

**Town of Ancram
Comprehensive Plan Committee
Regular Meeting
October 13, 2007**

Present: Art Bassin, Barry Chase, Gene Aleinikoff, Jim Bryant, Kyle Lougheed, Chris Sommerhoff, Leah Wilcox; **Absent:** Bonnie Hundt, Monica Cleveland

The meeting was called to order at 9:05 AM by Chairman Art Bassin.

The minutes of the October 8 meeting were approved as written. September 17 meeting minutes were not yet available.

Mr. Bassin and Mr. Bryant reported on the Town Board meeting which had been held 10/11 at which the Comprehensive Plan Committee was expanded from seven to nine members. In addition, Mr. Bassin reported that the Town Board had appointed Chris Sommerhoff to the Comp Plan Committee, and approved the appointment of Mr. Gene Aleinikoff to the Committee subject to final committee review. Mr. Aleinikoff met with the Committee at this meeting, and was elected to the Committee.

Mr. Bassin then suggested the Committee continue to recruit and appoint several "alternate" members who would attend meetings and be prepared to replace members who were absent during a meeting or who might resign in the future. The Committee discussed this idea and decided given it had just expanded to nine members and had just added two new members, that it was not necessary to appoint any official alternates at this time.

The Committee then continued its review of the survey questionnaire in light of the information from the Workshops. Mr. Bassin commented the questionnaire was 12 pages long, and it would be useful to get it down to under 10 pages.

The Committee discussed adding a question on the scenic corridor overlay zone, but most of the Committee felt that asking about the overlay zone might not be such a good thing since 1) it was too complex of a subject that was too little understood by the community to get a informed response; 2) it was a planning "tool", not an issue (though a minority opinion was that the scenic corridor overlay zone was an issue itself); and 3) it was a potentially incendiary matter that could generate unproductive responses. In addition, the Committee felt there were enough questions about "rural character", agriculture and "open space" to capture the importance of protecting "scenic corridors" without asking about scenic corridors directly.

The Committee tentatively concluded it might be better to add a broader question about how important zoning was to people, how much people knew about Ancram's "zoning" in general, and whether they thought they needed more information about zoning.

The Committee also discussed the idea of adding a question about where people wanted

to see Ancram's population in 20 years as a proxy for how much growth people wanted. There was a general feeling that 99% of the responses would be for no growth in population over the next 20 years, and we would not learn much we could do much about by asking this question. The minority view was if we know “for sure” based on a survey question that 99% are against seeing population growth, or conversely, that 99% favor moderate (20%) or significant (100%) population growth, our Comp Plan and zoning revisions could be substantially different than if we just assume, based on our own perceptions, that people do not want to see any population growth.

The Committee discussed the pros and cons of providing a stamped return envelope with the surveys to encourage a higher response rate. Nan Stolzenburg provided input via email suggesting that the response rates she had seen over the years were around 35%, and did not change if a stamped envelope were included in the mailing or not. The Committee felt that since experience showed the response rate to the survey was not affected by providing a stamped return envelope, saving the \$900 in return postage would be well received by the Community. The Committee also decided to encourage respondents to drop off the completed survey at the Town Hall rather than mailing it in, but also decided to make it clear how much the return postage would be by printing it on the return envelope for those who decided to mail in their surveys.

The Committee discussed the date of the next meetings. It was decided to hold the next meetings at 7 PM on Monday 10/22, and at 7 PM on Monday 10/29. Nan Stolzenburg will be joining the Committee for the 10/29 meeting. The previously scheduled meeting on Monday 10/15 was cancelled because several members could not attend that meeting. The purpose of the next meetings will be to finalize the changes to the questionnaire and begin discussions on how to organize issue oriented meetings, group and individual meets and focus groups to add the Committee’s understanding of how the Community feels about the various issues that have been raised in the Workshops and in the Planning Issues List.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10 AM. Motion carried.