

Town of Ancram
Community Development Block Grant Project Team Meeting
August 19, 2009

Members Present: Art Bassin, Donna Hoyt, Libby McKee, Will Lutz

The minutes of the 7/19 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Mr. Lutz suggested adding Rob Butler, a silversmith operating in Ancramdale, to the business directory.

1. Community Development Strategic Plan – Ms. McKee provided her detailed comments, questions edits and suggestions on the Community Development Strategic Plan. Mr. Bassin will incorporate her thoughts into the final draft of the Plan. Among her suggestions, Ms. McKee stressed the importance of making sure the Firehouse Deli was afforded an opportunity to stay in the center of Ancram when the Fire district expanded the firehouse. Ms. McKee also stressed as we attract new businesses and jobs we will also stimulate the need for and the supply of affordable housing. She also suggested the Town’s businesses create a small business association or a chamber of commerce to focus local business people on the needs of the community for revitalization and economic activity.

2. 82/7 Intersection -- Ms. McKee and Ms. Hoyt commented on the last State DOT visit and indicated that the DOT was agreeable to carving back the retaining wall under the Tin Smith house, but that the State did not have funds to do the work, so the Town may have to pay for the work directly or by securing a grant. The Committee discussed the merits of possibly buying the Tin Smith house and either moving it or removing it, and if it was removed, what could go there in its place. No conclusions were reached about what kind of structure or use could go there. Mr. Lutz commented that the first priority may be to figure out with the Ancram Preservation Group how the Simons General Store and site could be used, and suggested that was the primary issue we faced in Ancram.

3. Follow-up with CDBG – Mr. Bassin noted that the next CDBG Technical Assistance planning grant application due date was November 15, and the \$400,000 construction grant applications were due in April 2010. Mr. Bassin said he would set up a meeting so he and Ms. Bressler could meet with the CDBG during the second half of September to discuss grant applications, and mentioned the CDBG Committee along with the Grants Committee and the Town Board had to decide on what to propose as the next steps. The possibility of focusing on Simons General Store and turning it into a town historical center with apartments upstairs and a business in the basement was discussed as a possible use of the \$400,000 CDBG construction grant.

4. Project Cost Summary – The Committee reviewed the project cost summary and concluded without additional technical assistance, we are not likely to refine the numbers any further.

5. Historical Resources Survey: Mr. Bassin mentioned that town historian Clara Van Tassel had advised him that she was pursuing a grant to provide support for the Town to conduct a survey of historical resources. We will learn more about this in the future. Ms. Hoyt noted that the town historian needed more space to display the town's history and heritage. It was agreed Simons General Store would make a good "Ancram Historical Center" if parking, water and septic could be worked out.

6. Ancram Marketing Brochure -- Ms. Bressler will discuss this in more detail next time.

7. Community Development Strategic Plan Public Hearing – The Committee tentatively scheduled a public hearing Saturday 9/26 and Tuesday 9/29. To do the public hearing at that time, the Committee would have to post a public notice by 9/16 and notify the Community by post card or mail. Before the public hearing it would be important that the Committee develop a set of concrete next steps for the Town to pursue which could be reviewed with the Community. (Note: Since we do not have agreement with the Grants Committee or the Town Board on concrete next steps, it may make sense to postpone the public hearing to October or November).

8. Bottle Tree Issues -- The Committee discussed the recent issues regarding the bottle Tree Restaurant involving complaints from neighbors that the restaurant was open too late and was too noisy. The Committee noted that if the Town were to attract additional businesses in the future, there could be additional issues between residential and business properties. To minimize these issues going forward the Committee recognized zoning needed to be revised to provide for protection of existing residential users by requiring site plan review and screening. The Committee also discussed the possible need restrict the size of the business districts or expand them gradually.

9. Status of the Ancram Mill – Ms. Hoyt mentioned she heard that the Mill had laid off additional staff, was now down to about 68 people, and its future was uncertain. (Note: The Mill Manager told the Columbia Paper that this drop in staff was temporary, and things were fine). The Committee noted that the Mill had a wastewater treatment facility that could support a staff of 130-140, and that if the Mill's employment stayed at the 60-70 level or dropped, the Town might be able to work out an arrangement so that the homes in the center of Ancram could tap into Mill's waste water system. Ms. Hoyt commented that the Mill's tax assessment might need to be reviewed and increased.

10. Storm Water Control System – Ms. Hoyt also mentioned that the Town should look into using a "water garden" as a way to meet the DEC requirements for storm water runoff control at the existing town garage site. Ms. Hoyt's son will get more information for the Town on this approach.

11. Hunting and Fishing Businesses – Mr. Lutz suggested he and Mr. Bassin and anyone else interested discussing the development of businesses to cater to "sportsmen" (fly fishing, bird hunting, deer hunting, public access to the Roe Jan) talk to Skip Pilsch who is interested in exploring how to set up these kinds of businesses. Individuals who

might be interested in using farmland access to streams or using farm field in the fall and winter after the harvest for hunting would pay farmers rent for the use of the land. Mr. Lutz will set up this meeting in the next month or so.

12. Next Meeting – Wednesday, September 16. (Note: Next meeting has been changed to 6 pm, Thursday September 17. This will be a joint meeting with the Grants Committee)

Meeting adjourned at 9 pm.