

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Public Hearing #3 for Ridgeline Protection
July 18, 2013**

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

The continuation of the Public Hearing on Ridgeline Protection was called to order at 6:30 pm by Supervisor Bassin.

Mr. Bassin stated that there was a new map available to be viewed that distinguishes between degrees of visibility – from very low to very high.

Alternatives to the language of draft #9 are being considered based on public hearing comments and will be included in Draft #10, which will be presented at the next Town Board meeting.

Public Comments

A question was raised as to whether if a home that is already in the ridgeline protection zone can put an addition on it in the future. Mr. Bassin stated that if the addition is attached to the original home, then it is “grandfathered”. Mr. Clark stated that the law stated that additions to existing structures would normally be exempt. A separate building like a detached garage would be a different issue and would be subject to the proposed ridgeline law.

Councilwoman Israel stated that the law should specify seen when driving on a road, not standing on a road.

Malcolm Kirk asked if there was a specification with the color of a building. Mr. Bassin stated that the law proposes that the color should “blend in” with the surroundings.

Mr. Ron Steed stated that he felt the ridgeline definition makes the map incorrect. He stated that the selection process for the ridges was problematic. He asked if the committee had tried to evaluate the impact of the law on property values. He stated that nobody on the board has knowledge of how to evaluate property values. He felt that the board needed a professional to understand the impact of the proposed law on property values.

A question was asked as to how many acres and lots in the conservancy are affected. Mr. Bassin stated that a conservation easement usually allows for a few building lots per parcel, and there were about 6000 acres of land (out of a total of 27,000 total acres in town) with conservation easements on them.

Mr. Bassin stated that there are several issues concerning the ridgeline that the board is continuing to look at, including how to deal with conservation easement properties, if there should be different requirements for major versus minor subdivisions, and how to make an objective determination of what is "scenically" important".

A question was raised as to the protection of forests and farmland, as those lands are as important as the ridgeline. Mr. Bassin stated that the comp plan covers this

The question was raised as to who makes the decision if an owner can build. Mr. Clark noted that the proposed law states all parcels are buildable. The planning board will work with an applicant to develop an approved site plan in a protected ridgeline zone. The Planning Board will ultimately have the approval of an application, as it does for all applications. Mr. Clark stated that the committee is trying to achieve a balance and provide guidance to the planning board and the applicant. He said that no lot will be made unbuildable.

Mr. Bassin stated that the Town Board will be reviewing Draft #10 next month.

Councilwoman Israel stated that rural homes tend to be on the road due to the fact that in the past, people were unable to build up high.

Mr. Bassin closed the public hearing on draft #9 at 7 pm. Next month a public hearing will be scheduled for draft #10 for September or October.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica Cleveland
Ancram Town Clerk