

RAPHO TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
July 6, 2026 at 7:00PM

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Jay Gainer. Also present were Commission members Chet Eckman, Bryan Balmer, Dennis Shellenberger and Carrol Ehrhart. Randall Wenger, Township Manager, and Melissa Kelly from RETTEW, were also present as well as applicant, Jared Hess and his consultant Steve Gergely.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF THE June 1, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Chet Eckman made a motion to approve the minutes as written, Carrol Ehrhart seconded. All voted in favor.

Jared and Nicole Hess (Hess Seed and Services)
432 S. Erisman Road
Conditional Use 2026-55
Harbor Engineering

Melissa Kelly Briefed the commission on the application. Jered and Nicole Hess are the owners of 432 South Erisman Road. The property is ± 9.5 acres and contains the Hess' residence and business, Hess Seeds & Services, Inc. and the remainder of the property is cultivated. Hess Seeds & Services receives bulk seed deliveries and prepares and distributes seed to local farmers.

The existing business is considered an Agricultural-Related Business, and was permitted by Conditional Use in 1993. The existing business occupies an existing $\pm 7,600$ s.f. building. The building houses an office, warehouse area, and a loading dock. The business consists of Mr. Hess, 1 part-time employee and 1 seasonal employee.

In order to continue to operate the business successfully, Mr. Hess would like to construct an additional $\pm 4,800$ s.f. building on the east side of the existing structure that will be connected via a corridor to the existing building. Mr. Hess is proposing to construct this addition as an expansion of the existing Agricultural- Related business, which is permitted by Conditional Use (Table 3-1.2.). Additionally, the 1993 Conditional Use decision established a limit of 50 deliveries to the business per year. Last year, the business had approximately 70 deliveries. As part of the Conditional Use request, we ask that the Board remove the condition for the delivery limit established with the prior decision.

The commission questioned Mr. Hess on the reason for increased deliveries. He explained that the companies he buys from have switched to a contracted freight company to make their deliveries, so he receives more partial deliveries and not as many full load deliveries.

Carrol Ehrhart made a motion to recommend approval of the conditional use application and removal of the condition on delivery limits subject to the applicant addressing the comments, and with the conditions proposed in the RETTEW letter dated June 26, 2026.

Dennis Shellenberger seconded. All voted in favor.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dennis Shellenberger, Secretary