

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Regular Meeting
August 15, 2013**

Present: Supervisor Arthur Bassin Councilman James Miller
 Councilman Chris Thomas Councilman Hugh Clark
 Councilwoman Madeline Israel Town Clerk Monica Cleveland
 Highway Superintendent James MacArthur

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Arthur Bassin at 7:07pm with a salute to the flag.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to approve the meetings of the previous meetings as read with one clerical error corrected. Motion carried.

Fire Chief David Boice stated that the fire department has had a busy year thus far. The addition is coming along and should be done by mid September. In October there will be a lobster and beef BBQ. An open house will take place on July 12, 2014 to celebrate the 75th anniversary.

Mr. Boice stated that the pool is holding up. The storms have been bad to it, but it has made it another year.

Jamie Purinton stated that she has a recommendation due to the TCI fire that the CAC map the places of potentially hazards places in the town. She asked that Chief Boice work with her on that. He agreed.

Supervisors Report

Financial Report: Revenues for the seven months ending July totaled \$1,076,000, including \$811,000 in property tax receipts and \$182,000 in sales tax receipts. Building permit fees exceeded \$12,000 in July, and are over \$20,000 YTD through July, \$5000 ahead of the \$15,000 full year budget. Full year revenues for sales and mortgage taxes look like they will exceed budget by \$25,000 to \$50,000. Expenses for the seven months ending July totaled \$673,000, or about 49% of our full year budget. Cash on hand at the end of July totaled \$1,058,000. Barring any extraordinary events, I expect revenues and spending for the rest of the year to be slightly better than budget, resulting in a year end cash position of about \$680,000, which is about \$25,000 better than we budgeted.

Town Issues

- 1. Ridgeline Protection** – Hugh Clark and I have been meeting with Don Meltz to better understand how visible each of the designated ridgelines is. We are finding that there are entire designated ridgelines and portions of some other of the designated ridgelines that are either not visible, or substantially less visible than other more prominent ridgelines. We will review this “visibility mapping” analysis at the next TB meeting, and discuss how to use the visibility analysis maps to decide which of the designated ridgelines to include in the ridgeline protection zone and which not to include. I have also asked members of the Planning Board for their comments on the implementation of the ridgeline law. I will summarize the comments I get from PB members for the TB Board prior to the TB meeting next, and we can discuss PM member

comments. So far I have heard from four PB members. Two have suggested that we consider going back to the major-minor distinction, one suggests we expand the ridgeline protection guidelines to all site plan and abbreviated site plan reviews, to make the principles of ridgeline protection (rooflines under the ridgeline or tree line, screening, blending, light discipline) apply to all construction in Ancram, and one expressed concern that "blending in" colors would be hard to establish given the seasons change and what blends in in the winter may not in the summer. Based on the results of our discussion on ridgeline protection at next week's meeting, and whether we have revised language and a revised map to look at, we will consider scheduling a public hearing on the next draft of the law for the September TB meeting.

2. **Carson Rd Wind Turbine Permit Notices of Violation** – We are still waiting for information from both turbine owners regarding how they propose to mitigate the "hovering helicopter" noise at high wind speeds. If we are able to resolve that issue, we may be able to settle this matter before the scheduled ZBA public hearings in mid-September. If the "hovering helicopter" noises cannot be eliminated through additional maintenance or automatically "furling" the tail at a wind speed lower than wind speeds that cause the hovering helicopter noise, we will go through the ZBA public hearing on the revocation of the permits in September, and hear from the County Board of Health on their investigation into the health issues related to turbine noise. Regardless of how the NOV revocation process plays out, we probably need to review the Wind Turbine law to make sure that setbacks from neighboring homes are sufficient, that the building Inspector has ways and funds in escrow to monitor the quality of the installation, that we establish preventative maintenance requirements, and that we give the Building Inspector the power to shut down a turbine if it is making unusual noises and the owner is not fixing the problem in a reasonable time.
3. **2014 Tentative Budget** - The first draft at the 2014 budget, which we will discuss at the next TB meeting, shows a property tax increase of about 4.6%, or \$37,000. This is caused primarily by a \$25,000 increase in library funding assuming the 414 referendum passes, and by expected increases in health insurance and retirement fund payments. I have not budgeted any fund balance carry forward for 2014, which reduces revenues by about \$65,000, but have budgeted increases sales tax and mortgage tax revenues to expected 2013 levels, which adds \$40,000 in 2014. The 2014 Tentative Budget assumes no salary increases, but makes provisions for a deputy historian position at \$500.

Mike Citrin gave information on the 414 vote for the town library. They have collected enough signatures to place this on the ballot as a referendum. Mr. Citrin stated that the amount voted on for the town will not ever increase without going through the process again. Mr. Chris Thomas asked why the town should vote for supporting the library with tax money when they did not have a vote on building the library. Mr. Citrin stated that there were 5 people from Ancram on the library board. Mr. Thomas stated that the perception is that the library wants \$30,000 in funding from Ancram but did not want their say in building the building. Mrs. Donna Hoyt felt that this was another tax burden on the residents.

Mr. Bassin stated that the FAC has met with Kirk Kneller and that he had met with Greg Finger. The town will be getting quotes from both. The town will stay with CDPHP for the health insurance, but will make some changes with the deductible. The other change we are considering is moving the policy end date from January to November to help with the budget process.

Town Board

Councilman Miller had concern for the overgrowth along State Route 82. Libby McKee added that there are trees across the edge of the bridge at the mill. Mr. MacArthur will make some calls to the state

Highway Department

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to allow Mr. MacArthur to attend the Highway Conference. Motion carried.

Libby McKee asked about Roche Lane being a private road and questioned what would happen if there was an emergency and the road was not plowed. Mr Bassin stated that it is a private road so there should be an agreement for maintenance among the owners. Mr. MacArthur stated that if there is an emergency, he has been known to help, private road or not.

Planning Board

Jamie Purinton stated that they have had 2 training sessions. They are working on one subdivision with the new zoning.

Youth Commission

The Zoom Flume trip was a success with 104 adults and children in attendance.

Assessor

Mr. Leggett has an issue with the Woodhull property value. Mr. Bassin gave some background. There is a September court date. Mr. Leggett would like to settle this and asks to hire an attorney to assist the town with this matter. A motion was made by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilman Clark to approve Mr. Leggett's use of his choice of attorney. Motion carried.

Donna Hoyt stated that with the new zoning, she felt that the w-2's should be given for farm workers housing.

Historian

Mr. Bassin stated that fundraising has begun for the historical resources. They are hoping to raise up to \$12,000. So far they have raised \$5,000.00. They have applied for a community septic grant. Mrs. Hoyt state that she felt the people in the septic area should have been asked prior to this. Mr. Bassin stated that they will propose this if the grant comes through.

The July 21st event for the vestibule and anniversary was a big success.

September 7th will be the presentation by Ruth Piwonka.

The heritage resources committee is still evaluating if they wish to apply for a town wide historic district designation.

Ridgeline

Mr. Clark submitted the following memorandum on draft #10:

A question was raised as to whether the town will meet with all of the people on the list. Mr. Bassin stated that this is possible and that they have met with about a dozen so far.

CAC

Jamie Purinton presented the following to the Town Board:

Tonight, the Ancram Conservation Advisory Council asks for the Town Board's general support to develop an Ancram Natural Resource Plan as well as approval for providing financial seed money in the amount of \$5,000 – approximately 20% of this project's overall funding.

The Conservation Advisory Council would like to work with Hudsonia Ltd to develop an Ancram Natural Resource Conservation Plan (NRCP) and to complete the biodiversity map. This plan will identify important Ancram resources; will establish goals, targets, and priorities for conservation; and will outline an action agenda for carrying out the plan. We believe this plan and the biodiversity map are critical tools for the Planning Board and Town Board to carry out the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. By establishing a town-wide conservation plan and defining priorities, this plan will also enable Ancram to generate outside funding and grants for natural resource conservation and eco-tourism.

The overall goals of the plan are to:

1. Implement the Ancram Comprehensive Plan's Recommended Town Board Actions relating specifically to Priority Action Schedule 2 (page 53): "Develop policies and programs to protect groundwater, watersheds, streams, wetlands, woodlands, ridgelines and wildlife habitats."
2. Provide economic benefits to the town in terms of quality of life, property values, etc.
3. Allow completion of the biodiversity map which is necessary for the plan and immediately needed in the Planning Board process.

Brief Summary of the Proposed Plan (see attached March 23, 2013 proposal from Hudsonia):

- 1) The plan will explore ways to protect, improve, and expand existing features, such as trails for walking, hiking, and biking, and public-access lands and conservation areas, and identify potential opportunities for new recreational resources.
- 2) Hudsonia will prepare interactive digital maps that allow the user to integrate the various kinds of natural resource data in a single map, and to view the map layers selectively, either singly or in combination with other layers.
- 3) The plan will identify the available means and tools for conservation, identify the other organizations, agencies, and individuals that may serve as conservation partners, and develop strategies, an action agenda, and a timeline for carrying out the various components of the plan.
- 4) Hudsonia will include the background information and analysis used to develop the plan, and the map figures illustrating the landscape characteristics, the resources of concern, and the final conservation targets and priorities.
- 5) The biodiversity map will provide integral information for this plan and enable Ancram to identify conservation goals and areas of special concern.

Hudsonia's qualifications for this project (See Qualifications in the attached Hudsonia proposal)

Hudsonia is the leading Hudson Valley-based not for profit institute for research, education, and technical assistance in the environmental sciences. Ancram has been working with Hudsonia since 2001 on the biodiversity map and public educational events. They have an in-depth knowledge of Ancram and experience working with local governments and conservation advisory councils.

Proposed Funding and Funding Schedule

Hudsonia's cost for preparing the NRCP is \$9,600. This will cover gathering existing GIS data and other natural resource information, preparing map figures and NRCP narratives, conferring with the CAC about conservation priorities and document revisions, revising NRCP drafts as needed, and preparing the final NRCP document.

Hudsonia's cost for working with our CAC to complete the review and digitizing of the biodiversity map is \$12,500. The CAC will continue to provide time intensive volunteer work on the map that is valued at least at \$30,000. Approximately 50% of the map has been completed to date over the last 12 years. This funding is needed to speed up the mapping process.

Financial Plan:

Note: In order to gain grant money with these proposed organizations, it is important that we begin with the Ancram Town Board's support. Your official support will be necessary for us to be awarded any of the following grants:

1. Town of Ancram: **\$5,000** in monetary seed money + \$40,000+ in volunteer efforts associated with planning and biodiversity map.
2. Hudson River Valley Greenway: **\$10,000** (requires matching funding from the Town – volunteer work counts as matching funds)
Financial assistance of approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000 to designated "Greenway Communities" within the Greenway Area. Projects funded under this program include those that relate to community planning, economic development, natural resource protection, cultural resource protection, scenic resource protection, and open space protection.
Applications must be postmarked by September 7, 2013.
3. Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation: **\$4,000**

The two BTCF funds relevant to the Ancram Natural Resources Plan are the Fund for Columbia County (typical grants are \$1,000 to \$2,000) and the Green Pastures fund (typical grants are \$1,000 to \$3,000). The next Fund for Columbia Co. deadline is in February 2014. The deadlines for the Green Pastures Funds are September 1, 2013 and March 2014. We will ask for \$2,000 from each Fund.

4. Hudson River Bank and Trust Foundation: **\$1,000**

"The Hudson River Bank & Trust Company Foundation provides funding to support charitable causes and community developments in Columbia County. It concentrates its grant-making in the areas of environmental protection." Requests for Grants under \$1,000 may be submitted at any time.

5. DEC- Hudson River Estuary Project If they do have a 2013-14 grant program (not yet announced), and if it's like 2012, the grants would be in the range of \$5,000 to \$10,000, and the Ancram Natural Resources Plan would be a very eligible project. The past program required a 25% match – so, for a \$10K project, an HREP grant would fund only up to **\$7500**.

TOTAL: \$20,000 + potential DEC \$5,000 to \$10,000 = \$25,000 to \$30,000

Schedule

We would like to start the Ancram Natural Resource Plan this Fall making use of volunteer time in the winter months. Hudsonia said they can start this fall with a minimum funding of \$2,500. Depending upon our success with the grants, we may need two years to complete this project.

Mr. Bassin offered to help the committee to raise the money. Councilwoman Israel stated that this should be supported with town board support. Councilman Miller asked the benefits of this. Ms. Purinton stated that there are financial benefits. Councilman Thomas asked what will happen if the grant is not given. Ms. Purinton stated that then it will be done slower and in pieces.

The following resolution was offered by Supervisor Bassin and seconded by Councilwoman Israel and was carried by a unanimous roll call vote:

Resolution #20 of 2013: Grant Application under the Greenway Communities Grant program for funds to allow the Ancram Conservation Advisory Council to develop the Ancram Natural Resources Plan. CAC:

WHEREAS, the Town of Ancram is applying to the Hudson River Valley Greenway for a grant under the Greenway Communities Grant Program for a project entitled the "Ancram Natural Resources Plan", to be located in the Town of Ancram, and

WHEREAS, the grant application requires the applicant municipality to obtain the approval/endorsement of the governing body of the municipality or municipalities in which the project will be located;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the governing board of the Town of Ancram hereby does approve and endorse the application for a grant under the Greenway Communities Grant Program, for a project known as the Ancram Natural Resources Plan and located within this community, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Ancram Town Board hereby approves a budget of \$5000 for the Ancram Conservation Advisory Council to be used in the development of the Ancram Natural Resources Plan.

Mr. Bassin stated that the wind turbine problem is back and that this will be looked at again.

The Cell Tower on Wilmer Hill has been turned on.

The Fee Schedule is being looked at.

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilwoman Israel to pay the bills. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilman Thomas to allow the American Legion to place a flag receptacle at the town hall. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Councilman Miller and seconded by Councilman Clark to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk