

HELLAM TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Minutes of May 25, 2023

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, Jay Kokiko, Steve Fetrow, Michael Shillott and Susan Enrico (alternate). Other attendees included Corina Mann Township Manager and Jason Test, Acting Zoning Officer.

Approval of Minutes

The Planning Commission reviewed draft minutes from the May 11, 2023 meeting. Upon a motion by Mr. Shillott, seconded by Mr. Kokiko, the Planning Commission approved the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Ongoing Business

The Planning Commission began discussing draft five of the short-term rental ordinance. Mr. Winand stated this version should be close to final version and asked if anyone had any questions or discussion. Ms. Mann asked what the reasoning was behind the 700 ft from each other was. It was something that was thought would attempt to limit short term density. Ms. Mann stated she had a conversation with a supervisor as well as Mr. Shillott and during the conversation it was thought that they would most likely be self-regulated. Does it matter if they are less than 700 feet apart as long as it is regulated and they are paying their license fee?

The other question Ms. Mann asked was whether or not the grandfathered in was from licensing in the beginning or if it meant always. Mr. Winand stated it only had to do with the 700 ft. apart requirement, not any other regulations. There was discussion that if all of the regulations are being followed, does it matter if they are less than 700 ft. apart. Mr. Winand also stated the distance was looked at in terms of short-term rentals would limit the long-term housing market. Mr. Fetrow said that when this ordinance was started, he thought neighborhood fabric was an issue that needed to be addressed however, if it does need to be addressed in the future, he would rather have it done in the future if it becomes a raging problem rather than now. Mr. Shillott brought up the concern about parking for residents vs. rentals. It was said that issue was addressed by having an off-street parking requirement which is in the draft ordinance. Mr. Fetrow did say that Mr. Owens had a strong opinion of taking out the 700 ft. requirement but he was not present at the meeting to state what his concern was.

Ms. Katina Snyder asked the commission what this would do to her property values. It was said that it could potentially increase the value. The process of ordinance adoption by the Board was discussed as far as where does the ordinance go from here and when do the residents get to weigh in with their thoughts. Ms. Mann explained the steps from start to adoption. Mr. Shillott stated that the Township does have the tool, Engage, which he feels the Planning Commission should start using the platform.

Mr. Fetrow brought up the provision of annual licensing. His suggestion would be to pro-rate for the first year and make all licensing due at the beginning of the year making this requirement much more streamlined for staff to oversee. All agreed and Ms. Mann said she would add the wording to the final version of the ordinance.

Upon a motion by Mr. Fetrow, seconded by Mr. Shillott, the ordinance was approved, with the changes, for final draft to move on the Board of Supervisors. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Enrico and Mr. Eifert worked together on the Fee in Lieu of Ordinance research. They presented their findings at the last meeting and the discussion started. The main topic of this ordinance was in reference to curb and sidewalks. Susan presented their information in Mr. Eifert's absence. Ms. Enrico stated that they both thought the original that Rachel presented to them was good but they looked at Section 430-40 and thought an amendment to the wording which would require the Engineer to provide a list which would be enacted via a resolution and would identify locations for sidewalks to be constructed for the year.

They also thought Section 430-41 should be amended to add the same wording however make this specific to curbs instead of sidewalks.

There was discussion about the engineer doing this and it was stated that this requirement would come into play when more contiguous development starts happening. There was also discussion about how the escrow would work. The funds would be collected and put into an escrow account. Once the provision would be required, the Township would use the funds to install the previous properties curbs and sidewalks, with the escrow fund. There was discussion about the six-month note and the fact that the Township has been using this practice for quite some time. If the note is kept as a requirement, and it became necessary for curbs and sidewalks, the property owner would be required to install within six months of notification by the Township. If fee in lieu of was enacted, the Township would be required to install at their expense, even if the cost were to increase.

Ms. Snyder asked about the traffic study information that Rachel provided in the beginning with all of the ordinance information related to fee in lieu of. Ms. Snyder feels that the fee should be collected so the Township could engage with their own traffic study with a consultant of choice, using the fee in lieu of, instead of having the developer engage with their own consultant. Ms. Snyder's reasoning is that the developer's consultant may provide a bias report. It was said that the Township has their own traffic division through the engineer that reviews the submitted traffic studies.

After much discussion, it was decided that the six-month note seems to be the best option at this time and to do nothing with the proposed Fee-In-Lieu-Of draft. Upon a motion by Mr. Cooper, seconded by Mr. Fetrow, leaving the six-month note on the plan instead of enacting Fee-In-Lieu-of was approved. Motion carried 5 – 1 with Mr. Shillott dissenting.

Correspondence/Reports

The next meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2023. There is currently one variance and one conditional use application for this meeting).

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Corina Mann, Township Manager