

## **Ancram CAC Meeting MInutes, June 13, 2023**

**Attending in person:** CAC members Jane, Jono, Wally, Jaime, Erin, Amy, Colleen, Jay; Guests Heidi Bock/Columbia Land Conservancy (CLC) and Sarah Peele.

Meeting commenced at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

### **Main Business**

Conserving and protecting forests and other open spaces consistent with the Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan goals of maintaining the rural character of the Town, conserving wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and climate change resiliency has long been a priority of the CAC. This meeting was devoted to a discussion of forest protection: programs and grants available to counties, towns, and individual landowners, and potential opportunities for the CAC, Town, and CLC to work together toward protection of open spaces.

- Heidi introduced numerous state and federal programs and grant opportunities that could provide funding toward forest and open space conservation and protection.
- The concept of a tax on real estate transactions was discussed as a mechanism to fund a community conservation fund.
- We reviewed GIS maps illustrating forested areas and parcels already protected from development by state ownership and conservation easements.
- We initiated a discussion on criteria that may be used to prioritize parcels for acquisition (purchase or conservation easements).

### **Other Business**

Enforcement of laws and conditions of approval attached to applications for development continues to be a great concern of the CAC.

Revisions to town zoning laws to protect ridgelines, steep slopes and scenic corridors was discussed. Suggestions for revisions to zoning laws need to be submitted to the SCOZ by September 6, 2023.

We discussed new limitations on federal jurisdiction of wetlands handed down in the recent “Sackett” Supreme Court case.

### **Action Items**

- CLC will send the CAC more information on programs and grants available for forest and open space protection.
- Jaime will inquire about obtaining hard copies of the Ancram Natural Resources Conservation Plan for members of the CAC.
- Colleen will revise GIS maps in response to queries made by CAC members.
- CAC will continue to develop its proposal for updating zoning laws to strengthen protection of ridgeline, scenic corridors, and steep slopes.
- CAC will draft an educational article for the next issue of the Town newsletter discussing the importance of forest protection and incentives available to towns and individuals.
- There will be further discussions with Nan Stolzenburg regarding enforcement of zoning laws and conditions of approval.
- Discussion and actions to protect and conserve forests and open spaces, ridgelines, steep slopes, and scenic corridors will continue as a priority of the CAC.