

Draft Minutes
Ancram Comprehensive Plan
Public Hearing
June 22, 2009

Persons Present: Comprehensive Plan Committee Members Arthur Bassin, Chair, Vice Chair Barry Chase, Suzanne Bressler, Hugh Clark, Kyle Lougheed, Jim Miller, Don MacLean, and Leah Wilcox; Ancram Town Supervisor Thomas Dias; Ancram Town Council Members Donna Hoyt and Robert Mayhew; and citizens of Ancram. For complete list, see enclosed sign-in sheet.

7:02 p.m.—Call to Order: Art Bassin, Chairman of the Comprehensive Plan Committee, welcomed all participants to this second public hearing of the proposed Ancram Comprehensive Plan, introduced committee members, read verbatim the public hearing notice as it appeared in the Register Star, and noted that the hearing’s purpose was to solicit public comment about the proposed comprehensive plan. Mr. Bassin explained the procedures to be followed during the hearing and asked for a show of hands by those wanting to make comments. He also stated that cards were available for those who preferred to offer written comments.

Mr. Bassin then invited questions and comments. Following is a summary of individual comments:

George Wiggers, 23 Ohio Avenue: Requested that all changes to the Comp Plan since the April public hearing be read for hearing participants. Mr. Bassin explained that too much time would be required to cite each change, that the “Clarifications and Changes” hand-out summarized committee action in response to comments previously received, and reiterated that this hearing’s purpose was to receive additional comments. Mr. Bassin suggested Mr. Wiggers review the Clarifications and Changes document on the bench outside the room, and perhaps they could meet after the meeting to go over things.

Bob Mayhew: Asked whether the town is required to follow the Comprehensive Plan when making zoning laws. Mr. Bassin stated that he would provide to Mr. Mayhew the verbiage from the New York State law and noted that resultant zoning laws must be based on the Comp Plan and be consistent with it.

Rick DuBray: Noted that the Comp Plan says nothing about a new town garage and thinks that the plan should address the garage issue.

Jack Lindsay, Doodletown Road: Observed that a petition was mentioned in the April public hearing and asked whether the petition was actually presented. Also asked whether the petition or discussion about it influenced changes to the Comp Plan. Mr. Bassin responded that the petition was not presented, that meetings with people involved with the petition had occurred, that some points consistent with the community vision had been incorporated into changes in Draft 10.

Linda Bowen: Commented that page 33 of the Comp Plan says that the Town Highway Department is 80% of the town budget, and that the Highway Department should be a top priority because it's such a large part of the budget.

Donna Hoyt: Inquired whether the Comp Plan limits the number of one-to-four family dwellings per lot? Mr. Bassin explained that the Zoning Revisions Committee would determine that. Mr. MacLean commented that the starting premise is one dwelling per lot, and Mr. Bassin continued that the larger point is that the ZRC fleshes out the intent of the Comp Plan.

Jim Stickle, County Route 7: Believes that progression from a minor to a major subdivision is too complicated and is "still loose." Contends that the process should be reasonable, fair, and quick.

Jack Lindsay: Following up Mr. Stickle's comment, noted that a booklet will be prepared that defines the process, which should contribute to what Mr. Stickle seeks. Mr. Bassin underscored the need for balance between the rights of the individual seeking to develop and the rights of neighbors to be protected.

Donna Hoyt: Referred to minor/major subdivisions using an example of 100 acres divided into four lots is a minor subdivision, but if someone then divides one lot, five lots (a major subdivision) results. Posed a question about what happens in such an instance. Ms. Bressler and Mr. MacLean responded with comments about the need for accurate, complete, accessible records, including provisions in deeds and accurate disclosure.

Jim Evans: Indicated he was not clear whether plan ties hands of a landowner who simply wants to sell some acreage. Mr. Bassin clarified that this was not the intent of the Plan.

Jim Stickle: Commented that much clarity, along with very good record-keeping, needs to be instituted and that all that is likely to be cumbersome. Mr. Bassin noted the value of the recommended GIS over a system that relies on the memory of Planning Board members when tracking over time.

Mal Barasch, County Route 3: Sought clarification about conveyance of development rights, including whether any default rule goes into effect. Mr. MacLean responded that the committee should consider cases such a landowner who dies without leaving instructions about development rights.

Jack Lindsay: Observed that in the real estate process it's reasonably common that development rights are part of the advertising, and that title searches solve problems of vagueness. Mr. MacLean offered additional comments on the difference between deed restrictions and zoning restrictions.

Donna Hoyt: Stated that restrictions can help or hurt movement of property and there should be a way of informing buyers about development rights and restrictions even if the

seller or his/her agent doesn't bring up those issues. Suggested that buyers be told in the pamphlet about questions to ask to elicit such information.

Madeleine Israel: Commented "Isn't it 'buyer beware?'" The buyer is responsible for asking the right questions and seeking true answers. Mr. McLean added that subdivision should occur before advertising properties for sale.

Bob Mayhew: Stated that the Town Board does not have authority over county, state, or power companies concerning roadside trees and vegetation. Also stated that the Town Board doesn't have authority or influence over the Town Highway Superintendent. Mr. Bassin noted that, though the Town Board may not have overt authority, it may be useful to convey town preferences in such matters to county, state, and power company officials, and that the Town Board does have a degree of influence over the Highway Superintendent pursuant to setting the annual highway budget.

Adrienne Citrin: Confirmed that crews have, in the past, pillaged roadsides and that responses in the town wide survey reflect that insensitivity.

B. Docktor: Agreed with Mrs. Citrin's comment.

7:56 p.m. Noting no additional questions or comments from participants, Mr. Bassin asked committee members to voice questions and comments. Ms. Bressler stressed the openness of the comp plan process and of the Monday meetings, and also volunteered to work with community members writing letters, etc. Mr. Chase emphasized the plan's intent to control major development in accordance with community preferences while still boosting affordable housing, economic opportunity, agriculture, and open space.

Madeleine Israel: Stated that a good Comprehensive Plan and reasonable zoning increase the value of everyone's property.

Paul Spencer, Simons Road: Observed that Pine Plains is finding that a lack of an up-to-date comprehensive plan and zoning impedes acquisition of new business, which merely wants to know the rules beforehand.

Mike Citrin: Cited his purchase of property in Woodstock 30 years ago and how development that ran amuck ruined that community because of no Comp Plan or appropriate zoning.

Don MacLean: Cited the value of consultant Nan Stoltzenburg's expertise and experience as a strong plus to the committee, the plan, and the town.

Mr. Bassin emphasized that during the zoning revision process, which h could take another 18 months, there would be time to study, think, revise, and review the plan. There is no intent to rush to judgment; all can be comfortable with the process.

Donna Hoyt: Noted that, initially, Town Board members were uncomfortable due to perceptions that the Comp Plan was restrictive in nature. Now, they're comfortable and feel confident this document is progressive.

Jim Evans: Inquired about bringing "young blood" into the process, and about attracting a younger population to the town. Mr. Bassin cited the plan's recommendations for affordable housing and economic growth.

Paul Spencer: Stated that "Obviously, the committee worked hard, listened, and Art [Bassin] made it open...a fantastic job!"

Jim Stickle: Citing a meeting of supervisors and other officials, stated that it's easier to go to another state to start or expand a business. Additional restrictions and requirements mean more money is needed to get a business started. Mr. Bassin noted that the plan and approach in effect since 1972 haven't worked to get new business to come to town and suggested a new approach, as outlined in the plan, is necessary.

Jim Miller: "It's something we can all live with."

8:18 p.m. Given no further comments or questions, Mr. Bassin thanked participants and adjourned the public hearing.

List of 56 Attendees at the Ancram Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing on June 22, 2009:

Sheila Clark
Linda Bowen
Gene Morey
Bill Morey
Ed Wiggers
George Wiggers
Kevin Wiggers
Leroy Mayhew
Todd Elliott
Leon Smith
Elaine Smith
B Docktor
Ann Barasch
Mal Barasch
Paul Chaleff
Dennis Sigler
Bob Mayhew
Moishe Blechman
Bob Blechman
Mary Shimkin
Paul Spencer
Linda Dias

Tom Dias
Suzanne Bressler
Hugh Clark
Leah Wilcox
Kyle Lougheed
Art Bassin
Barry Chase
Bonnie Hundt
Jim Miller
Don MacLean
Janice Miller
John Slater
Stella Slater
Jim Stickle
Anna Morey
Keith Morey
Perry Miller
Mike Citrin
Adrienne Citrin
Anne Carriere
Donna Hoyt
Harold Miller
Sue Bassin
Paul Dulm (spelling?)
Sally Berg
Larry Berg
Chuck Hewett
Chuck Olbrecht
Madeleine Israel
Jane Shannon
Bryce Kirk
Malcolm Kirk