

**Town of Ancram  
Town Board  
Regular Meeting  
December 21, 2023**

**Present:** Supervisor Arthur Bassin  
Councilman David Boice  
Councilwoman Bonnie Hundt  
Highway Superintendent James Miller  
Councilman Hugh Clark  
Councilwoman Amy Gold  
Town Clerk Monica Cleveland

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The regular meeting of the Ancram Town Board was called to order at 7:00pm by Supervisor Bassin with a salute to the flag.

A moment of silence was observed due to the passing of former long term Assessors Clerk Mary Faith Boice and former Town Clerk Edella MacArthur.

Mr. Bassin asked if there were any items on the agenda any member of the board needed to recuse themselves from. There were none.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Gold and seconded by Councilman Clark to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as read and place them on the record. Motion carried.

The following statement was read into the minutes by Councilwoman Gold and signed by those listed:

*STATEMENT FROM THE ANCRAM TOWN BOARD REGARDING HATE SPEECH,  
INCLUSION AND UNDERSTANDING*

*The Ancram Town Board would like to shed light on some disturbing acts of hate and bigotry which recently took place in our town, and to make its position very clear on such behavior.*

*Ancram is a town that takes pride in the individuality of our residents and visitors alike and values dignity and respect for all people regardless of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, or any other such characteristic. The personal safety of our community members, both physically and psychologically, is of the utmost importance. The Town Board unequivocally opposes any expression of hate, intolerance, prejudice, or discrimination toward any individual or group. This includes race, religion, sexual orientation and any other protected class.*

*Under NYS's Hate Crime Law, numerous traditional criminal offenses that are found to be motivated by bias can result in substantial sentencing enhancements. Penal L. §485.05. Nearly 70 offenses are now deemed hate crimes if the victim is targeted in whole or in substantial part because of a belief or perception regarding the race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religious practice, age, disability or sexual orientation of a person. If convicted of a hate crime, a defendant faces a fine and potential jail time.*

*If you feel you have been the target of any such incident, we encourage you to reach out to local law enforcement.*

*To put it simply, this is not who we are. We are a small town that aspires to protect and respect ALL of our residents, businesses, neighbors and visitors and lead by example for our friends, families, and neighboring towns. Let's not stand by in these moments when our values of community, charity, and understanding are compromised. It is not through hate that Ancram will prosper, but through cooperation.*

*The Town Board now takes this opportunity to reiterate its Resolution of October 2022 and re-read it into the minutes.*

*Resolution Supporting Inclusion and Understanding (adopted October 2022)*

*WHEREAS, recently as a nation we have witnessed high violence based upon a person's religion, race, gender identities, sexual orientation, nationality, economic status and political affiliation; and*

*WHEREAS, here in the United States, inclusive communities rely upon the guidance, assistance and leadership of people of all races, religions, nationalities, gender identities, sexual orientations, economic status, and political affiliation; and*

*WHEREAS, the Ancram Town Board continues to maintain that all people have the right to feel safe and be treated equally and with respect and dignity regardless of their race, religion, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, economic status and political affiliation.*

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Ancram Town Board, on behalf of our community members, do hereby reaffirm our commitment to including all races, religions, nationalities, gender identities, sexual orientations, economic statuses and political affiliations in Town government and in the fabric of our community; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on behalf of all residents of the Town of Ancram we denounce violence of any kind and condemn any act of aggression, hostility, or violence against any member of our community.*

*Statement Signed by:*

*Amy Gold Bonnie Hundt David Boice*

*Colleen Lutz Jim Macarthur Hugh Clark*

*Jim Miller Monica Cleveland Art Bassin*

Councilwoman Hundt stated that the board wanted people to know what has been taking place in town and that if this kind of behavior is observed that it needs to be addressed with law enforcement. The County Sheriff Krapf was in attendance and said that all calls will be taken seriously. A motion was made by Councilwoman Gold and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt to accept the statement as read and approved by the town board. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Jane Plasman asked how the statement will be presented to the public. Mr. Bassin said it will go out via Anvramemail.

Mr. Devon Rueger asked if this was someone driving past or someone who stopped. He noted that this word is used in music that is often played very loud. Ms. Hundt said that it was an in person incident. Mr. Ruger asked if the person was identified. Ms. Hundt stated that the person was unknown but the vehicle description taken.

## **Local Law # 6 of 2023**

Councilman Clerk gave an overview of the process the town board has taken to pass Local Law #6 of 2023.

Mr. Clark read through the Part 3 of the Negative Declaration. There being no changes, a motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilman Boice to accept the Part 3 of the Negative Declaration. Motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt and moved for adoption. Resolution carried by unanimous vote.

### **Resolution #61 of 2023: NEGATIVE DECLARATION Local Law #6 of 2023 (Zoning 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.

WHEREAS:

1. Proposed new legislation in the form of a local law updating the Town of Ancram Zoning Law has been introduced and reviewed.
2. The new provisions related to the updated zoning are proposed in the form of a Local Law pursuant to the authority and power granted to the Town Board and the Town by Articles 2 and 3 of the New York State Municipal Home Rule Law and by Article 2 of the New York State Statute of Local Governments.
3. In 2019, pursuant to the authority granted in New York State Town Law § 272-a, the Town of Ancram adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan. That Plan sets forth Ancram's vision for its future, and the blueprint for how the Town should grow and how Ancram should preserve the characteristics and qualities of the Town so valued by Town residents. The Comprehensive Plan consists of materials, written and/or graphic, including, but not limited to, maps, charts, elements, appendices, and other descriptive material. Section 272-a (11) of the Town Law requires, in relevant part, that all town land use regulations must be in accordance with an adopted Comprehensive Plan.
4. New legislation, introduced to the Town Board in January 2023 and adopted as Local Law No. 2 of 2023, established a temporary moratorium on certain applications for the approval of building permits, abbreviated site plan approval, site plan approvals and special use permits related to hospitality-related land uses that are pending or may be subsequently filed with the Town of Ancram pursuant to either Article VI (Special Use Permits) or Article VII (Site Plan Review) of the Town of Ancram Town Zoning Law.
5. In addition to, and in support of the implementation of the goals of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, it is also the purpose of the proposed updated zoning to exercise our Town's right to protect our citizens by ensuring new uses of land are protective of the public health, safety and general welfare, and that are consistent with locally established goals and objectives in accordance with our comprehensive plan. Ancram's Plan is

designed to preserve and protect, for the benefit of the town as a whole, the basically rural-agricultural character of the Town.

6. The Town Board directed that the Town ZRC be tasked with conducting the review of the Zoning Law as it relates to updating land use regulations related to hospitality uses, and other ways to continue to ensure zoning is consistent with the adopted 2019 Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan.
7. This proposed Local Law is the result of hours of work and consideration by the Town's ZRC, and planning consultant.
8. Adoption of this local law establishing an updated zoning law has been determined to be a Type I action, pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) 6 NYCRR Part 617.4, and
9. The proposed action will not require permits and approvals from any other local, regional, or State agencies prior to adoption, and a coordinated SEQRA review is not required; and
10. The Town Board carefully reviewed Parts I, II, and III of the Full Environmental Assessment Form and took the required hard look on the above-described action according to SEQRA, 6 NYCRR Part 617 as part of the required adoption procedures; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS BY THE TOWN BOARD OF THE TOWN OF ANCRAM, COLUMBIA COUNTY, NEW YORK FINDS:

1. That the Town Board, after consideration of the Full Environmental Assessment Form Part III finds that:
  - a. The Town has not identified any significant, adverse environmental impacts that would result from adopting the amended zoning law. The Town Board has reviewed Part I and II and has determined that there are no identified potential moderate to large adverse environmental impacts associated with adopting updates to the zoning law for the Town of Ancram. This action implements policies established in the 2019 Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan. Protection of the environment and maintenance of the rural character of the Town are paramount policies of the Town and this local law is established to update the zoning regulations to ensure consistency between future development and that Comprehensive Plan. The ZRC conducted an almost year-long review of the zoning as it relates to hospitality uses and recommended, and the Town Board agrees with a variety of zoning changes needed to address ongoing and new issues facing hospitality uses in the Town.
  - b. The action of adopting a local law by itself will not result in any physical change to the environment. The proposed zoning changes relate to ensuring that new hospitality uses have a scale, intensity, and are of the type of use that is consistent with the vision, goals, and policies of the Town of Ancram as detailed in the 2019

Comprehensive Plan. All recommended changes further the environmental protection goals of the Town of Ancram while allowing for appropriate hospitality uses. A detailed Section F narrative attached to Part I of the Full EAF was provided to fully describe these proposed zoning changes. As detailed in Section F, the proposed zoning changes allow for certain appropriately scaled and designed hospitality uses, and prohibits those that are of high intensity, large scale, or not consistent with continuing the high environmental quality and rural character of the Town of Ancram. Thus, the Town Board considers this action will positively benefit the Town of Ancram and is fully consistent with the goals of SEQR. The primary purpose of the proposed amendments to the zoning law are to allow certain hospitality uses in a manner consistent with Ancram's environment.

2. That the Town Supervisor is authorized to execute and sign the Full Environmental Assessment Form, Part III.

3. That the Town of Ancram Town Board hereby declares that adoption of the proposed Local Law No. 6 of 2023 establishing a Local Law that updates the Town of Ancram Zoning Law as described herein, will not have any potential significant adverse environmental impact; and

4. That the Town Board hereby makes a negative declaration regarding SEQR 6NYCRR Part 617 and authorizes filing of such negative declaration (Part III of the FEAF); and

5. That the Town Board directs the Town Clerk to file a notice in the Environmental Notice Bulletin according to SEQRA, 6 NYCRR Part 617 as required; and

WHEREUPON this Resolution was declared adopted by the Town Board of the Town of Ancram.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt and moved for adoption. Resolution carried by unanimous roll call vote.

**Resolution #62 of 2023: Resolution of the Town of Ancram Town Board Adopting Local Law No. 6 of 2023, 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.**

**Whereas:**

1. This resolution introduces a proposed new local law (LL No. 6 of 2023) that rescinds all previous versions of the Town of Ancram Zoning Law and replaces it with a new, updated version of the Town of Ancram Zoning Law which amends various sections of the Town of Ancram Zoning Law (the "Zoning Law") and creates a new chapter entitled 'Hospitality'.
2. The zoning amendments are proposed in the form of a Local Law pursuant to the authority and power granted to the Town Board and the Town by Articles 2 and 3 of the

New York State Municipal Home Rule Law and by Article 2 of the New York State Statute of Local Governments.

3. The zoning law amendments in this local law are proposed to further implement the 2019 Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan that established the need and direction for further protecting the unique environment in the Town, and to further the vision and goals established by the Community.
4. New legislation, introduced to the Town Board in January 2023 and adopted as Local Law No. 2 of 2023, established a temporary moratorium on certain applications for the approval of building permits, abbreviated site plan approval, site plan approvals and special use permits related to hospitality-related land uses that are pending or may be subsequently filed with the Town of Ancram pursuant to either Article VI (Special Use Permits) or Article VII (Site Plan Review) of the Town of Ancram Town Zoning Law.
5. In addition to, and in support of the implementation of the goals of the Town's Comprehensive Plan, it is also the purpose of the proposed updated zoning to exercise our Town's right to protect our citizens by ensuring new uses of land are protective of the public health, safety and general welfare, and that are consistent with locally established goals and objectives in accordance with our comprehensive plan. Ancram's Plan is designed to preserve and protect, for the benefit of the town as a whole, the basically rural-agricultural character of the Town.
6. The Town Board directed that the Town ZRC be tasked with conducting the review of the Zoning Law as it relates to updating land use regulations related to hospitality uses, and other ways to continue to ensure zoning is consistent with the adopted 2019 Town of Ancram Comprehensive Plan.
7. This proposed Local Law is the result of hours of work and consideration by the Town's ZRC, and planning consultant.
8. Adoption of this local law establishing an updated zoning law has been determined to be a Type I action, pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) 6 NYCRR Part 617.4, and
9. The proposed action will not require permits and approvals from any other local, regional, or State agencies prior to adoption, and a coordinated SEQRA review is not required; and
10. The Town Board carefully reviewed Parts I, II, and III of the Full Environmental Assessment Form and took the required hard look on the above-described action according to SEQRA, 6 NYCRR Part 617 as part of the required adoption procedures.
11. The Town Board determined that there would be no significant adverse environmental impacts related to adopting these zoning amendments and has issued a negative declaration to that effect.
12. The Town Board held a duly noticed public hearing to elicit input from the community on these zoning amendments. The Town Board also posted a copy of the proposed Local Law on the Town's web site and made a paper copy of the proposed Local Law

available for review by the public at the Town of Ancram Town Hall, 1416 County Route 7, Ancram NY 12502.

13. The Town Board made a referral to the Town of Ancram Planning Board as required in the Zoning Law, and to the Columbia County Planning Board pursuant to GML 239-m and has received and considered their comments.
14. Pursuant to New York State Municipal Home Rule Law § 20, Local Law No. 6 of 2023 proposing updates to the Zoning Law for the Town of Ancram was received by each member of the Town Board prior to this meeting via email and that proposed Local Law shall be deemed to be on the desk of each member of the Town Board as of tonight's Town Board meeting.

### **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,**

- Section A. The Town Board hereby adopts Town of Ancram local law No. 6 of 2023, an update to 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.
- Section B. That the Board hereby authorizes the Town Clerk to post the updated Zoning Law on the Town of Ancram Website and to forward a copy of this updated Zoning Law to the Chair of the Town Planning Board, Chair of the Town Zoning Board of Appeals, and to the Town Building Department.
- Section C. That the Town Board instructs the Town Clerk to file the ENB form for the Negative Declaration as required by 6NYCRR Part 617.
- Section D. That the Town Board directs the Town Clerk to inform the Columbia County Planning Office if its decision on such form as may be prescribed by the Columbia County Planning Office.
- Section E. That the Town Board shall enter this law into the minutes of the Town Board and shall publish a summary or abstract of it once in the official newspaper of the Town.
- Section F. That the Town Board instructs the Town Clerk to maintain a file in her office in the Town Hall to contain all parts of this law, including the maps, and instructs the Town Clerk to ensure that affidavits of the publication and posting of the amendments be filed with the Town Clerk.

### **Supervisors Report**

1) Financial Report – Another normal financial month. The YE 2023 fund balance projection (cash plus T-Bills) is \$1,270,000, same as last month's projection. T-Bills and Building Department fees continue to be strong, and Highway costs continue to be under good control, and look like they could be \$50,000 or so under the 2023 budget.

2) Statement and Resolution Condemning Hate Speech and Supporting Inclusion and Understanding - We will consider adopting a statement condemning hate speech prepared by Town Board members Amy Gold and Bonnie Hundt with the assistance of the Committee for Respectful Behavior and Attorney Elena DeFio Kean. This initiative results from reports of several incidents of hate speech being directed at Ancram residents over the past few months. We will also consider reaffirming the Resolution Supporting Inclusion and Understanding which we originally adopted in October 2022.

3) Local Law #6 of 2023 (Zoning Amendments) – We will consider LL#6 of 2023 for adoption.

Mr. Bassin also noted that he had called the AOT about dissolving the Ancram Light District. This is possible but will be a task for the new town board.

#### **Town Board Comments**

Councilman Clark addressed the board with his thoughts as he steps down from the board. He cautioned the board members to continue on the path laid and to work as a group.

Councilwoman Gold gave an update on the Columbia Memorial Rapid Care in Copake. She said that the donations are coming in and that there is hope that the rapid care will open to the public in the first quarter of 2024.

Councilwoman Gold noted that she has met with Ray Jurkowski along with Mr. Miller and Mr. Boice. There are ideas to change the intersection. This is an ongoing project.

Councilwoman Hundt reported that there will be a Housing and Energy Fair event on January 27<sup>th</sup> at the Roe Jan Library.

Councilwoman Hundt noted that she has worked with Mr. Clark on the ZRC and the Comp Plan and while these were a long process, Hughs leadership was amazing.

Mr. Ronan Moloney asked Ms. Hundt what the definition of affordable housing is. Ms. Hundt said that she cannot explain it in two sentences and would suggest speaking one on one after the meeting.

#### **Highway Superintendent**

To Date we have had two snow and ice events.

We have patrolled roads for tree limbs following periods of heavy rain and wind, Wiltsie Bridge rd flooded in its usual spot by Herondale farm this past Monday-Tuesday.

We have been trimming trees along various roads as conditions allow.

We continue doing maintenance on the plow trucks to get them ready for the winter and through NYS inspection.



We have been hauling in sand to begin to fill our Salt and Sand shed and gravel to refill our stockpile. Presently it is about half full.

We will accept Christmas Trees for chipping 1/1/2024-1/15/2024 in an area designated by road cones.

We received our chips payment of \$133,747.24 last week.

Materials Bid: I advertised for road materials and received three. As is customary, I recommend that the board approve all three. They are Colarusso and Son for road salt, Hot mix and road stone. Red Wing for Sand and Gravel product and Package pavement for cold patch.

A motion was made by Supervisor Bassin to approve the bids as made. Motion seconded by Councilman Boice. Motion carried.

Victoria Dillinger asked the highway superintendent about tree trimmers having no flaggers and this being a safety issue. Mr. Miller said these were electric company tree trimmers. Mr. Bassin will reach out to them.

Mr. Miller took the time to thank Mr. Bassin and Mr. Clark for their time and dedication to the Town.

#### **Town Clerk**

Town Clerk Cleveland reported that the taxes will be ready to go out on time. She asked that those who may not get a bill in the mail, to reach out sooner rather than later.

Mrs. Cleveland gave thanks to Mr. Clark and Mr. Bassin for their time and friendship as they retire from the Town Board.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilman Boice to approve the following budget adjustments:

To: 1420.4- \$3000.00

1110.4- \$1000.00

1330.4- \$1320.00

1650.4- \$3600.00

7550.4- \$3500.00

9850.8- \$1100.00

1355.4- \$4500.00

From: Fund Balance

To 5130.4 From 5110.4: \$4000.00

A motion was made by Councilman Boice and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to approve the warrants and pay the bills. Motion carried.

The following resolution was offered by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilman Boice and moved for adoption. Resolution carried unanimously.

**Resolution #63 of 2023: 2024 Health Insurance Plans – Resolved**, that the Ancram Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to enter into an agreement with CDPHP to add the Bronze 421 health insurance plan to the Town's health insurance program.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Gold and seconded by Councilwoman Hundt and moved for adoption. Resolution carried unanimously.

**Resolution #64 of 2023: Columbia Greene Humane Society (CGHS) - Resolved**, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to enter into an agreement with the Columbia Greene Humane Society to provide care, support and services to the Ancram Dog Control Officer for any dogs presented to the CGHS.

The following resolution was offered by Councilwoman Gold and seconded by Councilman Clark and moved for adoption. Resolution carried unanimously.

**Resolution #65 of 2023: Town of Pine Plains Dog Shelter - Resolved**, that the Town Supervisor is authorized to enter into an agreement with the Town of Pine Plains Dog shelter to provide care, support and services to the Ancram Dog Control Officer for any dogs presented to the Town of Pine Plains Dog Shelter.

Mr. Frank Farinia of Route 82 informed the town board that there is a water issue in the northbound lane of Route 82 because of a non functioning drain. Mr. Bassin will reach out to the state but noted that they are behind.

Councilwoman Gold invited everyone for cake to celebrate Mr. Bassin and Mr. Clark.

A motion was made by Councilman Clark and seconded by Councilwoman Gold to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectively submitted by,

Monica R. Cleveland, RMC  
Ancram Town Clerk