

HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of July 24, 2025

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by the Chairman. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Attendees

Devin Winand, Chairman
John Kokiko, Vice-Chairman
Michael Shillott
Rick Cooper
Steve Fetrow
Bob Searer
Chris Altland
Corina Mann, Township Manager
Jason Test, Zoning Officer

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment offered at the beginning of the meeting.

4. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Shillott made a motion to approve the July 10, 2025 meeting minutes. Mr. Kokiko seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

5. New Business

There was no new business on the agenda.

6. Old Business

Short-Term Rental Ordinance

Mr. Shillott made a motion to send the draft Short-Term Rental Ordinance to the Board of Supervisors for review. Mr. Cooper seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Short-Term Rental (STR) Ordinance Review

The Planning Commission reviewed and discussed a draft ordinance regulating solar energy systems in Hellam Township.

Key points discussed included:

- **System Types:** Differentiation between accessory systems (e.g., roof-mounted or small ground-mounted for individual properties) and principal-use systems (e.g., commercial solar farms).
- **Permitted Zones:** The ordinance aims to clarify where solar systems are permitted by right versus by special exception or conditional use, depending on scale and location.
- **Agricultural Land Impact:** Members emphasized protecting prime agricultural soils, discussing limits on ground-mounted arrays in the Rural Agricultural (RA) Zone. Concerns were raised about how solar installations may affect the Township's agricultural base.
- **Lot Coverage & Setbacks:** The Commission discussed enforcing acreage limitations, setback requirements, and whether systems should count toward impervious coverage. Clarification was requested regarding how coverage is calculated for panels mounted above pervious surfaces.
- **Decommissioning:** There was consensus that language should require removal of non-functioning systems, with potential for financial security (e.g., escrow or bond) especially for principal-use solar installations.

HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of July 24, 2025

- **Battery Storage:** Discussion was held on the inclusion of energy storage systems, and the need to reference building code or fire safety regulations for lithium-ion or similar technologies.
- **Screening and Glare:** The Commission supported screening standards for visual buffering, especially in residential areas, and mentioned the importance of mitigating glare impacts on neighboring properties and roads.
- **Definitions:** Members emphasized the importance of consistent terminology, including clarification of “solar energy system,” “accessory use,” “principal use,” and what constitutes impervious surface in this context.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jason", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jason Test
Zoning Officer