

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
June 20, 2013
Ridgeline Public Hearing**

Present:	Supervisor Arthur Bassin	Councilman James Miller
	Councilman Chris Thomas	Councilman Hugh Clark
	Councilwoman Madeline Israel	Deputy Town Clerk Ruth Wittlinger

The public hearing was called to order by supervisor Bassin at 6:02pm. Mr. Bassin announced that this was a continuation of an open public hearing held May 16, 2013. Mr. Bassin opened the meeting to comments from the floor.

Mrs. Barbara Hermance, from the town of Taghkanic and a Land Use Chairman for the NYS Board of Realtors, stated that she has several comments regarding the ridgeline law if it is implemented. Mrs. Hermance presented a letter to the board, which is filed with the ridgeline file in the Town Clerks records. Some points that she commented on were as follows:

She stated that there should be no ambiguities so that the Planning board can make a good decision.

She stated that there is no clear outline in the differences between a major and minor subdivision.

She stated that the definition of the 300 feet footprint needs to be "tuned up".

She also question which "wins", Open space or wooded area on property.

She stated that she sees several spots where litigation cases could be opened. She felt that assessments will be hard to evaluate.

James Camardella, real estate attorney from Ancramdale. He asked if an economic impact analysis study had been done. He feels that there is a negative impact on all assessed parcels in this category. He stated that Mr. Bassin claims that none of these studies have been done to determine how the long term values of ridgeline property will be advantaged or disadvantaged with the proposed ridgeline protection regs.

Joe Maiberger addressed the board. He has some questions about his acreage and the fact that he feels there will be no value because it is in the ridge. He stated that the property cannot be seen from the road and that you cannot see the road from the property. Mr. Bassin stated that the property can still be built on. Mr. Maiberger stated that it is very restrictive and that it will be very difficult with the regulations. Mr. Bassin offered to go over the proposed regulations with him.

Mrs. Hermance asked that the board answer the question she raised about ambiguity. She questioned whether the planning board has to approve all the special use permits on this regulation. Mr. Clark stated that they are all dealt with in section #13 of the regulations

Mr. Ron Steed stated that he felt that Mr. Bassin had made a wrong comment when he stated that a property owner can build on a ridge. He stated that he felt that the ridgeline is in conflict with the comp plan. He feels there is nothing in the comp plan which states elevation levels. If this was the objective then all properties would be the same. He questioned how the town will legislate what the town will look like.

Mr. Hank Rothvoss stated that he has purchased a property for development in Ancramdale. He questioned the amount per property needing to be 3 ½ acres in the subdivision. Mr. Bassin stated that in 2010 the comp plan increased the property size from 3 to 3 ½ acres.

Mrs. Hoyt stated that the language that stated the structure can be seen year round has been taken out.

Mr. Ron Steed entered into the record the letter that had been sent to the residents in the ridgeline. He asked the following questions:

- Questioning the major vs minor subdivision
- # of foot buffer?
- Current or future dealings with what has been deemed as a ridgeline issue.

Mrs. Leah Wilcox entered into the record a letter regarding her concerns and property. The letter is on file with the ridgeline file in the town clerk's office.

Mr. Jeff Pulver read into the record a letter concerning his property and family farm. The letter is on file with the ridgeline file in the town clerk's office.

Mrs. Donna Hoyt made the point that a separate committee drew up the ridgeline map. Those people were Barry Chase, Don McLean, Bob Roche, Joan Taylor and Will Lutz.

The following questions were asked:

- Why not designate ridgelines by elevation.
- How do you tell where ridgelines are in relation to a structure on a property.
- Are parcels listed on the final list or can a parcel be added or deleted.
- Should parcels with conservation easements be exempt.
- The law is too weak.
- If you want to add onto the existing structure what is the process.
- Can logging regulations trump the ridgeline regulations.
- Can fields be cleared to plant crops.

Mr. Bassin stated that he is going to propose that the voting on this law be postponed in the regular meeting.

Mr. Wilcox and Mr. Clark discussed the shape of a property vs when it can be seen from the main road.

Mrs. Hermance asked how the board is going to proceed. She recommended that the board continue the meeting and put of the vote until items are clearer.

Mr. Bassin said he appreciated all of the comments and arguments and understands the community's desire to keep the rural feel of the town, protect ridgelines and, and the same time, to protect property rights. The challenge was to find the right balance.

Jane Shannon stated that this issue has come before the board before and the issue of keeping the rural character but preserving the identity and value of the houses in the area. She felt with the laws in place everyone will be guaranteed Ancram will look the same in 30 years.

Donna Hoyt stated that the people in favor of this law do not attend the meetings. She questioned if those in favor own land in the ridges.

Leah Wilcox thanked the board for keeping the public forum open and delaying the passing of the law.

Mr. Bassin adjourned the public hearing until next month.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ruth Wittlinger
Deputy Town Clerk