plan, cleaning up the town and painting some of the deteriorating buildings in the center of Ancram. Ms. VanTassel commented that the Ancram Preservation Group had indicated it was planning to fix up the Stiehle House. The Committee discussed the possibility of raising community money to support either the fixing up or the talking down of the deteriorating buildings in Ancram.

- 3. Shared Services** - The Committee discussed the importance of shared services as a way to possibly save towns and the county money. Ms. McKee mentioned the possibility of consolidating highway or fire companies in the area. Mr. MacArthur commented that Ancram and Copake had had preliminary discussions about consolidating highway departments, and could do it if the Town Supervisors decided they wanted to. Mr. MacArthur also noted that in some communities the school busses and the highway trucks shared facilities, which made a lot of sense if the bus facility was close enough to the highway garage. Mr. MacArthur also noted that consolidating insurance purchases at the County level could make economic sense. Mr. Bassin noted that there was talk about consolidating at the county level the property assessors, the building inspectors and the town courts. The problem was finding the time at the town level to figure out how to go about doing these consolidations. If the State or the County were to take the lead, these ideas may get implemented.

- 4. Economic Development** – The Committee reviewed the discussion on economic development in Millerton at the November meeting with Mr. Cawley and Ms. Reynolds. The major message taken from Mr. Cawley’s and Ms. Reynolds’ comments was “do something, do anything” to get things started. The Committee noted Millerton had significant advantages of location and infrastructure which contributed to their economic development successes, and the Millerton town government (the Town supervisor, the Planning Board, the ZBA) became supportive of economic development. Mr. Lutz asked

how economic development was going to happen in Ancram, and what we could do to attract businesses and jobs, or if we were just going to be a bedroom community and not really be able to attract businesses and jobs given the competition from neighboring communities. Mr. Lutz asked if we need to grow our population prior to attracting businesses, or do we have to attract businesses to expand the population, and is it realistic to expect doing either? The other issue discussed is the need to identify what is unique about Ancram that can be the basis for economic development. Mr. Bassin indicated he would solicit a proposal from an economic development consultant to help think about how to get started on an economic development plan. Mr. Bassin said he would try to have a preliminary proposal to look at by the next meeting.

5. Synthesis Designs for Ancram -- Mr. Bassin reported that we should have drawings from Synthesis showing a revised draft concept for the Ancram Town Center with the Fire House staying in place by the next meeting.

6. Historic Preservation Issues – Ms. VanTassel reported that the meeting with Bill Krattinger of the NY State historic preservation office went well, and that the paperwork was being started to designate both the Lutheran Church in Ancram and the Presbyterian Church in Ancramdale as historic sites. Ms. VanTassel indicated that the Milk Factory by the current town garage would be a interesting historic preservation opportunity if the funds were available. The Committee discussed the possibility of seeking contributions form the Community to support historic preservation activities.

7. Comp Plan Strategies – Mr. Bassin noted that draft Comp Plan Strategies would be circulated to CDBG Committee members in the next week or so, and would be on the agenda to discuss at the next meeting.

8. 2009 Project Plan Priorities – Mr. Bassin suggested that we spend time at the next meeting developing a “short term plan” for 2009.

9. Next Meeting – The next CDBG meeting will be on Wednesday, December 17 at 7 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 9 PM.