

**HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 26, 2026**

Chairman Devin Winand called the meeting of the Hellam Township Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m., beginning the proceedings with the Pledge of Allegiance. In attendance were Chairman Winand, Vice Chair John Kokiko, and Commissioners Robert Searer, Steven Fetrow, Rick Cooper, and Mike Shillott, along with Alternate Adrienne Johnson (via Zoom). Representing Township staff were Manager Corina Mann, Zoning Officer Jason Test, and Code Compliance Field Coordinator Shane Coolbaugh.

Following the call to order, the floor was opened for public comment; no comments were offered regarding matters outside of the scheduled agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Mike Shillott made a motion to approve the minutes. Rick Cooper seconded the motion. All members voted in favor, and the motion carried.

New Business – Logistics/Warehouse Ordinance

The Commission then began discussion regarding the proposed Logistics and Warehouse Ordinance. Steven Fetrow noted that the Township currently lacks a defined manufacturing district and does not have a specific manufacturing ordinance. He explained that the ordinance under consideration would apply to light manufacturing uses and raised the question of whether the Township should formally establish a manufacturing definition and address it through a separate ordinance. Chairman Winand expressed support for allowing manufacturing uses under a clearly written ordinance that is more accommodating, noting that certain manufacturing operations may have less impact than warehouse uses depending on the nature of the activity.

The Commission reviewed where warehousing is currently permitted. It was confirmed that the MU-1 District allows warehousing and wholesale trade businesses, with a 15,000 square foot size limitation as clarified during discussion. Members discussed whether warehousing should continue to be permitted in the MU-2 District and whether mini-warehouses should be removed or redefined. Consideration was given to placing larger warehouse uses in areas that are less impactful and to evaluating development around the Kreutz Creek Interchange, particularly whether available land in designated zones has been largely built out. The Zoning Officer advised that once permissible land within a zoning district is fully developed, the Township has met its obligation to provide for that use.

Significant discussion focused on definitions and distinctions between warehouse types. The Commission emphasized the importance of drafting precise definitions and determining whether regulations should focus on the physical building or the operational characteristics of the use. Various types of warehouse-related operations were discussed, including local distribution centers, fulfillment centers, pack-out centers, long-term storage facilities, and motor freight terminals. Members noted that each of these operations carries different impacts related to parking demand, service lanes, truck circulation, and traffic generation. Discussion included potentially consolidating warehouse and mini-warehouse classifications and regulating them by size rather than name. Several members expressed support for removing truck terminals and truck stops from the warehouse category and addressing them in separate ordinances tailored to their specific impacts.

The issue of speculative warehouse development was raised, particularly in situations where a building is constructed without a confirmed tenant. Members questioned how traffic impacts could be accurately assessed without knowing the final use. The Zoning Officer explained that traffic studies may be required as part of a conditional use approval and can be tied to the specific use proposed by a tenant at the time of occupancy. It was further clarified that Certificates of Use and Occupancy are issued to tenants and that any change of use requires review and inspection. Even similar businesses assuming occupancy of a property must undergo a formal change-of-use process, and once a certificate is issued it is difficult to revoke.

The Commission reviewed potential limitations on warehouse uses. Adrienne Johnson proposed explicitly prohibiting the use of a warehouse for housing living creatures, citing concerns that such a facility could be used as a detention center, including by federal agencies such as ICE. Rick Cooper asked whether this prohibition would include animals or livestock. Ms. Johnson suggested using broader language to prohibit living organisms to reflect her intended purpose, while Chairman Winand noted that such wording could inadvertently restrict the storage of plants.

Steven Fetrow observed that warehouses are occasionally converted into hotels. The Zoning Officer stated that any such conversion would be subject to the regulations of the underlying zoning district and require all applicable approvals.

The Commission discussed truck stops and truck terminals in greater detail, including concerns about parking demand, expanded services such as laundry and showers, fueling operations, and potential overlap with convenience store uses. Members also discussed the distinction between distribution functions and servicing functions. There was general agreement that truck stops and truck terminals should be removed from the warehouse definition and regulated separately with clearly defined criteria.

Members reviewed potential performance standards and operational requirements, including maximum parking limits, internal circulation, service lanes, and preventing truck queuing on public streets. The importance of incorporating these requirements into the land development process was emphasized. The term "nuisance" was discussed, with several members expressing concern that it may lack enforceability if not clearly defined.

The Commission also discussed transit access and bicycle facilities. Consideration was given to requiring transit studies and providing transit shelters where supported by the transit provider. Members noted the need to clearly define what constitutes a bus study and whether ordinance language should require such improvements where feasible. Bicycle parking requirements were discussed in relation to building size and anticipated employee counts. It was suggested that ordinance language use enforceable terms such as "shall" rather than "should."

Electric vehicle charging requirements were also discussed. Members considered whether requiring full installation of charging infrastructure may be too restrictive given current market demand. A reduced requirement, such as providing infrastructure for five percent of parking spaces, was suggested for further consideration.

Additional discussion addressed walkability and connectivity, including internal campus-style sidewalks and potential connections to the regional trail system in order to encourage pedestrian access.

The Commission discussed eliminating the current mini-warehouse definition and addressing self-storage as a separate ordinance. It was noted that surrounding municipalities commonly use the term mini-storage, and members agreed that this use may warrant standalone consideration.

Old Business / Ongoing Business

There was no old business discussed. Ongoing business will continue to focus on truck stop regulations, truck terminal regulations, and mini self-storage or warehouse definitions, with the possibility of developing separate ordinances for each use.

Rick Cooper made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:43 p.m. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Test', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jason Test, Zoning Officer