

Town of Ancram  
Zoning Revisions Committee  
10 February 2014

Members Present: Hugh Clark, Barry Chase, Barbara Gaba, Donna Hoyt, Bonnie Hundt, Jim Miller, Bob Roche, Dennis Sigler  
Members Absent: Terry Boyles, Don MacLean, Jane Shannon  
Others Present: Drew Hingson, Leah Wilcox

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The committee convened at 7:02 p.m. and approved minutes of the 27 January 2014 meeting.

The committee is focused on the first of two tasks requested by the Town Board: Determine which (if any) ridgelines and steep slopes merit protection as scenic resources of the Town.

On 27 January, members had requested Don Meltz produce a map that shows terrain that is at least 800 feet in elevation and visible from 158-211 points (3-4 road miles) and from 211-264 points (4-5 road miles). The committee examined that map, deliberated, and unanimously determined that terrain of at least 800' elevation and visible from 4+ road miles (211-264 points) is scenically important and will be verified by eyeball assessment.

To most accurately depict terrain meeting these specifications, Don had requested that ZRC representatives drive roads in town to verify that the "Ridgeline Visibility Analysis Selected View Locations" map produced on 8-14-2013 remains accurate and complete. Ensuring that this map shows all public locations with potentially significant views increases Don's ability to accurately portray terrain meeting the 800'/4+ miles criteria. This does not mean evaluating the quality of any view; it means only ensuring that all public locations with potentially significant views are shown on the map. The committee determined that Barry, Jim, Hugh, and Leah would conduct this verification as soon as possible.

Note: This group subsequently drove almost all roads in town on Tuesday, 11 February; verified that the 8/14 map was already quite accurate and complete; and further refined the map by deleting five stretches of road wholly or partially, and adding eight stretches of road wholly or partially.

To conclude discussions on 20 and 27 January about criteria to be used during an eyeball verification of terrain within the 800'/4+ mile specifications as scenically important, all present further debated whether any criteria should be used and, if so, what those criteria should be. Discussion focused on 18 potential criteria mentioned during those previous meetings. Some members contended that such criteria were not needed and also opined that no eyeball assessment was needed—that the 800'/4+ mile footprints on the map would suffice and would be more objective than a verification assessment. Others noted that criteria foster a conscious, uniform examination of the terrain as a scenic resource, especially if a portion of the terrain that lies within the 800'/4+ mile footprint does not appear to warrant retention. The committee determined that the Chair will distill the eighteen potential criteria to approximately

six, which all will keep in mind as they conduct the eyeball verification. The committee also decided that the 1-3 scale discussed at the 27 January meeting would not be used.

During this discussion, several participants reiterated that the terrain within the 800'/4+ mile visibility specifications constitutes the terrain to be nominated for protection. The eyeball assessment is not a survey of all terrain in town, nor is it intended to add terrain that is not in the 800'/4+ mile visibility perimeters. The eyeball assessment serves as human verification that the terrain within these footprints is a sufficiently important scenic resource to merit protection. If the eyeball assessment determines that a particular segment or feature within that perimeter is not sufficiently scenic to merit protection, it may be removed from potential designation.

Participants then discussed administration and logistics of the eyeball assessment. Given forecasts for significant snowfall during the coming week, the Presidents Day holiday, the time Don Meltz needs to refine and produce the 800'/4+ mile map, the varying availability of members and interested PB members on weekdays and weekends, and other factors, it is likely that the assessment will not begin until at least 19 February—probably later. The Chair will extend a written invitation for PB members to participate and will seek Colleen Lutz's help in determining the availability of all participants and scheduling the drives. During this discussion, the committee also invited Leah to participate in the eyeball assessment.

The committee does not plan to meet on 17 February. The Chair will notify all when the next meeting date is established.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.