

**Town of Ancram  
Zoning Revisions Committee**

**MINUTES**

**January 5 2026, 7:00 pm**

**Christine Brown, Minutes**

<https://zoom.us/j/97218495657?pwd=8MVq6oRJcRDclpMCqLrkRDqJgmcM2f.1>

PRESENT: Carol Falcetti, Christine Brown, Colleen Lutz, Erin Robinson, Kim Tripp, Steve Olyha, Susan Wohleking

ABSENT: Bonnie Hundt

**Inform:**

- 2 vacancies on ZRC as Dennis has decided to not be reappointed after 40 years of service to the town of Ancram

**MINUTES OF DEC. 15, 2025.**

Approved 7:03pm unanimously

**ADVERTISEMENT AND QUESTIONS FOR NEW MEMBER**

*The Ancram Zoning Revisions Committee (ZRC) has an opening for a new member. The ZRC, which works to align Ancram's Zoning Laws with Ancram's Comprehensive Plan, is currently looking at Ancram's Zoning law with a view to making it more friendly to affordable housing. Some familiarity with zoning law is a plus but not required and any new member joining the committee will be able to fully participate and ask questions. Since all of us - property owners and residents - are affected by the zoning law, this opening is an opportunity to be on the ground floor of reviewing and revising Ancram's current Zoning Law. The ZRC meets every other week on a Monday night via Zoom from 7:00 – 8:30 PM.*

*If interested in applying please send a brief note indicating your interest and some background highlights to [carolfalcetti@gmail.com](mailto:carolfalcetti@gmail.com). Applications are open until the positions are filled.*

**Discussion:**

- Since we meet via Zoom, it might be useful to do interviews as a committee. This hasn't been the practice in the past.
- Suggestion from Erin: When they apply, send them our principles etc.
- Reminder from Supervisor Lutz: When we interview, there must be at least one member of the Town Board on the panel. She will help identify an ongoing liaison, though she is also happy to join when needed ongoing.

**Action:**

- ZRC members to draft questions that they would recommend asking applicants, or topics / competencies to address.

## **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.**

### **Discussion**

The Committee discussed the implications and intent of the proposed language.

Concerns were raised that prohibiting the use of groundwater could conflict with common use cases, including ponds designed for flooding or stormwater management purposes. It was noted that ponds filled primarily by rainfall and surface runoff may still intersect groundwater depending on site conditions.

Clarification was sought regarding the definition of “groundwater,” including the scenario in which excavation results in water entering the pond naturally (i.e., “dig a hole and it fills with water”). Members noted that, as drafted, the provision could unintentionally prohibit ponds that intersect the water table without active pumping.

It was further observed that the proposed language would effectively require ponds larger than 1000 sq ft to be filled only through artificial means (e.g., trucked or tanked water), which was viewed as impractical and inconsistent with typical pond construction practices.

Members discussed precedents from other municipalities, noting that peer towns generally regulate groundwater use through conditions or performance standards rather than a complete prohibition. The proposed language was viewed as more restrictive than common practice.

Reference was made to New York State materials describing potential environmental and hydrologic benefits of responsibly designed ponds. Concern was expressed that the draft regulations appear to frame constructed ponds primarily in a negative light.

### **Scale and Threshold Considerations**

The discussion emphasized that the intent of the regulations is to focus on **larger-scale ponds**, not small or incidental features.

It was noted that the Committee has previously discussed establishing a size threshold whereby **constructed ponds of 1,000 square feet or less would not be subject to regulation**, with this threshold to be reflected in the use table.

Members discussed whether the proposed language should be revised to apply only to ponds exceeding that threshold, for example: **“A constructed pond larger than 1,000 square feet...”**

### **Status / Next Steps**

The Committee revisited the current draft of the “New regulations for a constructed pond permit.” Ongoing concern was expressed regarding the overall tone and framing of the draft regulations, particularly their emphasis on restrictions rather than scale-based review and impact mitigation.

**No decision was reached at this meeting.** The Committee agreed to continue refining the language, with attention to:

- Clarifying definitions,
- Aligning with peer-town practices,
- Focusing regulation on larger ponds, and
- Ensuring a balanced approach that recognizes both potential impacts and benefits of constructed ponds.

### **12. Owners shall obtain NYS DEC permits for herbicides and pesticides for use in ponds.**

#### **Discussion:**

- NYS DEC does in fact require applicators of herbicides or pesticides for use in water; they must be licensed and report exact quantities, location of application, etc.

**Approved @ 7:57pm**

### ~~**13. Removal of dams requires a NYS DEC permit, notice to both the Ancram Town ZEO and to all properties that could be affected by a sudden release of pond water.**~~

#### **Discussion:**

- Is this specifically about dams, or about removing any constructed pond.
- Maybe we don't need this at all - it's about removal / deconstruction - not construction.

**Decision: Remove 13.**

### **FINAL READING OF REGULATIONS ON CONSTRUCTED PONDS.**

This topic was moved to next meeting when we will revisit item 11 and make a decision. Then we will go through full document on constructed ponds. Once we have approved the regulations, then we will send it to Nan for comments. If Nan makes no suggestions and there are no changes, then it will be sent on to John Lyons.

## NAN'S RESPONSE TO CHANGE IN MULTIFAMILY DEFINITIONS.

Nan's responses to our definition changes are in red. Dwelling Group and Dwelling, Townhouse dwelling were included for completeness, so that you would have all the definitions in front of you.

~~Dwelling: A building designed or used principally as the living quarters for one or more families. The term 'dwelling', 'one family dwelling', 'two family dwelling', 'multi family dwelling', 'multiple dwelling', or 'dwelling group' shall not be deemed to include country inn or other lodging accommodations used for more or less transient occupancy. (See RESIDENCE)~~ **A building intended for long term residential use.**

NAN: I do not recommend this. It loses important information. But if you define long-term residential use, it may be OK. There is always questions as to whether someone living long term in an inn makes it residential (it does not), so I would recommend leaving this.

**Decision: Approved, back to original.**

~~Dwelling unit: A building or portion thereof providing complete house-keeping facilities for one family.~~ **An apartment or other residential unit within a larger building.**

NAN: This also loses the importance of noting that a dwelling unit is ONLY for one family. A two family unit has two dwelling units – but each one for one family. This now changes residential unit as something different than a dwelling unit. The legal term used is dwelling unit not residential unit. Again, I am not sure what this change gets you.

**Decision: Approved, back to original.**

Dwelling group: A group of two or more dwellings occupying a lot in single ownership.  
**NO CHANGE.**

~~Dwelling, Multiple Family or Multifamily: A building or group of buildings located on one lot, each containing three (3) but no more than four (4) dwelling units and designed or used for occupancy by families living independently of each other. A multiple family dwelling includes townhouses. Multiple family dwellings shall be considered a commercial use and subject to site plan review. A multiple family dwelling unit is distinguished from an accessory apartment because the structure is designed and used with up to four principal dwelling units whereas an accessory apartment is clearly subordinate to the principal use of the single family dwelling.~~ **A building containing multiple dwelling units, such as apartments or townhouses.**

NAN: Again, sorry to be negative, but this is not correct. By NYS Building code, a multifamily is indeed three or more units. Simplifying these definitions might raise other questions. I do not recommend changing.

**Decision: Approved, back to original.**

~~Dwelling, one family: A building containing one dwelling unit only.~~ **DELETE.**

NAN: There needs to be one definition and use the term either on-family dwelling or use the single family dwelling. They are the same. I am OK if this keeps the definition below.

**Decision: Approved, back to original.**

Dwelling, Single: Family Detached: A residential dwelling unit designed for occupancy by one family and having no **party** wall in common with another building or unit.

NAN: Why take out party? That is what it is called.

**Decision: Approved, back to original.**

Dwelling, Townhouse: A building divided vertically and consisting of three or four attached dwelling units, each of which has a separate entrance from an outside yard area. Townhouses are regulated as a multi-family dwelling. **NO CHANGE.**

~~Dwelling, Two-Family: A building on a single lot designed exclusively for two dwelling units. each of which is totally separated from the other by a wall, ceiling, or floor, except for a common stairwell and occupied exclusively as a home or residence for only two (2) families. Two family dwelling units shall not be considered townhouses or multi-family dwellings[CF1].~~

NAN: Again, these are all the legally accepted definitions. I don't mind the changes to the first part of the first sentence. But why remove the second part of that? And I think the last sentence is important to convey the difference between a two family and a townhouse or multi.

**Decision: Agreed with Nan's suggestion.**

**CLOSED MEETING at 8:28pm**

**Next meeting will be January 19, 2026. Erin will take Minutes.**