

**Town of Ancram
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting
October 6, 2008**

Present: Art Bassin, Suzanne Bressler, Barry Chase, Bonnie Hundt, Hugh Clark, Leah Wilcox, Nan Stolzenburg

Absent: Kyle Lougheed, Don MacLean

The Comp Plan Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Art Bassin at 7 PM. In addition to Committee Members, Town residents Jim Miller, Madeleine Israel and Sheila Clark also attended the meeting.

9/29 Minutes -- The minutes of the 9/29/08 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Strategy Outline Review – The Committee resumed its discussion from last week of possible strategies to implement the 2030 Vision and Goals with Ms. Stolzenburg.

Definition of a Home - Based Business -- Ms. Wilcox asked about the definition of a home “business”. Ms. Stolzenburg suggested there were “traditional” and “non-traditional” home businesses. The traditional home businesses were things like beauty shops, editing, photography and law which tended to operate within the home and did not generate a lot of traffic or impact the character of the neighborhood. Non-traditional home businesses included things like construction companies and car repair shops, which tended to operate outside the home and could impact the environment and the rural character of the area. Ms. Stolzenburg suggested the traditional home businesses could be a permitted right in zoning, while the non-traditional home businesses should be permitted subject to site plan review and special use permits. Ms. Stolzenburg also suggested that guidance for the definitions and requirements for each type of possible home business be given in the Comp Plan and clearly described in the revised zoning law, and requirements like how many employees could be part of a home-based business be established.

Strategy Outline Issues -- Mr. Bassin asked Ms. Stolzenburg to comment on the Draft Strategy Outline and offer suggestions regarding clarity and completeness. Ms. Stolzenburg and the Committee discussed the following issues, some of which are specific zoning issues which should be addressed in the zoning revisions effort which will follow the Comp Plan:

1. Farm worker housing – Ms. Stolzenburg suggested that the language regarding farm worker housing be clarified in zoning.

2. Ridgelines – The Committee agreed it was important to protect ridgelines and properties below ridgeline developments by establishing ridgeline development standards. Mr. Clark noted that some communities required homes built on visible ridgelines to blend into the ridgelines by being certain natural colors. Mr. Chase and Ms. Israel thought this was not necessary. Ms. Stolzenburg noted that the Hudson Greenway

had established a series of “Guidelines” which recommended how concerned homebuilders could minimize visual impacts, and suggested the Town could provide a copy of these Greenway Guidelines to all people and entities applying for a building permit as a recommended but not required approach. Ms. Stolzenburg noted that the Planning Board could always ask about the effect of a proposed building plan on the character of a neighbor, and review environmental impacts like light pollution and visual impacts.

3. Open Space – Mr. Clark asked for clarification of how to define “open space”. Ms. Stolzenburg said there was sample language available. Mr. Bassin indicated he would send it around.

4. Solar and Wind – Ms. Stolzenburg suggested separating personal and commercial wind and solar applications, and creating separate sets of requirements and regulations for personal and commercial applications. She noted that commercial solar and wind applications were really industrial uses, and may not be consistent with the rural character goals of the Town.

5. Business Uses – The Committee discussed the importance of reviewing all business uses during the zoning revisions process to make sure all uses are of an appropriate size and scale for the Hamlets.

6. Definition of Garden Apartments – Ms. Stolzenburg indicated there was a formal definition for Garden Apartments and she would send it to us. Ms. Hundt indicated she would contact developers of affordable garden apartments and will have them come present to the Committee later in the month.

7. Density Bonuses and Tax Assessment Reductions – Ms. Stolzenburg suggested the Committee consider using density bonuses and tax incentives as incentives to encourage developers and landowners to provide incremental services and benefits – like more than 60% open space, additional affordable homes (inclusionary zoning), integrating and interconnecting open spaces and providing public access to streams, water, hiking and biking trails. Planning Board could encourage these kinds of things during its review of proposed subdivisions.

8. Purchase of Development Rights – Ms. Stolzenburg suggested the Committee consider supporting the purchase of development rights if funding could be obtained.

9. Per Lot Recreation Fees – Ms. Stolzenburg suggested the Committee consider supporting the idea of establishing a per lot recreation fee, applicable to new subdivisions, to be used for funding town recreational activities.

10. Shared Services – Ms. Stolzenburg suggested the Committee consider support for the use of shared municipal services with nearby towns and the County.

11. Historic Preservation -- Ms. Stolzenburg suggested the Committee consider requiring an assessment of historic preservation issues as part of the subdivision process.

12. Visual Impact Analysis – Ms. Stolzenburg suggested the Committee consider requiring application of a Visual Impact Analysis as part of the site plan review.

13. Scenic Corridor Overlay – Ms. Stolzenburg suggested amending the boundaries of the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone to reflect the terrain, and to review and revise if needed the kinds of commercial uses which are permitted in the Overlay Zone.

14. Other Suggestions –Ms. Stolzenburg also suggested the Committee consider the establishment of a town trail system, the use of Cornell’s rural road standards, requiring traffic impact studies for major subdivisions, applying access management techniques for major subdivisions, adoption of design standards for commercial developments, allowing small scale non-agricultural commercial uses in the Agricultural districts and applying for NYS Legislative permission to impose a transfer tax on properties above a certain value.

15. General Uses – Ms. Wilcox noted that zoning currently permitted schools in the general uses category, and suggested the zoning revisions committee we may want to review general uses to bring them into alignment with the Comp Plan’s Vision and goals.

Next Week -- Mr. Bassin asked the Committee to review Ms. Stolzenburg’s original 24 pages of possible strategies before next week, to identify things we have not yet included which should be added to the strategy outline.

Next Meetings: Mr. Bassin indicated the Committee would meet next on 10/13 (Note: the 10/13 meeting was subsequently cancelled) with The Columbia Land Conservancy, 10/20, and 10/27. In addition, the CDBG Project Team would meet next on Wednesday 10/15 at 7 PM at the Town Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 9.15 PM.