

**Town of Ancram
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting
November 24, 2008**

Comp Plan Members Present: Art Bassin, Suzanne Bressler, Barry Chase, Hugh Clark, Bonnie Hundt, Don MacLean, Leah Wilcox

Absent: Kyle Lougheed

Others Present: Jim Miller

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

The minutes of the 11/17 meeting were approved subject to a revision requested by Ms. Hundt to note that she had said we needed to be careful in developing the floating zone language not to be viewed as permitting “spot zoning” or to be opening the door for activities not consistent with the Town’s Vision and Goals.

1. Affordable Housing – Mr. Bassin asked for comments on Kevin O’Neil’s presentation last week about the Housing Resources Corporation of Columbia County, Inc. (HRCC). Ms. Hundt noted, and the Committee agreed, that Mr. O’Neil’s presentation did not have anything in it that suggests we had to make any changes in the Comp Plan, and thought the Comp Plan Strategy draft covered the alternatives Mr. O’Neil had discussed. The Committee agreed that the changes proposed in the Comp Plan to permit apartments in barns and garages, smaller lot sizes where possible based on water and septic availability, and rehabilitation of run down buildings were ideas consistent with Mr. O’Neil’s presentation. The Committee noted that Mr. O’Neil did not provide an adequate definition of what “garden apartments” were, and plans to check with Ms. Stolzenburg for a definition.

2. Synthesis Town Center Design Proposal – Mr. Bassin asked for additional comments related to the Synthesis initial design concepts for Ancram and Ancramdale. Mr. Clark suggested we ask Synthesis to give us a step-by-step sequence of events for how to implement the concept piecemeal over a period of time. The Committee noted that carving back the retaining walls of the houses on the north side of the 82/7 corner would require variances because the roadway would be too close to the houses. The Committee also discussed the status of the engineering studies on the intersection, the structural soundness of the three deteriorating buildings in Ancram and the septic alternatives analysis. Mr. Bassin indicated we had just received the septic alternatives analysis, and should be getting the intersection and structural assessments shortly.

3. Final Documents Review: Mr. Bassin asked for additional comments on the Profile Document, Strategy Summary and Draft 8F of the Recommended Strategies, Programs and Policies. Mr. Bassin noted he had received edits and comments from most members of the Committee, and was working on incorporating them into the final documents. The Committee reviewed draft 8F of the detailed strategies and discussed the following items:

-Mr. MacLean suggested we delete the restriction in section 1.13.4 which limits any farm related business from becoming the primary use of the land. Mr. MacLean believes that this restriction might preclude farm-related businesses from starting up in Ancram. The Committee will check with Nan to determine if deleting this restriction could have unintended negative consequences. Mr. MacLean will revise the language of this section to insure we protect the Community by controlling the size and scope of farm related businesses which might be or become the primary use of the land.

-Ms. Wilcox noted we used terms like farm stand, farm market and green market without distinguishing among them. She suggested we define them carefully, and volunteered to revise the language of the various sections which dealt with these type facilities.

-Ms. Wilcox also suggested we determine the difference between a “zone” and a “district”, and suggested we call the proposed new Ag Zone an ag district. Mr. MacLean noted that the County had already established “Ag Districts”, so there could be confusion. The committee will consult with Ms. Stolzenburg on how to deal with this matter.

-Ms. Hundt suggested we delete the sections in the Strategy document which dealt with establishing a property maintenance law on the basis that these kinds of laws were already in the State Building Code, and just needed enforcement. The committee agreed, and decided to consolidate and revise sections 6.7 and 6.8 to emphasize the availability of town support in securing grants to assist in rehabilitating deteriorating buildings.

-The Committee decided to delete any specific comments on the Town Garage issue.

-The Committee decided to recommend that outdoor wood burning stoves installed in the Hamlets be required to have chimney’s tall enough not to create a smoke nuisance for neighbors.

-The Committee discussed the importance of keeping accurate subdivision records on small “serial” single subdivisions which were part of a larger parcel which could eventually have a large number of subdivided parcels.

4. FAQs – Mr. Bassin asked the Committee to review the 30 FAQs and email to him their suggested additions before next Monday’s meeting. The Committee will discuss how and when to use the FAQs at a future meeting.

5. Glossary of Terms – Mr. Bassin said that Ms. Stolzenburg had circulated a second version of the “Glossary of Terms” late this afternoon, and suggested Committee members review both versions of the Glossary, identify any additional items that need to be added to the Glossaries, and determine if the language in the glossaries was clear enough to be useful to non-planners.

6. Communicating the Comp Plan -- The Committee discussed a proposed timeline for mailing a Plan strategy summary to the Community in December, holding informal public meetings in January and holding the Public hearing on the Plan in February. Mr.

Chase noted that mailing things in December could be a problem, as we learned last year. Mr. Miller suggested we brief the Town Board in a series of “Comp Plan Workshops” so the Town Board was familiar with the Plan and the FAQs before we mailed anything to the Community. The Committee agreed that this was an excellent idea. The Committee also decided to cancel the planned December 22 and December 29 meetings, and determine at the December 8 meeting if the December 15 meeting would be necessary. Mr. Bassin will revise the Timeline to Completion Chart to reflect these changes and will circulate that revised chart before the next meeting.

7. Town Board Participation on the Comp Plan Committee – The Committee asked Mr. Miller if he would become the Town Board rep on the Comp Plan Committee in January. Mr. Miller tentatively agreed, subject to Town Board concurrence.

8. Next Meeting: Mr. Bassin indicated the Committee would meet next on 12/1 jointly with the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan Project Team and the Columbia Land Conservancy to discuss the process of developing an Ag and Farmland Protection Plan.

The meeting adjourned at 8.40 PM.