

**HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of November 13, 2025**

1. Opening Agenda

- **Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at **6:00 PM** by Vice Chair John Kokiko
- **Pledge of Allegiance** was recited.

Attendees

- Steve Fetrow
- Robert Searer
- John Kokiko, Vice Chairman
- Rick Cooper
- Mike Shillott
- Chris Altland
- Corina Mann, Township Manager
- Jason Test, Zoning Officer
- Shane Coolbaugh, Code Compliance Field Coordinator

Public:

- Brian (via Zoom), Solar Developer Employee
-

2. Public Comment

- No public comment
-

3. Approval of Previous Minutes

October 9, 2025 Draft Minutes

- **Corrections:**
 - EAC checklist completed
 - Fix error in planning commission member titles
 - **Motion to approve with corrections:** Shillott
 - **Second:** Fetrow
 - **Motion Approved.**
-

4. New Business

Case: Z-2025-14

- **Applicant:** 1374 East River Drive (31-08-104)
- **Request:** Special Exception

HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of November 13, 2025

Discussion

- The residence proposes a net-zero impervious addition, increasing lot coverage from 15% to 17%.
- Zoning Officer confirmed that the applicant complies with the zoning criteria.
- The proposed addition will be constructed directly adjacent to the existing house.
- There will be no disturbance of any steep slope.
- Clarification was requested regarding a driveway that runs around to the garage.

Floodplain Considerations

- A FEMA floodplain issue was noted; however, it was determined that the matter has no bearing on this discussion.
- The board clarified that they are not determining whether the applicant may build within the floodplain as part of this review.

Stormwater & Impervious Coverage

- Cooper raised stormwater management concerns.
- The applicant stated that stormwater mitigation measures will be implemented.
- It was noted that most of the existing patio construction is permeable.
- Questions were raised regarding how much of the patio area will remain pervious.
- Discussion acknowledged that construction of additional pervious structures may reduce the total impervious estimate.

Additional Site Features

- Kokiko referenced the existing deck and swimming pool.
- The deck is connected to the driveway, and the driveway will be converted to patio space.
- Searer asked whether the setback is acceptable, noting an existing non-conformity.
- It was confirmed that the driveway is already within the setback.

Motion

- Shillott made a motion to recommend approval of the application, with the condition that the applicant reduce or alleviate the pervious-surface percentage as discussed.
 - Altland seconded the motion.
 - The motion passed with unanimous approval.
-

HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of November 13, 2025

Case: Z-2025-15

- **Applicant: 7000 River Drive (31-08-106)**
- **Request: Variance and Special Exception**

Discussion

- The property is **out of the FEMA floodplain**, but the **primary issue involves steep slopes** on the site.
- **Searer** asked whether there are existing retaining walls.
 - Response: **No**, except for a **small existing wall**.
- It was noted that there is **no feasible way to avoid the steep slopes entirely** for the proposed improvement.
- **Shillott** raised **concerns about the steep slopes** and pointed out that **the claimed hardship results from the specific development request, not from an unavoidable or inherent condition**.
- **Fetrow** asked which specific portion of the rear property line involves encroachment into the steep-slope area.
- The applicant stated that an **existing shed will be removed**, and referenced a **stone area on the west side** of the property.
- The applicant emphasized that the expansion is necessary to make the home **more livable**, noting that due to the **age of a stakeholder**, they prefer **not to build upward** and instead seek **additional space on the main floor** to reduce the use of stairs.
- It was clarified that the **house itself is not in the flood zone** and sits **above the road**, although **the property as a whole is partially within the flood zone**.
- The proposed **retaining wall would be located within the flood zone**.

Public Comment

- **Steve Hauer**, neighboring property owner, expressed support and stated he **wants the project to move forward**.

Motions

1. **Motion by Fetrow** to recommend **approval** to the Zoning Hearing Board for **both the special exception and the variance**.
 - **Motion fails**.
2. **Motion by Cooper** to recommend **denial** of the request.

**HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of November 13, 2025**

- **Shillott** seconded the motion.
- **Searer** and **Fetrow** opposed.

3. Roll/Member Responses

- **Shillott**: No
- **Cooper**: Motion to deny
- **Fetrow**: Dissent
- **Searer**: Dissent
- **Altland**: Deny
- **Kokiko**: Deny

Final Outcome:

The body voted to **recommend denial**, and the recommendation to deny was **approved**.

5. Old Business

Solar Ordinance Review

Overview

The Commission continued its discussion regarding revisions to the proposed **Solar Ordinance**, with specific emphasis on how **Principal Solar Energy Systems (PSES)** should be regulated across zoning districts.

Discussion

- It was noted that **all PSES installations are proposed to require Conditional Use approval**, ensuring that the Board of Supervisors has an opportunity to review each application individually.
- Members acknowledged that this may present **limited review frequency**, as the Township does not anticipate many applications.
- **Adrienne Johnson** asked whether **farms could be added** to the list of permitted locations.
 - **Shillott** stated that, in his opinion, they **cannot** be added in that manner.
- **Fetrow** commented that the **onus is on the property owner**, and that **each zoning district provides a public vehicle** for consideration.
- It was clarified that **PSES would not be permitted by right anywhere**, and **projects in eligible zones must come before the Planning Commission**.

HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of November 13, 2025

- **Fetrow** asked if there were **any buffer requirements**.
 - It was explained that **each zoning district has its own buffer requirement**.
 - Discussion followed regarding the **buffer requirement for the RA Zone**.
 - **Shillott and Fetrow** expressed **disagreement on the interpretation of Section N(3)** of the draft ordinance.
 - **Fetrow** expressed concern about the possibility of **industrial-scale solar facilities**.
 - **Searer** stated that he would **prefer industrial solar to a warehouse** as a land use alternative.
 - **Kokiko** reminded the Commission that the **intent of the ordinance is to help farmers expand revenue streams**, and encouraged members to **refocus on the original goal**.
 - **Fetrow** voiced concern that the **public may react strongly** once they understand where PSES projects may be permitted.
 - **Johnson** asked whether **additional electric transmission lines** could be brought in to support projects.
 - The response noted that such expansion would be a **major utility project**.
 - The **Senior Planner from the York County Planning Commission** reviewed the ordinance and provided feedback.
 - **Fetrow** stated that the **overall impact remains unclear**, and further asserted that it is **not the Commission's responsibility to create business opportunities** for property owners.
 - **Shillott** noted that **nothing in the ordinance would permit PSES installations to supply energy to data centers**, addressing one concern raised during review.
-

Motions

- **Cooper** moved to **recommend the revised Solar Ordinance to the Board of Supervisors (BOS)**.
- **Shillott** seconded the motion.

Vote

- **Kokiko**: No
- **Searer**: Yes
- **Fetrow**: No
- **Chris**: No
- **Adrienne**: No

HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of November 13, 2025

Outcome:

The motion **did not carry**.

6. Reports

- A. Data Centers
- B. Logistics/Warehouse Ordinance
- C. Signs
- D. EAC Checklist
- E. Riverland 1&2 Ordinance
- F. Understanding the Township (review of prior research and tasks to continue and validate research)

Discussion

- The Commission held a discussion comparing **data centers** and **warehouses** as potential land uses in the Township.
- **Fetrow** reminded the group that the Township **does not currently have a definition for “data center,”** noting that this gap complicates any attempt to regulate the use.
- **Corina, Township Manager**, advised the Commission that **neighboring municipalities have adopted model data center ordinances**, and that these could be used as references when developing the Township’s own standards.
- **Altland** shared research illustrating that many modern data centers operate with **“bring your own generation”** power systems.
 - He stated he **does not want data centers in the Township**.
 - He added that if data centers are permitted, it should be **mandatory for them to supply their own power** rather than relying solely on the electrical grid.
- **Shillott** distributed a **data center ordinance comparison spreadsheet** summarizing how other municipalities approach definition, siting, and regulation of data centers.
- **Searer** asked **how sending districts are identified** within the Township’s Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.
 - Discussion briefly addressed evaluation criteria and the Township’s process for determining sending-area eligibility.
- It was noted that the Township maintains **a list of available TDRs** for reference.

7. Upcoming Meetings

- **Next Planning Commission Meeting:** December 11, 2025

**HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of November 13, 2025**

8. Adjournment

- **Motion to Adjourn:** Shillott
 - **Second:** Fetrow
 - **Meeting Adjourned at 7:43 PM**
-

Respectfully Submitted,

Jason Test
Zoning Officer