

Town of Ancram  
Zoning Revisions Committee  
6 January 2014

Members Present: Hugh Clark, Barry Chase, Donna Hoyt, Bonnie Hundt, Don MacLean, Jim Miller, Bob Roche, Jane Shannon, Dennis Sigler

Members Absent: Terry Boyles, Barbara Gaba

Others Present: Drew Hingson, Ann Rader, Ron Steed, Bob Wilcox, Leah Wilcox

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The committee convened at 7:00 p.m. and approved minutes of the 9 December 2013 meeting.

Noting that the Town Board had referred to the ZRC Supplemental Regulation H, Ridgeline/ Steep Slope Protection, the Chair reminded all that there are two tasks to be accomplished: Determine which (if any) ridgelines and steep slopes merit protection, and determine how to honor Comp Plan guidance that requirements will be mandatory for major subdivisions and encouraged/voluntary for minor subdivisions.

The Chair also reminded all that existing, sanctioned text at H1b2 stresses no lot shall be unbuildable, and H2f, g, and h provide waiver authority if project site does not coincide with mapped R/SSPOD, or is not visible from publicly accessible location, or PB site visit verifies that intent and standards are met, or if standards render lot unbuildable.

Following up a question posed on 9 December, participants discussed the possible value of establishing criteria that its recommendation ought to meet. Among the suggestions were: height relative to other parts of town may qualify as a criterion; following the Comp Plan guidance to select based on topographic prominence and scenic importance is the way to go; there must be a degree of judgment when applying Comp Plan guidance; and adhering strictly to major/minor guidance would neuter the law.

An adjunct to this discussion was the role that objective information and subjective judgment should play when determining what terrain to protect. Members of the public participated throughout the discussion period, including Mrs. Wilcox who offered photographs and comments, including that property with conservation easements should be excluded from designation, and Mr. Hingson, who noted that triggering elevations ranged from 1100' in Hillsdale, to 900' in Gallatin, to 500' in Clinton, which, he contended, was a source of disagreement for some property owners in that town.

During ensuing deliberation, members opined that some minimum elevation should be one determinant when designating terrain to be protected; steep slopes exceeding 15% should be included; the visible top ground above any slope should be included; and that visibility from publicly accessible locations should be a factor, with Mr. Miller suggesting that 4 miles of cumulative visibility may be preferable to 6 miles. Once terrain has been designated by using such factors, consensus also emerged that the designated terrain could be shown on a map, thereby aiding both property owners and the Planning Board.

With intent to meet again on 13 January, the ZRC adjourned at 8:45 p.m.