

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
2015 Year End Meeting
January 4, 2016**

Present: Supervisor Arthur Bassin Councilman Hugh Clark
 Councilman Chris Thomas Councilwoman Madeline Israel
 Councilman David Boice Town Clerk Monica Cleveland
 Highway Superintendent James Miller

Supervisor Arthur Bassin called the 2015 year end meeting to order at 7:00 pm with a salute to the flag.

Mr. Bassin welcomed new board member David Boice and new highway superintendent Jim Miller.

Fire Chief

Mr. Boice reported that 2015 was the slowest year for the Fire Department in 26 years. Since the last Town Board meeting there have been eight calls.

Town Supervisor

Mr. Bassin reported that the town will finish 2015 with around \$800,000 in the bank. Mr. Bassin announced that the tax freeze refund checks should be arriving in property owner's mail boxes in the next few weeks. Mr. Bassin explained how the check amounts were calculated.

Highway Department

Mr. Miller said that he is learning the ropes of the department. He reported that there had been some issues with the hydrolic lifts on the plows of the two new trucks. Both have been fixed by the company who had installed the plows. The department has been working on pot holes but had to discontinue due to the cold weather.

FAC

Mr. Mike Citrin gave a thank you to the town for doing such a good job fiscally in keeping cash in the savings account equaling a years' worth of taxes. Mr. Bassin stated that next year, if this trend continues, the town may look into paying down the loan for one of the new trucks or do some work on the pool.

Planning Board

The planning board reported that the majority of their activity this year has been for lot line adjustments.

ZBA

The Zoning Board reported having an especially slow year, having only done two variances.

Ethics

Mr. Jack Lindsey reported that for 2015 there were 23 phone calls and emails for inquiries. There were no written requests. Going into 2016, all current members will continue to serve.

The Board may give a refresher course about the Ethics Law. This will be scheduled over the course of a couple of weekends.

Youth Commission

The Youth Commission will be getting ready to begin the planning for the 2016 camp season. Samantha Mason has stated that she will be returning as camp director this year.

Communications

Mr. Bassin stated that the town has been approached to take part in a site called In My Back Yard (IMBY), a blog site for municipalities. He will look into this.

The town website is approaching eight years old. Mr. Bassin explained that the engine running the site is now out of date. He has looked at proposed new engine sites, but said the feel was not like what the town currently has. Mr. Bassin will continue to research this. A proposed change over cost is estimated to come in under \$1000.00.

A question was raised by Bonnie Hundt about the new Highway Department Facebook page. Mr. Bassin explained that the page is set up to give weather warnings and updates on road work.

CAC

The CAC gave the following report on their 2015 activities:

2015 Achievements and Activities

1. Ancram Natural Resources Conservation Plan (NRCP)

- Completed the Ancram Natural Resources Conservation Plan – 50 copies purchased and donated to community members and to our grantors. NRCP posted on the Ancram website. Kim presented to the Town Board in early 2015.
- Managed project finances and payments for Hudsonia's consultant work.
- Accepted Lynne Perrella's generous offer to do an exhibit on the NRCP. Provided general input on the exhibit and presentation in preparation for the February 21,

2016 event.

- Ancram was included as an exemplary community in terms of their NRCP document in the book, *Creating A Natural Resource Inventory: A Guide for Communities in the Hudson River Estuary Watershed 2014*.

2. Culvert Replacement Grant

- Reviewed Andrew Meyer's culvert assessment study and attended the community presentation.
- Provided supporting letter with grant expressing our town's commitment to environmental stewardship, our success in achieving Natural Resource Conservation goals and our commitment to work on the proposed project.

- Ancram wins \$220,000 for culvert replacement – in large part because of the reputation and success of an active CAC. (With major thanks to Colleen’s brilliant grant writing!)
- Erin Robertson served as CAC representative on the Culvert Committee.
- Reviewed 3 engineering proposals and recommended an engineer with environmental qualifications based upon the environmental requirements of the grant.

3. Biodiversity Map

- Hudsonia completed a preliminary mapping for the entire town.
- CAC starts to chip away at the 454 specific sites that Hudsonia identifies as needing to be assessed in the field.
- Raised over \$600 in private donations to Hudsonia for the Ancram biodiversity map.

4. Regional Work

- Participated in the CAC Columbia County Roundtables providing leadership to other new CACs.
- CAC asked the Town Board to vote on and pass a Climate Change Resolution, closely modeled on the Cooperstown Climate Change Resolution and endorsed by our Rep.

Chris Gibson. The Town Board passed a Climate Change Resolution for Ancram on May 21, 2015. CAC writes letter to Chris Gibson letting him know that Ancram passed the Climate Change Resolution.

- Jamie presented the work of Ancram’s CAC at a regional Greene and Columbia County meeting for conservation advisory councils in Catskill, New York.

5. Public Environmental Educational Memos and Community Help

- Sent out Hudson River Estuary and DEC memo on stream buffers and arranged for hard copies to be given out at Town Hall.
- In January prepared and distributed memo on “Invasive Plants Awareness in Ancram.”
- In April updated and sent memo to public on “ALTERNATIVES TO BURNING BRUSH: SPRING BAN IS ON!”

- As per citizen's request in September, prepared and sent out memo "New Glyphosate Cancer-Link Warnings for Homeowners."

- In November, prepared and sent to Art for circulation "New Glyphosate Problems for Farmers."

- Provided information about special habitats for Long Lake Community's Fall newsletter.

- Provided information on over-wintering animals and their habitats for Long Lake

Community's Winter newsletter.

- At the request of Jerry Marcus, went to his property to identify potential hog weed – plant identified as wild lettuce.

- Prepared and sent out in advance questions on environmental stances to candidates for Ancram public office and participated in the Meet the Candidates session asking questions about opportunities for environmental conservation in Ancram.

- Provided major participation in the Ancram Kids Camp in terms of organizing sessions on environmental education. Jane Meigs provided session on the special conservation areas of Ancram and maps of the NRCP, Choral reviewed numerous environmental educational films and provided list of appropriate films to the Camp director. Anne Rader provided 2 sessions on birds, Colleen Lutz a session on aquatic habitats and Kim Tripp led a plant id field trip to Old Croken. Barbara Docktor took photographs of Camp for the NRCP upcoming exhibit.

6. Prepared these recommendations and input to the Ancram Town Board:

- As per Art Bassin's request, provided information on LED lighting alternatives. Kim

Tripp serves on a newly formed LED committee.

- Reviewed with Art Bassin and Gerry Fultz how Ancram might use the potential sewer grant.

- Recommend delayed mowing at the Town Hall property. (Field mowed for Helicopter landing).

7. CAC ongoing Training

- Requested and received grant money from New York State DEC to cover the costs for a ½-day training in biodiversity assessment with Hudsonia. Long Lake community generously offered their land as a training location in exchange for sharing our plant information. Participants included David, Jane, Hillsdale CAC members, Jamie, Choral, and Kim.

- Colleen Lutz gives CAC training on Hudson Valley invasives and citizens effort to iMap invasives.

PLANS FOR 2016

- Prepare for presentation/opening of the NRCP exhibit on February 21, 2016.
- Ongoing advisory role for Town Board, Planning Board, and the public on environmental issues and concerns.
- Biodiversity map – continue our work visiting the 454 sites that Hudsonia identified as requiring confirmation of the habitat type.
- Continue to implement recommendations of the Natural Resource Conservation

Plan.

- Improve CAC's role as advisors to the Planning Board on applications with environmental concerns.
- Develop recommendation papers on various subjects including reducing use of lawn chemicals.
- Continue to provide information to public about the importance of biodiversity assessment and mapping.
- Provide information to the Town Board and the community on the Climate Smart

Community Program and help Ancram become a Climate Smart Community to help educate the community about climate change issues and to put Ancram in a better position to benefit from climate change programs and funds.

- As requested, meet with CLC to provide our recommendations on county-wide public environmental educational needs for other Conservation Advisory Councils.
- As per request of Roe Jan Library, provide environmental educational program at the library in concert with the Copake and Hillsdale CACs.

Mary Murfitt asked about the sewer grant and who decided to not accept it. Mr. Bassin said it had been a town board decision and that he can explain the reasons following the meeting. Gerry Fultz volunteered to explain the decision to Ms. Murfitt.

Mr. Jack Lindsey raised a question about the DEC purchasing parcels on Doodletown Road to turn into a Wildlife Sanctuary. He asked where he can find out information about the progress of this and if it will be a place that allows hunting. Jamie Purinton said that she will call the DEC and ask some questions.

Ag Advisory Board

The board will look into a town right to farm law consistent with the State and County RTF laws. When there is more information they will report to the town.

Heritage Resources Committee

Clara VanTassel reported that she met with Bill Kratinger on Wednesday. Mrs. VanTassel gave the dimensions of the town that will be part of the Historical District. They will be County Seven from the Stone's house to the old school house and on Route 82 from Gerry Fultz through the intersection and to the bridge. The paperwork will not go to the state before June. A meeting for the home owners will need to be held. Mrs. VanTassel felt that Ancramdale will happen in future years, but that it has been suggested that the hamlet will not be as extensive a job.

The following budget adjustments were offered by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilman Clark and moved for adoption. Motion carried.

From: contingent 1990.4 \$1,777.00 To Building 1620.1 \$400, Building 1620.4 \$360, TB 1010.4 \$77, Town Clerk 1410.4 \$96, Parks 7110.4 \$15 and Unemployment 9050.8 \$829.

From Repairs 5110.4 to Repairs 5110.1 \$5200.00

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk