

**Town of Ancram  
Zoning Revisions Committee**

**Minutes  
January 19, 2026 7:00 pm  
Erin Robertson, Minutes**

**Present:** Carol Falcetti, Bonnie Hundt, Christine Brown, Erin Robertson, Steve Olyha,

**Absent:** Kim Tripp, Susan Wohleking

**Guests:** Elizabeth Corteville, Michael Del Rossi

**Minutes of Jan. 5, 2026. Approved no changes**

The meeting began with Carol updating on the status of committee applicants and plans to reissue a call for more candidates. Steve expressed concerns about the current committee's lack of diversity and suggested reaching out to specific community members such as farmers and the firehouse for potential applicants.

**SUGGESTED REGULATIONS FOR A CONSTRUCTED POND PERMIT (Continued).**

**11. A constructed pond shall not use any natural water source, such as from a stream, spring, any wetland or groundwater, to fill the pond.**

Suggested change: A constructed pond shall not use ~~any natural water source, such as~~ from a stream, spring, ~~any wetland or groundwater,~~ **aquifer** to fill the pond.

There were concerns about #11 with Steve expressing strong opposition to the current restrictions, arguing they effectively prevent pond building by limiting water sources to fill a pond. He said ponds can be beneficial and should be allowed to use small unregulated wetlands to fill a pond. Carol clarified that the regulations apply only to ponds larger than 1,000 square feet and Erin discussed potential methods for filling ponds other than trucking in the water would be stormwater collection from gutters and over land drainage. Christine suggested comparing Ancram's regulations with those of other towns, and Steve emphasized the need to balance environmental protection with property owners' rights. Bonnie asked about the effects of pond water on local wells. Steve suggested a constructed pond should not use water from a stream or a regulated wetland but would allow creating a pond from a small wetland or spring and using a well to fill a pond.

7:30 Steve left the meeting. The committee does have not a quorum to vote on anything for the rest of the meeting.

The question came up as to whether we have existing regulations to protect our aquifers. Would the planning board be able to say no to a landowner that wanted to use a well to fill a large

pond? Most people would not want to use their well and risk running it dry but some people can afford to use well water. Carol is most concerned about the aquifer. Erin suggested increasing the regulated pond size. Bonnie is concerned with protecting our aquifers and suggested consulting Nan for expert advice on filling methods and size stipulations. Christine will review local town regulations.

The group considered options for #11 and came down to these two choices to be decided next meeting:

- A) A constructed pond should not use water from a stream, spring, regulated wetland or aquifer to fill the pond.
- B) Eliminate #11 entirely because of existing regulations that already protect streams, springs and wetlands.

## **REREAD AND REVIEW INTENT AND REGULATIONS FOR A CONSTRUCTED POND PERMIT**

Carol made suggestions to the Constructed Ponds definitions that the committee has so far approved to look for clarity, consistency and understandability and had questions on the definitions.

**Pond, Constructed or Constructed Waterbody:** a human-made body of water typically formed by excavating soils to create a basin that holds water. The bottom of the basin has water retention capabilities from materials such as clay or man-made liners and permanently holds a pool of water.

Carol was concerned that stating 'typically formed by excavating soils' was restrictive.

**The decision was to leave it as is.**

**Pond, Stormwater Detention:** An engineered artificial pond designed to temporarily store stormwater runoff and release it slowly over time to prevent downstream flooding and erosion. These ponds are typically dry between rain events, as the water is released gradually through an outlet structure after the storm has passed.

Carol asked if an engineered artificial pond is different from a constructed pond?

**The decision was to leave it as is.**

**Pond, Stormwater Retention:** An engineered artificial pond with vegetation around the perimeter and a permanent pool of water used to manage stormwater runoff, for protection against flooding, for erosion control, and to serve as an artificial wetland and improve the water quality in adjacent bodies of water.

Carol thought perhaps we could use parallel construction here.

**The decision was to leave it as is.**

**Jurisdictional Determination Permit:** Is a formal assessment conducted by NYS DEC to determine if an area meets the criteria for classification as a regulated freshwater wetland and/or adjacent area under the Freshwater Wetlands Act. This determination

helps define boundaries and characteristics of wetlands that require protection from degradation to maintain their functionality at optimal levels.

Carol asked what does "and/or adjacent area mean. Adjacent to what.

Erin explained the definition was taken directly from NYS DEC.

**The decision was to leave it as is.**

There was a question as to the asterisk that is next to a use in the Use Table. On page 50 of the zoning law, it explains that an asterisk indicates that there are supplemental regulations for that use.

Erin suggested that Constructed Ponds be located in the Use Table under Residential Accessory Uses. Dennis had suggested it be located under agricultural. The group questioned if it can be located in 2 different categories. Nan will be asked for her recommendation.

## **NAN'S RESPONSE ON MULTIFAMILY HOUSING Cont.**

~~Residence, Residential: A building, or any part of a building, which contains living and sleeping accommodations for permanent occupancy. 'Residence', therefore, includes all one-family, multi-family, boarding, fraternity and sorority houses. However, 'residences' shall not include transient accommodations, such as hotels, motels and hospitals, or that part of a building containing both residences and other uses which is used for any non-residential uses, except accessory uses for residences. A residence is any location at which a person resides, including boarding and fraternity or sorority houses and nursing homes, but not including transient accommodations such as hotels, motels, B&Bs or hospitals.~~

NAN: Again, the legal status of residences require that they have living and sleeping accommodations. What if someone wanted to live in a garage, or a storage unit, or a shed that is used for something else but has no other living and sleeping accommodations, including plumbing. It unfortunately does happen.

**We will review this at the next meeting.**

## **NAN'S RESPONSE TO CHANGING Art. V A. 16.d.2.**

~~2. Maximum building size and density: The maximum number of dwellings shall be no more than the residential density established for that district. The Planning Board shall ensure that any proposed density will meet all New York State Board of Health requirements for wastewater treatment systems and water supplies. When multiple structures **buildings** are included within a multifamily development, there shall be no **more** than ~~four~~ **six** dwelling units per individual structure ~~provided that density is allowed pursuant to Tables 1 and 2~~~~

NAN: But that removes the important information that the maximum # of dwellings can't exceed that allowed for in the district. If you take that out, doesn't it imply that it is OK to have 6 units but you might have dozens of 6 unit buildings. The maximum must equal the total density allowed in the district.

The question concerns the need to limit the number of units in a building. What if we set no limit? We are thinking of limiting the number to 6 or 8 which is probably the limit in the hamlets considering density regulations but more units may be possible in the ag district. What are other towns doing?

NAN: This was added in to ensure that the scale of buildings fits Ancram. Most communities (rural) are picking 6 or 8 to limit the size of individual buildings. I do not think that more than that in the Ag District matches the goals of the Town. At least up to this point. Maybe Ancram has changed and they will now accept not only higher density but bigger and more intensive buildings. Remember that along with the building, comes parking. The more units, the more parking, the more lights, and the more intensity of uses required.

**The discussion focused on how many dwelling units per building and would the density regulations control a very large development. We will review this at the next meeting.**

### **NAN SCOZ.**

We need to make a decision on what we want to do with cell towers: Do we want to lower the height? Do we want a tower cover the rail trail? Do we want that it serves a majority of residents of the Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone?

**Erin explained that we cannot regulate the coverage area of a cell tower.**

**Discussion was about lowering the height in the SCOZ.**

**The decision was to come back to this next meeting.**

**Next meeting will be Feb 2, 2026. Kim will take minutes.**