

**Town of Ancram
Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting
February 4, 2008**

Present: Art Bassin, Barry Chase, Jim Bryant, Bonnie Hundt, Don MacLean, Leah Wilcox, Nan Stolzenburg

Absent: Gene Aleinikoff, Chris Sommerhoff, Monica Cleveland

The Comp Plan Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Art Bassin at 7 PM.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the 1/28/08 minutes. Motion carried.

Survey Results

Ms. Stolzenburg distributed hard copy of the numerical results of the survey and the “other comments” from question 44. Both these items, and a 50 page “text answer” summary, have been emailed to Committee members, and will be available on the web site. Ms. Stolzenburg said the 434 completed surveys, based on the 1550 mailed out, represented a statistically significant sample with a confidence level of between 95% and 99%. 306 replies were necessary for a 95% confidence level. 461 replies would have given the survey a confidence level of 99%.

The Committee reviewed the responses to each question. Ms. Stolzenburg commented on the near unanimous (90% or over) level of support for encouraging agriculture, maintaining open space, protecting ground water and protecting streams, ponds and wetland.

Ms. Stolzenburg also noted that the responses were geographically balanced with about one third coming from the Hamlets, one third from the central portion of the town and one third from the eastern parts of Town. The responses also were balanced between short term and long term residents, with about one third having lived in Ancram less than 10 years, one third between 11 and 30 years and one third over 30 years. In terms of age, Ms. Stolzenburg noted that residents over 65 represented 30% of the responses, while the 40 to 64 group represented 62%, and the under 40 group represented 8%. Based on the 2000 Ancram census, the over 65 group appears to be overrepresented, while the under 40 group appears to be underrepresented. 97% of the survey respondents were property owners.

Ms. Stolzenburg encouraged the Committee to review the results carefully, and to develop a list of cross-tabs needed to more fully understand the data. She also indicated that there would be apparent conflicts in the data (ie, a majority believes that more affordable housing is necessary, but survey respondents do not want to see smaller lot sizes or apartments) which would have to be resolved, and that there would be opportunities to educate the Town on possible solutions, and move the Town in certain directions which may not initially appear to be supported by the data, but which in the end may be the only ways to achieve the most important priorities outlined by the data.

There is some additional information that needs to be compiled in the next day or so, and the surveys will then be posted on the web site (www.townofancram.org) before the end of the week.

Mr. Bassin suggested that the Committee review the survey data, the Q44 “other comments” and the text answers over the next week and plan to go over it again at the next meeting on 2/11.

Comp Plan Outline/Community Profile/Vision Statements

Ms. Stolzenburg mentioned she had circulated the initial framework of the Comp Plan using the profile information, the demographic analysis, the DEC and Ancram bio-diversity write ups on wildlife and wetlands, and information on housing affordability. She said the GIS maps, the results of the survey, the Vision Statement and goals and strategies for implementing the Vision would be the next pieces of the Plan that have to be developed. She recommended the Committee start reviewing and commenting on and editing the preliminary Comp Plan Framework.

Water Study

Mr. Bassin mentioned that the Water Study, done by Steve Winkley of the NY Rural Water Association, had been received and is on the web site. The summary of the report, but not the full report, had been circulated by email. Steve Winkley will attend the Saturday 2/16 meeting to present the Water Study.

Grants

Mr. Bassin asked for final comments on the revised draft of the Farmland Protection Grant Application. There was general agreement that the Farmland Protection Grant was ready to submit. Mr. Bassin said he would present the final grant application to the Town Board at the 2/14 Town Board meeting. Mr. Bassin indicated we hoped to hear back on the Economic Development grant application before the end of February.

Community Communications

Mr. Bassin mentioned he had contacted NHN, the APG, the Long Lake Owners Association and a Church group in Ancramdale to offer to come to meetings held by these groups to discuss what is going on with the Comprehensive Plan, at a time and place more convenient to the members of these groups than our Committee meetings are. No responses yet.

Farmland Trust Meeting 2/28

Mr. Bassin mentioned again that the Farmland Trust was holding a one day conference in Saratoga Springs on 2/28 on “Growing NY Farms in the 21st Century.” You can get more

information and register by going to the Farmland Trust Website, www.farmland.org, going to the NY site and clicking on the 2/28 Event at Saratoga. Or call them at 518-581-0078.

New Committee Member

Mr. Bassin mentioned that a public notice will be in the Independent starting 2/5 for two weeks seeking volunteers to replace Kyle Lougheed. Several Committee members indicated they would check with people who had expressed an interest in the past to serve on the Comp Plan Committee or on other Town Boards, to see if any were still interested in being considered for the Comp Plan Committee. There was general agreement the next member of the Committee should live and work in Ancram if possible.

Ancram Mill Article in the Independent

Mr. MacLean mentioned the story in the Friday Independent concerning the Mill's meeting with Supervisor Dias, and expressed concern that the article gave the impression that the Comp Plan Committee had already decided to support the idea of expanding the Mill by permitting it to use part or all of Blass Memorial Park. Mr. MacLean and others on the Committee felt it might be necessary to clarify that the Comp Plan Committee has made no determination on the possibility or desirability of the Mill's expansion into the Park. There was general agreement that keeping the Mill's jobs in Ancram and expanding the employment base at the Mill was a positive thing for the Town, but that the preservation of the Town pool and athletic facilities was also a critical need, and supported by the results of the workshops and the survey. The Committee decided to take no specific action at this time, but to clarify its position in the future if the issue becomes a point of contention.

Next Meetings

Mr. Bassin proposed that the Committee plan to meet next on Monday 2/11 to continue the discussion of the survey results, on Saturday 2/16 to review the Water Study, and again on Monday 2/25. The Monday meetings will start at 7PM, and the Saturday meeting will start at 10 AM. Steve Winkley of the NYH Rural Water Association will join us for the 2/16 meeting to discuss the Water Study. The meeting schedule for March will be discussed at the 2/11 meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Chase and seconded by Ms. Hundt to adjourn the meeting at 9.20 PM. Motion carried.