

**Town of Ancram  
Community Development Block Grant Project Team Meeting  
March 18, 2009**

**Members Present:** Art Bassin, Suzanne Bressler, Libby McKee, Will Lutz

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The minutes of the 2/18 meeting were reviewed and approved.

**1. Hamlet Zoning** – The committee reviewed the zoning maps of the hamlets and discussed various alternative zoning solutions to expand the commercial zones and to provide for more affordable ½ acre lots, but came to no firm conclusions. Ms. McKee suggested providing zoning supportive of assisted living facilities and nursing homes. Mr. Bassin noted that ½ acre lots in the hamlets would be limited by septic and water issues, but that it probably made sense to provide for ½ acre lots to help provide more affordable lots.

**2. Economic Development** – The Committee concluded its discussion from last month on economic development. Ms McKee noted that economic conditions were bad and getting worse, the real estate market was deteriorating and the tax base was shrinking. Ms. Bressler commented that “marketing” the town was an important way to stimulate economic development, and suggested that we think outside the box and do something radical to get thing started. Ms. McKee had a copy of the Columbia County tourist brochure which she showed to the committee. No mention was made of any places in Ancram in the County brochure. Ms. McKee will contact the County tourism office to make sure Ancram is included in the next printing of the County tourist guide. Ms. Bressler suggested the Town develop our own marketing brochure, and volunteered to sketch one out. Ms. Mckee suggested our economic development plan had to promote existing businesses as well as attract new businesses. The committee concluded that there already was a lot of business activity going on it town, and decided it was important to inventory all existing business activity going on. A first cut at this “Business Inventory” is attached at the end of these minutes, and needs to be expanded with additional input from the community.

**3. Short Term Plan** – The Committee decided that it should focus on a “Short Term Plan which could include:

1. Cleaning up the town (building facades and roadside trash)
2. Fixing the 82/7 intersection with low cost solutions like a mirror
3. Developing a set of brochures promoting Ancram’s
  - historic places (houses, cemeteries)
  - house and garden tours
  - farms and farm tours
  - businesses
  - events and activities
  - outdoor recreational opportunities
  - cultural and art opportunities

The Committee also noted that the town could start activities like a regular weekly flea market or farmers market, a food festival based on strawberries, a corn maze, farm tours, garden tours etc which could stimulate economic activity. Mr. Lutz noted that Mill Farm was hosting the regional “World Cup Trials” for Icelandic horses in early May, and that there were other activities and events that should be identified and put into an annual calendar of activities and events that could stimulate community involvement and attract visitors to town.

**5. Next Meeting** – The next CDBG meeting will be on Wednesday, April 15 at 7 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 9 PM.

### **Exhibit 1: Ancram Business Activities Inventory**

Advertising/marketing services: Paul Spencer; Suzanne Bressler

Antiques: Town Hall Antiques

Artists/Sculptors: Leon Smith; B Docktor; Nick Nickerson; Paul Chailiff (?)

Builders: Bob Mayhew; Tad Higgins

Cartoonists: Keith Bendis

Construction: Perry/Mike Miller; Terry Boyles; Fred Schneeburger

Convenience/gas: Citgo Rte 22

Custom Dressmaking/Drapes: Annie Wallen-Jones

Dog Trainers/breeders:

Entertainment: Ancram Opera House

Electrical Contractors: Ginnochio Electric; Jim Stickle

Farm Auctions: Don Duksa

Dairy Farms: Sommerhoff; Millerhurst; Chaseholm; Davenport; Nancy Miller; Coach

Garden Center: Emily Miller

Golf: Undermountain Golf Course

Horse Boarding, Training, Lessons, Breeding: Mill Farm; Cricket Hill Farm; The Horse Institute; Bill Broe

Hair Care: Donna Hoyt

Industry: The Ancram Mill

Lawn Care/Home Care: David Boice; Rich Dubrey

Locally grown food: Thompson Finch (strawberries, blueberries); Herondale (organic beef, chicken, pork); Chaseholm (cheese); Ronnybrooke (milk, ice cream)

Landscape Architecture: Jamie Purinton; Betsy Bendis

Massage: B. Docktor

Mining: O&G; Bryant Mines; Palumbo

Online Merchandising: Jack Lindsey and Bob Murphy

Photography: B Docktor; Steven Irving

Restaurants/catering: Ancram Hotel; Pond Restaurant; Farmers Wife

Realtors: Nancy Broe

Tutoring: Suzanne Bressler

Veterinarians: Mark and Tina Aiken

Writers: Bill Cohan

Yoga: Joan Arnold (Ancram Opera House); Roberta Rolle