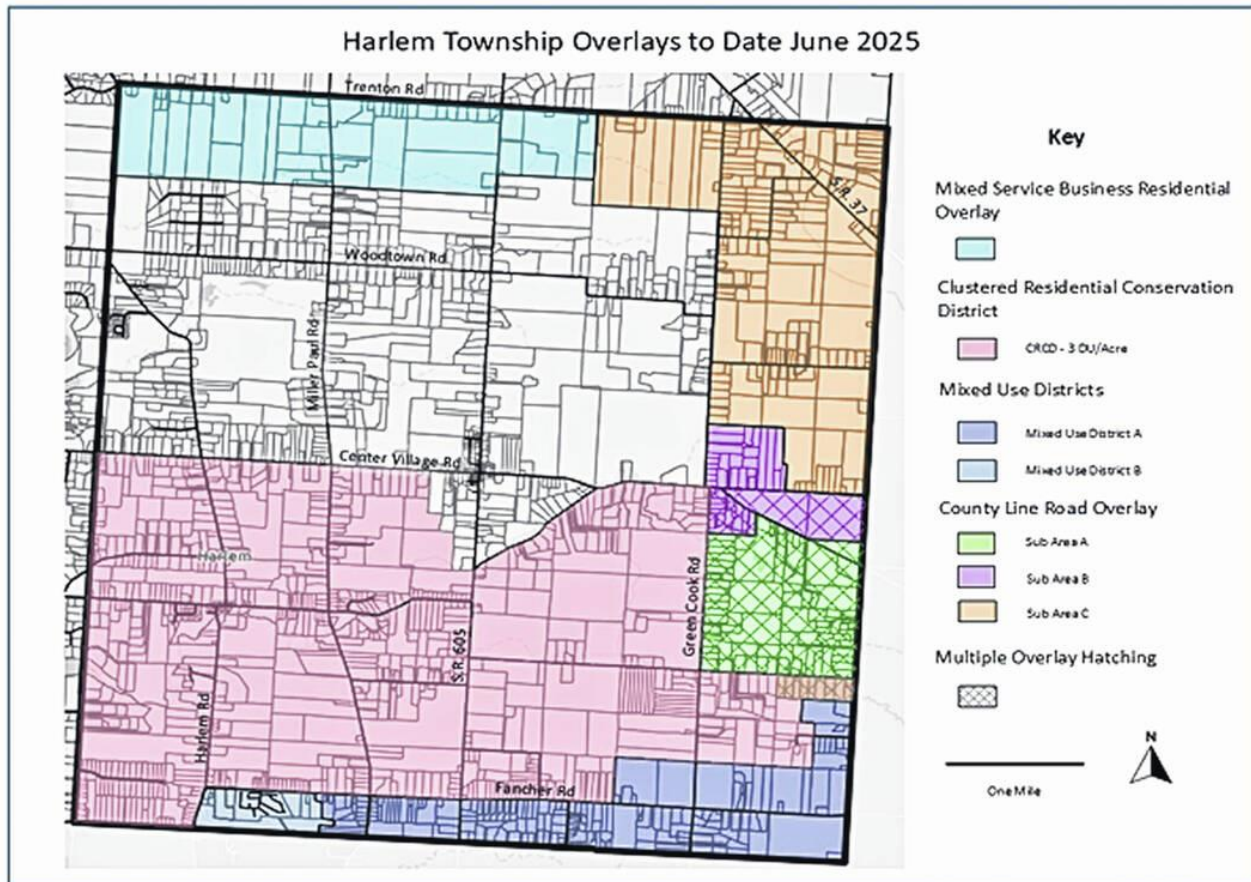


Trustees dissect strategic plan

By Gary Budzak - September 6, 2025



GALENA — A special meeting was held Thursday to go over the first draft of the Harlem Township Strategic Plan.

The township trustees — Chair Dave Jackson, Vice Chair Adam Holliday and alternate Jon Trainer — went over the 64-page document for two hours, changing words or terms as needed for clarification. Members of the steering committee, township staff, authors Crossroads Community Planning, and the public also provided input in person and via Zoom.

By this time next month, there should be a second, more complete draft available for residents as well as candidates who may be asked about the future of Harlem. As it is, the main thing missing from the current document is a chapter on economic development, to be contributed by Delaware County.

When that next edition becomes available, The Gazette will report on its recommendations. However, an analysis place in front of the current edition outlines Harlem's current condition.

Strengths

- Rural environment
- Current Comprehensive Plan and zoning
- Township organization
- Transparency
- Diverse educational backgrounds
- Core involvement
- Civic/non-profit organizations

Weaknesses

- Low public participation in meetings
- Township wide communication
- Infrequent newsletter
- Lack of younger generational input
- Misunderstanding of zoning
- No agreed upon definition of rural character

Opportunities

- Tap into civic/non-profit organizations
- Reach out to young families
- Zoning 101 — brochure, website, video
- Rural design — create a vision
- Best practices research

Threats

- Housing bullseye
- Potential lobbying for zoning changes
- Resistance to change
- Water and sewer
- East side service areas
- Annexation.

While Harlem was first spurred into action due in part to the nearby Intel One Ohio campus project, it was noted that despite its delay, infrastructure is still being put into place in the area in anticipation of future growth.

Among the proactive steps Harlem has taken since then is proactively establishing overlay districts in order to prevent annexation into neighboring communities. Harlem officials have said they want partnerships with their neighbors, along with non-annexation agreements.

The trustees also discussed the possibility of enhancing Center Village, which is in the middle of Harlem. They also mentioned the opportunity to establish something like the New Albany Foundation and ask any potential developers how their project would support the township's values through such a foundation.

Harlem helpers

- Harlem's Trustees are Chair Dave Jackson, Vice Chair Adam Holliday and alternate Jon Trainer.
- Among those present at trustee meetings are Fiscal Officer Lisa Hursey, Director of Zoning and Development Mike Cannon, Zoning Administrative Assistant Valerie Hamill, Fire Chief Thomas O'Brien, Assistant Fire Chief Mike McKeen, Maintenance Supervisor Jason Andruzis and Administrative Assistant Ashley Zoruba.

- Their meetings are in the Harlem Township Fire Station, 3883 S. S.R. 605, Galena. For more information, visit www.harlemtwp.com (website), Harlem Township Government (Facebook).
- The Communication Committee consists of Chair Lindsay Kuhn, and Molly Snodgrass is alternate.
- The BZA consists of Keith Campbell, Vice Chair Steve Eisenbrown, Chair Kyle Farris, Bill Gallagher, Amy Richardson, and alternates Chris Pieroni and Jim Steelesmith. Mike Cannon is the Zoning Inspector; Ashley Zoruba is Administrative Assistant. The meetings are at 7:30 p.m. third Mondays.
- The Parks Committee consists of Josie Bonnette, Lurley Hernandez, Mike Kabler, Tom Nied, Jerry Paul, Dave Snyder, and Ed Valeska. Meeting minutes are not online. The Harlem Community Park is at 3858 S. State Route 605, Galena, across from the fire station.
- The Zoning Commission consists of Chair Mike Kabler, Vice Chair Joni Manson, Louis Greenwell, Brittany Hoperich, Tom Nied, and alternate Alan Czako. Also present at meetings are Zoning Inspector Mike Cannon, Administrative Assistant Ashley Zoruba, Scott Sanders (Delaware County Regional Planning Commission).