

**Town of Ancram  
Zoning Revisions Committee**

**MINUTES**

**July 15, 2024, 7:00 pm,**

*via Zoom*

**Zoom Host- Steve Olyha**

**Minutes: Steve Olyha**

Carol opened the meeting by reminding everyone all opinions are important and need to be respectfully heard and thanking Jim Miller and Dennis Siegler for being able to participate. She noted though she may have different views from the two of them in particular, she respected their differing points of view.

1. a. Approve Minutes of the meeting June 17, 2024. Add in 4i "tabled for further information." Approved.

b. Prohibited Uses: Review -3bvii. *Furniture Manufacturing Facility (Home scale occupation is allowed.)* Do we need the phrase in parenthesis? Leave as is since it gives clarity.

c. Discussed other topics coming up outside of the current SCOZ review and the critical nature of some, easy nature of others, to update. Steve O specifically mentioned local law #1 allowing Board Chairs to nominate an alternate to full member whenever needed. The ZRC agreed not to interrupt the momentum of working on the SCOZ except for something very important such as the current proposal on Board Chairs nominating alternates to a voting position.

**2. re: Development Standards**

-4g was approved 6-17-24.as written but we questioned the 20,000 sq ft. Erin contacted Jane Meigs and Jane contact Nan Stolzenberg. See attachment for Nan's reply and the thread that resulted from her reply.

*-4g. "For a new house or building envelope, any proposed clearing of woodlands shall not exceed 20,000 sq. ft. If there is any logging or tree removal that should exceed 20,000 sq. ft., there must be a sustainable forestry plan approved by a DEC-certified forester. This sustainable forestry plan shall be submitted to the Planning Board and Code Enforcement Officer for review and enforcement."*

Discussed the 20,000 sq. foot clearing of woodlands as potentially being too restrictive. We agreed to hold off on it's approval even though previously voted on. Norman agreed to look into creating a percent option in lieu of the specificity of square footage not being reasonable for larger lots. Steve and Carol will meet to review the R/SSPOD laws for further guidance and to incorporate that wording into our law.. Norman will work on using a percentage as a limiting factor.

TABLED.

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4i. was tabled at our last meeting. From the minutes of our last meeting: "There was much discussion as to the distinctions between native vs. non-native plants, and invasive vs. non-invasive species. There can be non-invasive non-natives, and there can be invasive natives. Susan said she will do research and Erin will look up NYS prohibited plant list so that we can clarify this language." Attached is NYS Prohibited list

***-4i. "For all disturbed areas, provide a planting and plant maintenance plan. All new plants shall be native to the northeast except invasive species."***

An extended discussion of 4i ensued about native vs. non-native species. Susan noted there was no such thing as a "native invasive" and that they can be good. Kim disagreed technically using poison ivy and various sumacs as an example. Steve stated we risk "the law of unintended consequences" by forbidding non-invasive plantings, and others gave examples of non-natives that can be beneficial. While no conclusion was reached it is a topic for further discussion, and we agreed to ask the CAC for examples of a planting and plant maintenance plan. It was further noted we may be adding a restriction that will never be subject to enforcement.

***-4i. "For all disturbed areas, provide a planting and plant maintenance plan. To the extent possible all new plants shall be native to the northeast and invasive species should be avoided entirely. See NYS prohibitive plant list"***

APPROVED

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***-4j. "If on a hill, the-top of the structure will be a minimum of 40 feet below the crest line."***

With a restriction of a structure top being 40 ft below the ridgeline we agreed to table until further review of the Steep Slopes and Ridgelines by Carol and Steve. Norman will look up a definition of mean roof height.

TABLED

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-4k. Approved by ZRC 12-4-23: "Building and roof colors shall consist of natural earth tones, black, or shades of ,sgray. Day glow or neon colors shall be avoided. All structures within the scenic corridor shall not have facades that exceed the maximum length of 80 feet. ***All viewsheds shall be maintained to the extent practicable.*** Facades adjacent to New York State Route 22 shall include glass surface area when practicable and reflective glass shall be avoided."

Suggested addition: " ***The intent is that all structures blend in with the surroundings as much as possible.***"

4k to read: -4k. "Building and roof colors shall consist of natural earth tones, black, or shades of ,sgray. Day glow or neon colors shall be avoided. All structures within the scenic corridor shall not have facades that exceed the maximum length of 80 feet. ***The intent is that all structures blend in with the surroundings as much as possible. All viewsheds shall be maintained to the extent practicable.*** Facades adjacent to New York State Route 22 shall include glass surface area when practicable and reflective glass shall be avoided."

APPROVED

b. **Suggested definition of a viewshed:** “A view of an area from a specific vantage point that contains particular scenic or historic value that are deemed worthy of preservation against development or other change. After much discussion the ZRC approved

*“A viewshed is a view of an area from a specific vantage point.”*

APPROVED

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4l is new.

*-4l. “In order to increase bird safety, applicants are encouraged to not locate window and doors in opposite positions that suggest flyways. In addition applicants are encouraged to use insect screening and or glass and glass film that reduces collisions.”*

Bird safety and encouraging applicants not to align windows and doors in opposite positions was not endorsed. Susan specifically noted is went past our charge of reviewing scenic and environmental issues into building codes which was not our charter. T. It was felt that this should be a handout to anyone buying property or building.

NOT APPROVED

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*-4m. “All outdoor lighting ~~shall comply with Dark Sky guidelines, and~~ include diffusers or minimal wattage bulbs that minimize glare to adjoining roadways and properties. **To prevent light pollution the following is suggested:** ~~use downward pointing fully shielded fixtures;~~ ~~Reduce the amount of light by using less fixtures, lower wattage bulbs, timers and motion detector;~~ and ~~use warm colored lights 3000 Kelvin or less.”~~*

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For more information on Dark Sky see <https://darksky.org>

A robust discussion on Dark Sky guidelines ensued, with the general feeling that as written it was not clear and did not provide enough direction to applicants. For example, what specifically might dimmers be used for (security lighting?) and the use of wattage as being out of date due to current outputs from low-wattage bulbs could still be bright. Kim suggested that this wording was from a previous document that was produced when the town was looking at streetlights. Susan asked for that document from Kim. We agreed to table this for now and Susan will do some research and propose a link to Dark Sky Guidelines and try to re-write this guideline. This also led to a general discussion of creating a set of “Guidelines” for applicants that would not be part of zoning law but could include this as well as 4l above. The ZRC seemed to universally endorse the idea with no plan to implement.. There was lots of discussion on the reason to include lower wattage bulbs, timers and motion detectors, etc.. Kim suggested that this wording was from a previous document that was produced when the town was looking at streetlights. Susan asked for that document from Kim.

TABLED

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-4n Only two changes in 4n below/next: 1. the addition of the word “doors” for clarity. 2. 4n was moved here to development standards from Buffer requirements. It is in the original law.

-4n. "All garbage cans, garbage collection areas, loading areas, loading docks and loading dock *doors* and mechanical equipment must be screened from view. Small rooftop mechanical equipment, including vents, need not be screened if the total area of such equipment does not exceed nine (9) square feet per structure."

APPROVED

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The only change in 4o is placement under development standards. It was 7e in the SCOZ law. It is already a part of the law but every change, even if it is in placement must be approved.

-4o. "All signs shall be in accordance with the regulations set forth in ART.V A 20. in the Ancram Zoning Law 2023."

APPROVED

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-4p. comes from SCOZ 4c)1 Buffer requirements. In the minutes of 11-20-23 the ZRC approved

4p"A natural buffer, minimum twenty-five (25) feet wide, shall be maintained along the portion of any lot adjacent to New York State Route 22. If existing vegetation does not provide a buffer screen of the new development, as determined by the Planning Board, additional native plantings shall be added to the buffer area and provided on a scaled landscape planting plan. The applicant is encouraged to follow the Landscaping Supplemental Regulations in the Zoning Law for standards and maintenance of plantings."

a. Do we need the first sentence? ZRC agreed to table until Erin returns since ZRC was not clear on the issue.

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b. Suggested change in word order to second sentence: "If, as determined by the Planning Board, existing vegetation does not satisfactorily provide an undisturbed buffer screen *of the new development*, additional *native* plantings shall be added to the buffer area *and shown on a scaled landscape planting plan*."

APPROVED

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- 4q From SCOZ 4c)2 Buffer Requirements was in the original. In the interest of simplifying do you think we need to keep it in?

4q. "No development, including improvements, buildings, structures, parking areas or open-air uses are allowed within the buffer. For new development, when necessary for access or provision for utilities, streets or easements may be permitted to cross the buffer."

APPROVED Keep it in.

Suggested change to word order in second sentence:

*“For new development, when necessary for access or provision for utilities, streets or easements may be permitted to cross the landscape buffer screen.”*

**APPROVED** change in word order.

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4r is from SCOZ 4c)3. CAC did not suggest a change.

“No development shall be required to have the buffer area exceed twenty-five (25%) of the total site.

Discussion centered around the problems a small lot would have.

**APPROVED** as is

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4. Discussion of problems with future meetings. Carol then led a discussion on 2 topics, one of which was continuing to meet via Zoom or meeting in person.

a. Meeting in person. The general consensus seemed to be meeting in person built better teamwork and was preferred. We also discussed a hybrid model but it was pointed out that was complex and that model was showing difficulty as it was used for TB meetings and people were often hard to hear. We did not settle on the format for the next meeting. Norman gave his reasons for wanted to meet in person. The Consensus was that we would decide at the end of each meeting.

b. Future conflicts with the ZBA Because we would lose one meeting a month for the rest of the year, we decided to change our Monday's. Our next meeting will be July 29 and then we will meet the following week on August 5. And continue from there.

c. MY FUTURE SCHEDULE: Carol also noted she would be away for travel for a number of upcoming weeks and put out a couple of options to consider, including having her resign and be replaced, or having someone else host meetings she would be missing. Susan suggested that Carol send out our new schedule with a note on what meetings she will miss. No decision made.

5. Our next meeting will be Monday July 29 at 7:00. Susan will take minutes. It was decided to meet in person

