

**Town of Ancram
Zoning Revisions Committee
25 October 2010**

Members Present: Hugh Clark, Terry Boyles, Barry Chase, Barbara Gaba, Kyle Lougheed, Don MacLean, Bob Mayhew, Jim Miller

Members Absent: Bonnie Hundt, Bob Roche, Jane Shannon, Dennis Sigler

Others Present: Donna Hoyt

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

After accepting Mr. MacLean's amendment that the last sentence of the second paragraph should include asking Nan Stolzenburg to clarify the definition of accessory apartments versus multi-family dwellings, members approved minutes of the October 18 meeting.

The committee then reviewed edits to pages 23-25, paragraph H, Criteria for Site Plan Review, that the Chair had passed to Nan Stolzenburg, approved changing "historic" to "traditional" in line 2 of paragraph 2o5, and approved deleting the second sentence of that paragraph. Intent is for commercial design standards to be sufficiently clear and comprehensive that retaining an architectural advisor will not be necessary. The committee also noted that paragraph B13, p. 11, already authorizes the PB to hire "professional consultants, at the applicant's expense" when necessary. To enable the committee to easily check whether commercial design standards or subdivision regulations include the details extracted from paragraph H, the committee requested the Chair compile a summary of the extracted passages.

Reviewing pages 23-25, paragraph H, Criteria for Review of Abbreviated Site Plan:

Members voiced concern that references in paragraphs H2 and H3 to NYS DEC and USDFW lists and opinions complicated the intent for a simple review able to be concluded in a single meeting. Members concluded that the PB should be able to briefly compare the application to CAC BioDiversity Maps or existing DEC maps to quickly determine whether the proposal conflicts with endangered wildlife habitats. Note: CAC BioDiv Map not yet available.

Discussion also led to asking Nan to clarify intent of paragraph C2o9, page 17—what is meant by "public locations?" Do these include sites other than roads? If so, what?

There also was extensive discussion about what are "unfragmented woodlands" and what constitutes "fragmentation of existing woodlands." Specifying what number of acres constitutes unfragmented woodlands was considered. The difficulties of dealing with a significant patch of woodland that comprises several parcels with different owners also was discussed. The committee would like to discuss these issues further with Nan on November 1.

Paragraph 10a on page 24 prompted consensus that the Comp Plan's provision that "buffer zones between farmland and new residential uses should be established by the new residential user, not the farm" is correct, and that the first sentence of paragraph 10a is correct. However, a requirement for minimum 50' buffers appears excessive and should be deleted from this

paragraph. Members agreed that the PB should verify that the residential applicant has received a disclosure statement about the noise, odors, etc attendant to building next to a farm, and about the residential applicant's responsibilities for any buffers.

Similar to the discussion about unfragmented woodlands, review of paragraphs 10b and 10c prompted much discussion about the value and ability to avoid prime farmland when siting building envelopes, especially on parcels of only a few acres. Offshoots of that discussion included conjecture that the PB would become clogged with residential applications and that the ZEO/BI would be better equipped than the PB to conduct a site visit and determine whether the building envelope adhered to guidelines in the revised zoning law.

Consensus favored concept that building sites on selected ridgelines should not be clear-cut and that the structure should not obtrusively stand out "like a pimple against the skyline."

Referring to paragraph A1b on page 2, Mr. MacLean proposed that the ZRC should: "exempt from Abbreviated Site Plan Review (ASPR) both single family dwellings and mobile homes, except reinstate a square footage threshold trigger for ASPR of single family dwellings larger than (X). Require ASPR for accessory apartments and multi family dwellings as they may have parking/access issues. Require ASPR for minor subdivisions.

Unless there is a large inventory of undeveloped lots, I think that those measures will provide effective control for the protection of open spaces, etc., as subdivision continues in the future, without loading the Planning Board with the review of every building application. I am concerned that our desire to streamline the ASPR process could lead us to simplify the ASPR requirements to the point of being ineffective. Better to retain the effective content and reduce the uses requiring ASPR."

Members noted that the Comp Plan requires site plan review for major subdivisions and recommends review for minor sub divisions. Also noted was that the Comp Plan calls for site plan review standards and processes to steer all new residential and commercial development to areas within the lot which will minimize the negative effect on farms, farmland and open space, and encourages avoiding placement of buildings in the middle of large open areas. Also mentioned was that individual residences, not major subdivisions, have taken farmland during the past ten years.

No decision was reached on Mr. MacLean's proposal. To aid decision-making, he will "check out the number of available lots and the number of building permit applications."

All members present contributed throughout the meeting to wide-ranging, civil discussion that generally sought to balance applicant and community priorities with criteria that contribute to a simple, inexpensive abbreviated site plan review.

The ZRC's meeting with Nan Stolzenburg on November 1 will focus on abbreviated site plan review—options, pros, and cons for what should be reviewed and how to do it simply.

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.