

**HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of October 10, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Devin Winand. The meeting was held at the Hellam Township Municipal Building. Chairman Winand led the Pledge of Allegiance. Other members present were, Rick Cooper, Michael Shillott, Bob Searer, John Kokiko, and Steve Fetrow. Other attendees included Jason Test, Zoning Officer, Kate Nopulos, Admin, and Corina Mann, Township Manager

Minutes Approval:

Upon motion by Mr. Cooper, seconded by Mr. Fetrow, the minutes from the September 26, 2024, meeting were approved with changes. Motion carried unanimously.

On-going Business

Solar Ordinance

The Commission then resumed discussions on the solar ordinance, focusing primarily on the decommissioning of solar energy systems. The conversation centered around the requirement for solar systems to continuously generate usable power to the grid for 60 continuous days within a six-month period. Some members proposed changing the term "commercially usable" to "commercially available" or "saleable" to account for instances when the grid might not accept power. This change aimed to better reflect the operational realities of solar energy production.

A significant portion of the meeting was spent debating the financial responsibilities for decommissioning costs. There was a strong discussion about whether landowners, in addition to system owners, should share responsibility for decommissioning. Since landowners financially benefit from leasing their land for solar projects, some members felt they should bear part of the decommissioning burden, particularly in the event of the solar company's failure.

Concerns were also raised about the sufficiency of bonds intended to cover these costs. It was suggested that both the landowner and system owner should sign a decommissioning agreement, thus ensuring that both parties are accountable for removing the solar infrastructure if the system owner defaults.

The Commission then moved on to discussing reporting requirements for solar energy systems. It was agreed that the system owner must submit reports every six months, detailing operational data such as daily energy production, outages, and any significant issues encountered.

Additionally, in the event of an emergency requiring the presence of fire or police personnel, the system owner would be required to inform the Township within 30 days, providing a detailed report of the incident and how it was resolved.

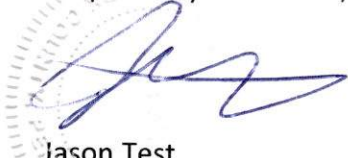
Next, the fencing and signage requirements for solar energy systems were reviewed. The Commission

reaffirmed that all ground-mounted solar systems should be enclosed by an eight-foot fence with locked gates at every access point. In addition, visible warning signs must be placed at 100-foot intervals along the fence, clearly indicating the presence of high voltage hazards.

The discussion then shifted to environmental protection measures, including the need to establish setbacks from sensitive areas such as wetlands, floodplains, and steep slopes. The Commission also emphasized the importance of protecting agricultural land, agreeing that no more than 50 acres of Class I and Class II soils should be allocated to solar projects on any individual parcel. This was part of a broader effort to ensure the preservation of prime agricultural land, even as solar energy projects expand.

The meeting concluded at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason Test", is written over a faint, circular official seal. The seal contains the text "PLANNING COMMISSION" around the perimeter and "CITY OF CHANDLER" in the center.

Jason Test

Zoning Officer