

**Town of Ancram
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting
December 1, 2008**

Comp Plan Members Present: Art Bassin, Suzanne Bressler, Hugh Clark, Bonnie Hundt, Don MacLean, Kyle Lougheed, Leah Wilcox **Absent:** Barry Chase
Others Present: Sheila Clark, Libby McKee, Jim Miller, Dennis Sigler

The Comp Plan meeting was called to order by Chair Art Bassin at 7.15 PM. The minutes of the 11/24 meeting were approved.

1. Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan Project Team Meeting Review – Mr. MacLean, Ms. Wilcox, Mr. Sigler and Mr. Bassin reported briefly on the Ag & Farmland Protection Plan Project team Meeting which had been held from 6 PM to 7.15 PM with Mr. Peter Paden and Ms. Ellen Epstein of the Columbia Land Conservancy. Minutes of that meeting will be sent around separately. Highlights of that meeting included:

-Discussion of a grant application for the purchase of development rights (PDRs) in a neighboring town which was turned down by the State because the town did not have a current Comp Plan in place which supported farmland protection, or a Farmland Protection Plan;

-Mr. Paden noted that the NYS Department of Ag and Markets believed agricultural economic development leading to more profitable farms was a more sustainable way to protect farmland long term than the PDR program, given the scarcity of funding for PDR programs;

-Mr. Wilcox commented that PDR programs helped the farmer who decided to sell development rights, but did not help future farmers who had to operate the farm without the benefit of the PDR income;

-Mr. McLean commented that the important thing was to keep the Town's best farmland intact to make it possible to support farming and farm-related businesses, and the Comp Plan and Ag & Farmland Protection Plans would help do that and would help the Town's farmers qualify for a variety of grants to improve their businesses. Mr. MacLean noted that Planning could not guarantee profitable farming and it was up to farmers to develop new and profitable types of farms.

2. Strategy Document Review – The Committee continued its review of the Strategy Summary Document and the Recommended Strategies, Policies and Program document. Mr. Bassin reported he had incorporated all changes he had received through Sunday into the Draft 2 Summary Document and to Draft 9F of the Recommended Strategies, Policies and Programs, and asked everyone to review these documents for typos as well as content. Additional edits received Monday and in the next week would be add to the documents. The Committee discussed sharing the documents with 3-4 friends or family members to get additional editorial inputs to make sure the documents were clear to

people who were not as close to the process as we were. The Committee decided to “finish” their editing as of next week, and plans to release the Strategy documents to the Town Board, the Planning Board the ZBA, the CDBG Project Team, the Farmland Protection Plan Team and other town officials by the middle of December.

3. Glossary of Terms -- The Committee reviewed the two glossaries. Several Committee members had not gotten both versions. Mr. Bassin will resend both to all members, and the Committee will reviews and discuss next week. Committee members should review the glossaries to make sure they include all the terms needed, and that the explanations are clear.

4. Frequently Asked Questions – The Committee discussed the expanded FAQs and Ms. Stolzenburg’s comments, and agreed to revise the questions to be less conversational, and to organize the questions in so they are grouped by topic. Committee members will review the document to determine if additional questions are needed, and if the answers are clear and correct. FAQ’s will be discussed again next week.

5. Comp Plan Framework – The Committee discussed the Comp Plan Framework Ms. Stolzenburg had circulated and decided to review it over the next few meetings. Ms. Stolzenburg will circulate a proposed introduction and overview of the Plan next week.

6. CDBG Project Report – Mr. Bassin advised the committee that we have received reports from Laberge on the 82/7 and 82/3/8 intersections, on the septic options for Ancram and on the three deteriorating buildings in Ancram, and these reports would be reviewed at the next CDBG meeting on 12/17. In addition, at our request, Synthesis will be revising their project to expand the Ancram concept to tie in the bridge and Ancram Hotel area, the Town Hall and the Lutheran Church. Synthesis will not do a detailed model of the Ancram concept as originally planned, but will review the concept to see how to make it work without moving the Fire House. Finally, Mr. Bassin noted that he had been advised by our consultants that the Housing Survey, which was part of the CDBG project plan and is a precondition to getting CDBG grant monies for renovation work, was valid for 2 years. Because of the Town’s Board’s decision not to pursue the 2009 round of CDBG Planning Grants because of the \$15,000 matching fund requirements, it was not likely we would have the ability to develop grant request for renovation work before the two year period ran out on the Housing Survey. Our planning advisors suggest we wait until we are ready to proceed on a renovation grant request, and add plan to do the Housing Survey at that time. The Housing Survey will take about a month to complete. Mr. Bassin indicated that the CDBG funds which would have been used for the Housing Survey will be used to support development of an economic development plan, which had been part of the CDBG Project Plan but was cut because we did not have enough funds to do it and the Housing Survey.

7. Next Meetings: Mr. Bassin suggested the Committee plan to meet on 12/15, and then again on January 5, 2009 with Ms. Stolzenburg.

The meeting adjourned at 9.00 PM.