

Town of Ancram
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting
January 28, 2008

Present: Art Bassin, Barry Chase, Gene Aleinikoff, Bonnie Hundt, Don MacLean, Chris Sommerhoff, Leah Wilcox

Absent Jim Bryant, Monica Cleveland

The Comp Plan Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Art Bassin at 7 PM.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the 1/14 minutes. Motion carried.

Vision Statements

The committee reviewed and discussed the Draft Vision statement Nan Stolzenburg had provided, along with an edited version of the Vision Statement from Hugh Clark, a town resident. Mr. Aleinikoff asked what the purpose of the Vision Statement was, and commented that the Draft Vision statement might be seen by the community as unrealistic and unachievable, and too expensive to implement. Mr. Bassin commented that the intent of a Vision statement was to summarize and describe what the citizens of Ancram said they wanted the community to be in 20 years, based on what the 130 residents property owners who attended the 9/29 and 10/1 workshops said, and was, by definition, supposed to be unconstrained by “reality” at this stage of the game. The Vision statement was also supposed to provide a framework for the Town’s Comp Plan efforts, and capture the way Ancram should be if we could “waive a magic wand” and make Ancram what we wanted. The Committee agreed that the Draft Vision statement should be edited down to make it shorter and less repetitious, and decided that any editing of the Vision should wait until after the Committee had reviewed the results of the surveys. (Draft copies of the draft Vision Statements will be posted on the website (www.townofancram.org)).

Draft Community Profile

Mr. Bassin mentioned that he had emailed around the first draft of the Community Profile from Ms. Stolzenburg, and asked the Committee review the Profile before the 2/4 meeting so we could discuss the document them with Ms. Stolzenburg. Mr. Bassin reminded everyone Nan indicated that this was a very rough draft and was probably not worth printing out yet, as this draft will probably evolve weekly going forward. Several Committee members indicated they could not get the Profile attachment to open. Mr. Bassin said he would check with Nan about this.

Brainstormed Solutions to Positives and Negatives

The Committee then reviewed the Brainstormed Solutions from the Workshops to see if there were any issues or themes which were worthy of discussing. Mr. MacLean commented that there was a theme that came out of the Brainstormed Solutions which

implied the only way to preserve the rural character, agriculture and open space was to have more restrictive zoning (ie, ten acre minimum lot sizes), which Mr. MacLean did not believe was the case. The Committee agreed that larger lot sizes did not serve to protect rural character, and there other, better ways to protect open space, agriculture and rural character while protecting the property rights of landowners.

Mr. MacLean also asked if there were any guidelines about how analyze and prioritize the enormous amounts of information we have from the workshops and will get from the survey to allow us to focus on what is important to the Town. The Committee agreed this was an important concern, and will ask Ms. Stolzenburg for her opinion on this matter next week.

Grants

Mr. Bassin asked for comments on the revised draft of the Farmland Protection Grant Application. There was general agreement that the Farmland Protection Grant was coming together nicely, and the comments which had been received from the Columbia Land Conservancy were useful and would be incorporated in the grant application. Mr. Bassin said he wanted to have the grant ready to present to the Town Board at the 2/14 Town Board meeting, and asked for everyone to give the application one more look before we finalized it.

Mr. Bassin also indicated that he had received an email copy of the Economic Development Grant Application we had submitted in December, and would circulate that to the Committee. Mr. Bassin indicated we expected to hear back on the Economic Development grant application before the end of February.

Other Items

Mr. Bassin suggested the Committee contact groups in Town, like the Fire Company, NHN, the APG, the Long Lake Owners Association, Church groups and other groups and offer to come to meetings held by these groups to discuss what is going on with the Comprehensive Plan at a time and place more convenient to the members of these groups than our Committee meetings are. Mr. Bassin proposed he make the contacts, and if any of the groups are interested, would see which Comp Plan Committee members might be available to meet with the various groups. The Committee agreed that this could be a useful way to communicate to groups that might not otherwise have a chance to participate in the Comp Plan process.

Mr. Bassin mentioned again that the Farmland Trust was holding a one day conference in Saratoga Springs on 2/28 on “Growing NY Farms in the 21st Century.” You can get more information and register by going to the Farmland Trust Website, www.farmland.org, going to the NY site and clicking on the 2/28 Event at Saratoga. Or call them at 518-581-0078.

New Committee Member

Mr. Bassin mentioned that Kyle Lougheed had resigned from the Committee, and asked the Committee for any suggestions on possible replacements. Several Committee members indicated they would check with people who had expressed an interest in the past in serving on the Comp Plan Committee or on other Town Boards to see if any were interested in being considered for the Comp Plan Committee. The Committee discussed the need to advertise the Committee opening in the Independent, and Mr. Bassin said he would take care of that. The Committee also discussed the background and skills desirable in a new committee member, and it was generally felt that finding someone who lived and worked in Ancram would be a good thing. Mr. Bassin reminded the Committee that its recommendation for a new Committee member would be presented to the Town Board for the Town Board's action.

Next Meetings

Mr. Bassin proposed that the Committee meet during February on Monday 2/4, Monday 2/11, Saturday 2/16 and Monday 2/25. The Monday meetings will start at 7PM, and the Saturday meeting will start at 10 AM.

A motion was made by Mr. Chase and seconded by Mr. Sommerhoff to adjourn the meeting at 8.30 PM. Motion carried.