

**Town of Ancram**  
**Comprehensive Plan Committee Meeting**  
**March 3, 2008**

**Present:** Art Bassin, Barry Chase Gene Aleinikoff, Bonnie Hundt, Kyle Lougheed, Chris Sommerhoff

**Absent:** Jim Bryant, Don MacLean, Leah Wilcox

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

The minutes for the 2/25 Committee meeting were approved as submitted.

Mr. Bassin asked members of the Committee to comment on the Vision statements, making sure we had not left anything out.

Ms. Hundt stated she felt the vision statements were too long as currently presented, and passed around a combined vision statement/goals statement from the Town of Amenia Comp Plan as an example of a more concise Vision statement coupled with goals. Ms. Hundt also said she thought we should refer in the vision statement to the “people of Ancram” rather than “residents”, suggested we eliminate references to “crime free” and make sure we include all three hamlets in our language. Ms. Hundt concluded by saying it was important that we focus on consensus building as we move forward.

Mr. Sommerhoff commented that the Vision statement had to be viewed by the Town as “realistic” if it were to be believable and supported by the people of Ancram. He commented that while a third of the land in Town was used for agriculture and agriculture was a major economic activity in Town, only 8% of the residents of Town were employed in agriculture, and the future of agriculture was in the hands of fewer and fewer people. Mr. Sommerhoff said that this very small percentage of agricultural employment put at risk the long term viability of the agricultural economy of the Town, which then put at risk the agricultural working landscapes and open spaces everyone in Town valued so highly. Mr. Sommerhoff concluded that supporting and expanding agriculture had to be the focus of the vision and the goals, as it was the core of what Ancram was about. He concluded by saying he did not know how this could be done.

Mr. Chase commented that he thought the Vision statements were too long and could be seen by the Town as “pie in the sky” and cause people to discount the Comp Plan in its entirety. He thought that the lack of water in parts of the town and the overabundance of water in other parts of the town were going to have an effect on the development going forward, and somehow we needed to capture this water issue in the vision. Mr. Chase agreed with Mr. Sommerhoff that it was important to capture the importance of preserving working agricultural landscapes to the Town’s future.

Mr. Aleinikoff commented that agreed with those who said the Vision was too long, covered too much and was not realistic. He stated it was important that we decide what we are going to support and what we are not going to support. He commented that he thought support of agriculture was going to be a challenge in that agriculture as we know

it, especially dairy farms, was disappearing, and may not be viable long term. Mr. Bassin commented that he had been at a Farmland Trust seminar the prior week at which one of the Cornell Ag experts predicted the dairy business was going to make a dramatic comeback in NY State over the next 10 years. The Committee thought that this development was unlikely to be important for Ancram.

Mr. Lougheed commented that he thought we needed to keep the vision statement on one page, and develop goals to support the vision. He said he thought we should use something like paragraph 2 of Nan's Draft Vision Statement as the Vision, and use the rest of the categorized components of the vision statement as goals. This was the approach used by the Town of Amenia in the vision/goals Statement Ms. Hundt had passed around earlier in the meeting. The Committee supported Mr. Lougheed's suggestion.

Mr. Bassin indicated he would revise the Vision statements to incorporate everyone's comments and would circulate a vision/goals statement in the Amenia format as suggested by Mr. Lougheed before the next meeting.

Mr. Bassin then asked the committee to review the issues outlined in Item 3 of the agenda and decide which of the issues identified we needed more information on and should plan to meet with "experts" about, and which we felt we had enough information about already. Mr. Aleinikoff suggested we already know enough to move forward and did not see why we needed additional meetings. There was general agreement that Nan Stolzenburg would be a resource for many of these issues, and we should discuss next steps in each area with her at the 3/17 meeting. After some additional discussion and subject to reviewing this with Nan on 3/17, the Committee concluded it would like more information on the following issues:

- Preserving/protecting open space and ridgelines; cluster development
- Gravel mining
- Senior citizen services
- Overlay Zones
- Ancram Revitalization
- Housing and residential development
- NYS Dept of Transportation

The Committee concluded it already knew enough to move forward without additional information on the following issues:

- Protecting groundwater, streams, wetlands, woodlands
- Recreational facilities for youth
- Preservation of historic places
- Mill expansion
- Economic development
- Town government

Mr. Bassin reported that he had gotten an email from Ken Feroni of O&G Mining who volunteered to come in to discuss gravel mining with the Committee. Mr. Bassin suggested he try and set up a meeting with Mr. Feroni and others related to the gravel mining industry including Fred Schneeberger, Palumbo and Perry Miller to help educate the committee on the issues related to gravel mining. The Committee agreed, and felt we should have representatives of DEC (and other non-industry gravel mining experts) join us on a separate occasion to understand the process from the DEC perspective as well.

Mr. Bassin reported that there were still discussions underway about scheduling Comp Plan review meeting with APG, NHN and at the Churches in Ancram and Ancramdale.

Mr. Bassin reported that there was no new news on our two grant applications.

The Committee set its next meeting for 3/17 with Nan Stolzenburg), and will attempt to set up a gravel mining meeting for either March 24 or March 31. (Note: Gravel Mining Meeting has been set up for 7 PM, 3/24)

Committee meeting adjourned at 9 PM.