

**Town of Ancram  
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting  
November 10, 2008**

**Comp Plan and CDBG Members Present:** Art Bassin, Suzanne Bressler, Barry Chase, Hugh Clark, Lucy Eldridge, Donna Hoyt, Kyle Lougheed, Libby McKee, Don MacLean, Kit White, Leah Wilcox

**Synthesis:** Ian Law, John Quackenbush

**Others Present:** Sue Bassin, Dennis Berry, Sheila Clark, Madeleine Israel, Jack Lindsay, Jim Miller, Bob Murphy, Jane Shannon, Dennis Sigler

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

Mr. Bassin introduced Ian Law and John Quackenbush from Synthesis LLP who were here to present their preliminary ideas on a design to “revitalize” the centers of Ancram and Ancramdale. Mr. Bassin noted that this presentation was the beginning of what would be a very long discussion about how to revitalize the hamlet centers and thereby provide the first step toward economic and community development.

Mr. Law and Mr. Quackenbush used aerial maps to outline the existing town centers and the new concepts proposed. For Ancram, they proposed an approach which would improve the 82/7 intersection and provide for the development of small shops and residences in a new town center. Carving back the retaining walls of both the “Tin Smith” House on the SW corner and the house on the NW corner of the intersection would improve site lines. In addition, they proposed to reroute the southern portion of County Route 7 so it intersected the 82/7 intersection at right angles. The design proposed would solve the dangerous intersection problem, and would create a “Town Square” and Town Center in the area now occupied by the Fire House, Simons General Store and part of Blass Memorial Park.

For Ancramdale, the design suggests establishing a commercial/residential area with affordable housing for families and seniors opposite the Farmers Wife, Post Office and Church, screening off the parking area between the Farmers Wife and the Post Office, and providing walkways from the corner to the Church.

Following the presentation of the preliminary design concepts, Mr. Law asked what people liked and disliked about the proposals. The discussion which followed indicated that the preliminary design concepts were viewed as imaginative and responsive to objectives of the assignment. The specific issues identified and discussed included:

1. Mr. Bassin commented that the proposed solutions were excellent, but the complexity and scope of the proposed changes were intimidating. Mr. Chase noted that the Ancram design certainly solved the intersection problem, but he had trouble imagining it being implemented because of the apparent complexity.
2. Mr. White suggested that the design was one which might not be doable piecemeal, but might have to be done all at once, with the “new” firehouse being the first thing that was

done to make sure the fire Company could continue to operate while the other changes were being made. Mr. Sigler noted that if the Fire House were rebuilt at another location it would have to meet current building codes and would cost twice as much to rebuild as the current facility. There was general agreement that if the design concept could accommodate the fire house where it was, and allowed for expansion, it would make this concept more feasible.

3. Mr. MacLean commented that the proposal was a “giant leap”, but suggested it could be done in stages if the Town did not want to commit to it all at once. There was general agreement that the retaining walls on the east side of 82 and 7 could be done as a stand-alone project as a first step.

4. Mr. Sigler noted that the ‘new’ Route 7 looked too narrow and the curves too sharp to accommodate the amount and size of traffic that now went through town. Mr. Miller commented that farm equipment would need to be accommodated on the new road. Mr. Law responded that as shown, the revised Route 7 met County road standards and was as wide as the road currently was, and indicated the curves were designed to slow down traffic coming through town.

5. Ms. Hoyt commented that proposed side walks could effect the septic systems in town, and wondered how the town-wide septic problems would be handled. Mr. Law indicated we should be getting a separate report from Laberge on that, along with separate engineering reports on the intersection and the three deteriorating buildings in the center of Ancram.

6. Mr. White asked how much parking was included in the design. Mr. Law said for about 100 cars.

7. Ms. Bassin suggested expanding the design to incorporate the new Town Hall, the Ancram Hotel/Bridge gateway and historical sites like the Lutheran Church and cemetery

8. Ms. Bressler cautioned that in the design we not make Ancram ‘suburban’, but maintain the look of a farm community.

Mr. Bassin thanked Mr. Law and Mr. Quackenbush for their stimulating proposal, and indicated the Comp Plan and CDBG Committees would review the drawings over the next 10 days, and would provide “formal” feedback by the end of next week.

Mr. Bassin then convened the regular Comp Plan Committee meeting.

The minutes of the 11/10 meeting were approved as presented.

**Hamlet Zoning Committee** -- Town Center Mr. Chase reported on the review of Ancram and Ancramdale zoning conditions he and Ms. Hundt had made during the week, and recommended that the “hamlet” line be redrawn to end about ½ mile from 82 on Poole’s Hill. Mr. MacLean will revise the language of sections 7.2 and 8.6 to reflect

this recommendation, and the recommendations regarding the commercial zones from the Synthesis proposal. In general, the hamlet centers will be zoned for commercial/residential mixed uses, while the rest of the hamlets will be ½ acre residential zoning, if septic and water permit.

**Organization of Comp Plan:** The Committee agreed to use the Organization suggested by Mr. Clark, which he will email around to the Committee.

**FAQ's:** Ms. Bressler suggested developing a set of FAQ's to dispel some of the rumors that are going around. Mr. Bassin asked each Committee member to email to him the "rumors" that are going around so we can include them in the FAQs.

**Finalize Documents:** Mr. Bassin asked everyone to review the Profile Document, Strategy Summary and Draft 8F of the Strategies so we can finalize them in time to mail them to the Community in early December. Ms. Hoyt noted that we had to be sure we made the Comp Plan understandable, and urged the Committee to make things simple to understand.

**Community Communications:** Mr. Bassin suggested a proposed communications program which would involve community meetings in mid-December and mid-January, followed by a Public Hearing in mid-February. The Committee will review and settle on specific dates at the next meeting.

**Next Meetings:** Mr. Bassin indicated the Committee would meet next on 11/17 with the garden apartment/affordable housing developer Ms. Hundt had arranged, 11/24 and 12/1 (with Ms. Stolzenburg).

The meeting adjourned at 9.15 PM.