

**Town of Ancram
Town Board
Continuation of Public Hearing-ZRC Package 4
February 21, 2013**

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

Supervisor Arthur Bassin called the continuation public hearing for Package 4 of the Zoning Revisions to order at 6:00pm.

Mr. Bassin summarized all of the arguments in favor of ridgeline protection and in opposition to ridgeline protection made at the prior public hearing, and in written and verbal comments received since the prior public hearing. He stated that the arguments in favor of ridgeline protection are then is it will help maintain the rural character of the community, protect property values and be supportive of the Comp Plan. Arguments against ridgeline protection were that the designated ridgelines were arbitrarily selected by non-experts, imposed unnecessary and onerous restrictions on land owners and would reduce property values.

Since the prior public hearing, Mr. Bassin reported that he and Mr. Clark have met with three members of the Columbia-Greene-Northern Dutchess Real Estate Association who stated that they felt there were too many regulations on the town level in telling people what they can and cannot do with their properties. Most comments that were made were negative. Mr. Bassin noted he had received comments in writing from real estate professionals and individuals who both supported ridgeline protection and opposed it.

The meeting was then opened to the floor. Mr. Bassin asked that only new information be spoken of.

Mr. Eric Benn, who owns 400 acres between Doodletown and Westfall roads and is in ridgeline #8 spoke. He felt that with the proposed changes and the new regulations, only 50 % of his land is usable. He asked who will pay for the survey to find exactly where the ridgeline is located. Mr. Bassin stated that this is a good point and that he will look into it. Mr. Benn stated that he would like to know how many more issues will be brought up, making all of his property unusable. He stated that he is against all of the regulations.

Mr. Tim DeMarest stated that he has a question about the language in the law that reads; "took out designation I map not to confuse property owners."

Ms. Jill Rose asked if there is any tax advantage to the property owners. Mr. Bassin stated that the only way to geet a tax benefit would be if the property owner donated an easement to the land conservancy.

Gary Delemeester stated that other towns have much stricter regulations and yet the houses continue to go up. He stated that it was his feeling that the regulation will not prohibit the building on the ridge, but would limit how high on the ridge the house can go. Mr. Delemeester supported the proposed ridgeline regulations.

Mr. Dennis Johnson spoke on behalf of the McCarron Trust. He stated that the comp plan ridgeline proposal was limited to major subdivisions. His client would like the ZRC to come back and review their property for the ridgeline. He felt that in protecting the town, it is making all people make up the tax amounts.

Mr. Ron Steed stated that he was told last month that all documents were in final form and that they had all had their origins in the comp plan. He feels that ridgeline protection is negative for the town. He stated that in October 2010 was the first time the ridgeline is mentioned in the ZRC minutes and not discussed again until June of 2012. At this time Mr. Bassin asked Mr. Steed to summarize and get to the point. Mr. Steed feels that errors were made during the process and now the errors are going to be formed into regulations that must be adhered to.

Mr. Drew Hingson stated that the ridge map is not accurate and was made by people driving the roads and picking out points. Mr. Bassin asked if the point was that the designated ridges are not the "right" ones or that the protection should be applied to all ridges. Mr. Hingson stated that all ridges should be included. He stated that the town of Gallatin has mild ridge protection and that Pine Plains, Millerton and Claverack all rejected their plans. He stated that most land proposed for this is already protected by the land conservancy or NYS. He stated if the people cannot build high, they will build low and take farm land. He also stated people are paying cash for large chunks of land for privacy, and people will buy in towns where there is no ridge protection. Mr. Bassin stated that there are people who will buy in areas where the zoning protects views through ridgeline protection, because that protection helps them too. Mr. Hingson stated that if people have to go through this cumbersome process, they will go elsewhere and the town will lose income.

Mrs. Hoyt stated that this regulation is trying to protect the large property owners. Middle class people cannot build on a restrictive property, making it unaffordable to live here.

Mr. Bassin commented that the Town board would have to get more information on how common ridgeline protection was around the area, as there seemed to be a disagreement on how common this practice was, and also try and find data on the impact on property values of ridgeline protection, as some seemed to think ridgeline protection would deteriorate values, while others believed ridgeline protection would enhance values. Mr. Bassin suggested that the Board should consider excluding ridgeline protection from the vote for package #4, and deal with ridgeline protection separately after additional research has been done.

The public hearing was closed at 6:55pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Ruth Wittlinger, Deputy Town Clerk