

Town of Ancram
Zoning Revisions Committee
14 May 2012

Members Present: Hugh Clark, Terry Boyles, Barbara Gaba, Donna Hoyt, Bonnie Hundt, Don MacLean, Bob Mayhew, Jim Miller, Bob Roche, Dennis Sigler
Members Absent: Barry Chase, Kyle Loughheed, Jane Shannon

The ZRC convened at 7:00 p.m. and approved minutes of the 7 May meeting.

Members approved edits to Subsection VI F re: Non-conforming Buildings, Uses, and Lots. The committee also recommends that the Building Department and Town Board produce a brochure or other means to inform citizens that the one-time subdivision permitted by F3 will increase their property assessment and taxes.

Discussion about the draft outline for Section V, Supplemental Regulations, produced consensus that this section should be user-friendly—that all readers should be able to find the subject of their interest easily. Members then focused on two options: one that Section V should be organized by discrete subject in alphabetical order; the other that the section should be organized by district. After debate, the committee voted to organize Section V totally by subject listed sequentially in alphabetical order. Distinctions between districts would be cited within the text about the subject. Consensus also was that current subject headings are not consistently clear and should be changed as necessary to give readers a clear indication of what the subject really deals with. For example, “Sanitary Disposal” and “Transition Between Districts” are two examples that members cited.

Reviewing draft revisions to “Off Street Parking and Loading Regulations,” members agreed:

re: B1a and 2a—ask Nan Stolzenburg whether the maximum capacity of a business such as a restaurant or bar should be included as a basis for calculating parking requirements. If this is the concept already intended within “anticipated peak demand” in B1a, please also clarify by including verbiage referring to posted maximum capacity.

re: Comment N3 about B5, Location of Required Spaces, authorized language giving some flexibility—that parking may be allowed in front if lot configuration precludes parking at rear or side—and that, if feasible, such parking in front be landscaped or screened.

re: B6, ...Future Parking—While agreeing with the concept articulated here, members questioned how the PB can objectively and practically determine whether an applicant or business is likely to expand and need additional land for parking, unless it is a phased project.

re: B2e, Residential Uses—Members seek Nan’s affirmation that two spaces per dwelling unit remains an acceptable norm.

re: B2a, B2b, and elsewhere—Noting that parking for office, business, and like uses is predicated upon square footage, members ask Nan whether number of employees is, or can be, used as basis for calculation. Might particularly apply to home based occupations.

re: B7, Cross-Access—To enhance clarity, members suggest inserting “commercial” into “two or more *commercial* developments....”

re: B11, Construction of Parking Areas—members question whether “gravel penetrated with oil” remains an acceptable, environmentally suitable paving method.

Although B1d and B2 state that the following standards “should be used as a guide only” and are “Parking Lot Guidelines,” members noted that many of the standards use the term “shall,” which may confuse readers about what is required and what is a guide. Concurrently, members voiced concerns about whether any of these standards actually “have teeth” if they are “merely” guidelines. Such terminology and concepts are reconcilable, but may call for careful word-smithing to ensure clarity.

Initiating review of “Sign Regulations,” members noted:

re: F1, Exempt Signs, that sizes need a more thorough examination, e.g. F1b (24 sf).

re: F2b, Freestanding signs...--Does “aggregate total face area” refer to one side of the sign or to both sides?

Further review of sign regulations was deferred, pending member study of the text.

Noting that Section V, Supplemental Regulations, is the final major element of revisions, and that completion by 30 June is desirable for several reasons, the committee discussed how to increase the speed of their review without unduly sacrificing the thoroughness of the review. Results were:

- the Chair and Nan will provide draft text to members by Thursday evening;
- members will study the draft text *before* the Monday meeting;
- and will arrive at the meeting with notes identifying passages about which they have questions or comments;
- if possible, members will contact the Chair via email or phone before the meeting to inform him which passages prompt questions/comments and what are those issues. If time permits, the chair will obtain a response from Nan;
- at the beginning of the meeting, the Chair will survey members to determine what passages prompt questions or comments—no other passages will be discussed;
- debate will only deal with substantive changes—not with minor edits;
- during discussion, once a comment has been made about an issue, it should not be repeated by others...only make new points pro or con;
- once a passage has been edited, it will be reviewed only once—no draft after draft.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.