

Town of Ancram, October 2023 Adoption of Zoning Law Amendments

A Local Law proposing to update the Town of Ancram Zoning Law to implement the 2019 Updated Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan recommendations as they pertain to land use regulations and to update regulations related to Hospitality Uses.

F EAF Section F – Additional Information About the Action

This action will result in a repeal of the August 2022 version of the Town of Ancram zoning law and replace it with a new, updated version. This action will implement changes that were recommended in the 2019 Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan (Plan), as well as those recommended from the Town’s Planning Board, ZBA, ZRC, and Building Inspector. Changes include clarification of referrals from the ZBA, updated definitions, addition of allowance for solar facilities on farm operations, updated short term rental rules, clarification on use of ‘maximum extent feasible/practical/possible’, and creation of a new section compiling and updating Hospitality Uses.

Some of the proposed zoning changes are clarifications and are areas identified by the Planning Board, Town Board, or CEO as lacking a definition, confusing language, or vague. The Town Comprehensive Plan called for Ancram to control new land uses affecting the Town in a manner that protects the environment and community character of Ancram and that balances landowners’ needs. The Town Board had enacted a 9 month moratorium on hospitality uses to allow the ZRC time to evaluate and update the zoning law related to a variety of hospitality uses.

In addition to the miscellaneous changes mentioned above, the bulk of the changes relate to hospitality uses. These include

- Agritourism
- Bed and Breakfast
- Bungalow Colony
- Boardinghouse
- Camp, Campground, Campsite, Camping Unit
- Commercial Pool
- Conference Center
- Country Inn
- Day Spa
- Food and Beverage
- Glamping
- Destination Spa
- Hostel
- Membership Club
- Physical Fitness Facility
- Special Event Facility
- Summer Camp
- Short Term Rentals
- Yoga and Meditation Facility

Some of these uses have been included in the previous version of the zoning, and this update consolidates them all into one new section within the Supplemental Standards for Individual Use chapter. Each of these uses is not defined, and a new chart is added detailing hospitality use-specific standards for maximum lot size, maximum number of guests, maximum lot coverage or building size, and whether the use can be added to another hospitality use. This section also details general development standards that all hospitality uses will need to meet. To detail acceptable scale and intensity of hospitality uses, the new zoning law also addresses access from state, county and local

roads, prohibits retreat centers and resorts as they were deemed not compatible with the goals of the Town of Ancram, and establishes a variety of development standards all such uses must meet.

Development standards for the hospitality uses are designed to ensure compatibility of the use with the environment and character of Ancram. These include standards related to the following:

- Parking and traffic
- Signage
- Lighting
- Commercial design standards
- Screening
- Access and curb cuts
- Noise
- Adaptive reuse
- Hours of operation
- Water and septic
- Plants and animals
- Agriculture and prime farmland soils

The updated zoning also establishes a variety of criteria the Planning Board must consider in its review and permitting of the project. These include:

- a. Adequacy and arrangement of vehicle traffic access and circulation.
- b. Adequacy of driveways in terms of width, ability to provide adequate emergency access, slope, aesthetics, and control of stormwater runoff.
- c. Location, arrangement, appearance and sufficiency of off-street parking.
- d. Location, arrangement, size and design of lighting and signs.
- e. Relationship and compatibility of proposed use to uses of adjacent parcels in the immediate vicinity.
- f. Compatibility in regard to traffic circulation, parking, appearance, and consistency with zoning, consistency with the building scale, building facades, roof types, materials, etc.
- g. Adequacy, type and arrangement of trees, shrubs, fences and other landscaping or improvement constituting a visual or noise-deterring buffer between the site and adjacent or adjoining uses.
- h. Adequacy for emergency access.
- i. Consistency with the Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan, especially related to community character, rural character, and the Plan's vision and goals.

Summary

The Town recognizes the need for and desires to accommodate new hospitality uses provided they are consistent with the essential values of the community and the environment. The updated zoning will guide hospitality land use growth in a manner that eliminates or mitigates adverse impacts. The Update implements smart-growth principles and development standards based upon environmental protection and best management principles oriented towards hospitality uses. The new zoning is specifically designed to preserve the Town's environmental resources and community character while promoting hospitality uses that have scale, design, siting, and design characteristics consistent with the stated goals and vision for the Town of Ancram.

These changes will allow for responsible growth consistent with the environment and character so valued by Ancram residents. The Updated Zoning Law will govern new hospitality land uses and will clearly support the Town's goal to protect its environment.

Adoption of the Updated Law will help the Town reduce or mitigate environmental impacts. It continues the long-standing policies of the Town of Ancram to allow for development through effective land use regulations, careful and comprehensive project reviews, and transformative recognition of the importance the Town gives to its environmental resources and community character. The Town views the updated zoning as an important tool to ensure resiliency, sustainability and protection of Ancram's environment.