

Town of Ancram
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting
February 25, 2008

Present: Art Bassin, Barry Chase, Jim Bryant, Bonnie Hundt, Kyle Lougheed, Don MacLean, Chris Sommerhoff, Leah Wilcox, Don Meltz

Absent: Gene Aleinikoff

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

The minutes for the 2/11 and 2/16 Committee meetings were approved as submitted.

Mr. Bassin asked if there were any comments on the 2/16 Groundwater Protection Plan presentation made by Steve Winkley. The Committee members felt Mr. Winkley's study and presentation were excellent, and suggested we should ask Mr. Winkley to come back and give the presentation to a larger audience, including the Town Board.

Mr. Bassin asked members of the Committee who would not be at the 3/3 meeting to comment on the Vision statements.

Ms. Wilcox felt the vision should include support for energy efficiency, energy conservation and alternative forms of energy for residential construction, and said we should look at including energy efficiency and alternative energy standards as part of the site plan review. Ms. Wilcox also thought we should exclude sidewalks in the hamlets and medical care from the vision statement. She also indicated she liked the wording of Hugh Clark's section on housing.

Mr. MacLean commented that he liked the wording of the first three paragraphs of Nan Stolzenburg's version of the Vision Statement, and thought the Community character section of Mr. Clark's draft was too dense. Mr. MacLean liked the wording of Mr. Clark's paragraphs on Economic Development, Housing and Public Services. Mr. MacLean suggested we be very careful about how we characterized the "rural" and "scenic" aspects of our town, noting that the result we see today and enjoy so much is the result of generations of farm families working the land. What we call "scenic" and "rural", in fact is a working agricultural landscape which is not easy or inexpensive to maintain, and we need to somehow recognize this in the Vision. Mr. MacLean also indicated that our Vision for revitalized hamlets might have to be modified as we learn more about the physical constraints (water and septic) facing us in Ancram and Ancramdale.

Mr. Bryant commented that the Vision could be written as a very long term "ultimate" description of where we want to be by, say, 2050, or as a more realistic and achievable description of where we want to be by 2020. In either case, Mr. Bryant believes that the Vision statement has to be clear, concise and short.

Mr. Bassin commented that the 2020 timeframe now attached to the Vision Statement was probably too near term, and suggested using 2030 as the appropriate timeframe for the Vision Statement.

Mr. Bassin then turned the meeting over to Don Meltz to review the GIS mapping process he had gone through. Mr. Meltz reviewed 18 maps, including maps that covered the towns property boundaries, property classifications, roads, surface water and wetlands, flood plains, steep slopes, soil types, land in the agricultural district, farmlands, school districts, properties with conservation easements and watersheds. Hard copy versions of the maps presented are now at the Town Hall, and the maps will be set up shortly on the web site.

During the discussion of the school district map, several Committee members commented on the inefficiency of the multiple school bus routes serving the town, and wondered if the school district boundaries could be redrawn to improved school bus route efficiencies and promote cost savings.

Mr. Meltz reported that he had not been able to develop any cross tabs, but would be working on them next, along with a build out analysis which would show how the town could look in time in terms of residential development under current zoning regulations. Mr. Meltz and Mr. Bassin will discuss cross tabs once Mr. Meltz has the ability to produce them.

Mr. Bassin reported there was no new information concerning the Committee's efforts to communicate to various groups in town, but that were discussions underway about scheduling meeting with APG, NHN and at the Churches in Ancram and Ancramdale. Mr. Bassin also reported that Ruth Wittlinger had asked if the Comp Plan Committee would be interested in making a presentation at a planned Community Day to be held around Memorial Day. The Committee agreed that doing a presentation during the Community Day would be a very good thing.

Mr. Bassin then mentioned that he would like to spend time next week (3/3) talking about the key issues facing the Committee, talking to individuals interested in and knowledgeable about specific key issues, and scheduling meetings with these people either during the Monday night sessions or at the convenience of the individuals we want to talk to. The issues to focus on would be those which were outlined in the Survey.

Mr. Bassin reported that there was no new news on our two grant applications. We are still waiting for a response from the State on the Economic Development Grant, and we planning to file our Farmland Protection Grant Application by mid-March.

Mr. Bassin reported that Town supervisor Tom Dias had raised the question of setting up a Zoning Revision Committee at the last Town Board meeting. Mr. Bassin suggested that the Comp Plan Committee be prepared to make recommendations regarding the composition of the Zoning Revision Committee in the next 60 days or so, once a draft of the Comp Plan was done.

The Committee set its March meetings schedule for March 3, March 17 (with Nan Stolzenburg), March 24 and March 31.

Committee meeting adjourned at 9 PM.