

**Town of Ancram
Public Hearing
Right To Farm Law
April 21, 2016**

Present: Supervisor Arthur Bassin Councilman Hugh Clark
 Councilman Chris Thomas Councilwoman Madeline Israel
 Councilman David Boice Town Clerk Monica Cleveland
 Highway Superintendent James Miller

The public Hearing was called to order at 6:45pm by Supervisor Bassin. Mr. Bassin announced that the meeting had been advertised via legal notice in the town's papers.

Mr. Bassin opened the meeting to comments from the floor.

Mr. Don McLean of Thompson-Finch Farm addressed the board. He felt that this was a good law that is needed by the town. He added that one of the items that helps with the application for a conservation easement is a right to farm law. Mr. McLean felt that there was one issue not touched on by the law and that was the use of herbicides. He had concerns that while the law protects many items, it does not protect organic farmers and property owners from the use of herbicides by neighbors. He questioned what the property owner was to do in such a case and if the law should "go both ways".

Ms. Jamie Purinton read into the minutes the following statement from the CAC:

After our April 4, 2016 meeting and discussion, the Ancram CAC makes the following recommendations for revisions to the Draft Right to Farm local law:

** We request that Article I. Title, Legislative Intent and Purpose include language that recognizes Ancram's intent to protect its natural resources and water quality. Given that the town of Ancram considers "encouraging agriculture, protecting water and the environment, and preserving open space as their top priorities", we believe that the protection of water and the environment needs to be stated as an overall intent and purpose that goes hand-in-hand with encouraging agriculture. Therefore we ask that this language, taken directly from the Ancram Comprehensive Plan, be added to Article I.C: "...to support the initiation of farms, farm enterprises and agri-business, to*

"promote and encourage the use of environmentally sound agricultural "best practices" as recommended by the New York State Department of Ag and Markets in order to protect groundwater, watersheds, streams and wildlife habitats,"

...and to promote new ways to resolve disputes..."

** At the end of Article I.C, we'd like to add the following sentence:*

"...free of unreasonable and unwarranted interference or restriction."At the same time, the comprehensive farming rights that are outlined in this local law come with responsibilities to act as a good neighbor and careful steward of the land."

** Article III. B.3 - After the word "Water", add "Quality Protection"*

Remembering that water quality and a healthy environment are crucial to agriculture, we would also like to see a minor addition to Article III. B, 5.:

** "5. Conducted in a manner which does not constitute a threat to public health and safety and the environment, or cause injury to health or safety of any person, and..."*

Minor edits:

** Article IV, A: last sentence: "Such farming activities may include, but are not limited to..." [add "are"]*

** Article IV, B: delete the 500 feet requirement for providing notice: "This notice shall be provided to all prospective purchasers of property within the town of Ancram."*

At this time Mr. Bassin read comments from Nan Stolzenburg, Bob Sommers and Bonnie Hundt. These documents can be found on file in the Town Clerks office.

Mr. Bassin suggested that at this time the town board refer the law back to the Ag Committee for edits to incorporate comments from the public hearing.

Mr. Clark asked if the RTF law will expand the notification requirement from parcels within 500 feet of a farm to all parcels. Mr. Bassin stated that this would be probably be a good idea because agriculture is town wide and parcels further away from a farm than 500 feet are also affected by agriculture.

Mrs. Ann Rader asked what protection a property owner has if an adjoining property becomes a farmed piece. Mr. Bassin stated that he did not feel that this would be covered by the Right to Farm Law, but by zoning regs covering structures and set backs.

There being no more comments at this time, a motion was made at 7 pm by Councilman Thomas and seconded by Councilman Clark to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland, Ancram Town Clerk