

DISCUSSION

2026-0245

Data Center Ordinance Discussion Draft #2

(Memo McLeod 05-13-26, Draft Ordinance 05-13-26, Draft Ordinance 03-19-26, Temporary Data Center Moratorium 02-11-26, Draft PC Minutes 04-21-26, City Council Synopsis 03-09-26 and 02-23-26, Joint PC-CC Minutes 02-02-26, PC Minutes 12-09-25, and Public comment had been placed on file and by reference became a part of the record hereof.)

Chairperson Hooper called the meeting back to order and introduced the discussion on a potential draft data center ordinance. He addressed widespread public discussion and speculation on the internet, clarifying directly that there was absolutely no proposed data center development before the City, nor was any such project being contemplated or considered for Rochester Hills.

He explained that the City Council had proactively enacted a six-month moratorium to stay ahead of the curve, observing how other communities were handling potential data center reviews. Chairperson Hooper stated that the ongoing administrative effort over the past few months was strictly an exercise to draft preventative regulations for the highly unlikely scenario that a data center developer ever approaches the City in the future.

Chairperson Hooper then asked Mr. McLeod if he had any opening statements. He also requested that any attendees who wished to speak but had not yet submitted a public comment card do so immediately, noting that a significant number of cards had already been received and public comment would take a couple of hours to process.

Mr. McLeod echoed Chairperson Hooper's comments, confirming that there was no imminent threat of a data center development. He explained that because data centers are considered a legitimate land use within the State, the City is legally required to provide reasonable zoning provisions for them. By taking a proactive approach, the City aims to establish as many regulatory safeguards as possible to avoid being caught flat-footed. He noted that a data center development is highly unlikely to occur due to the City's limited land availability, the current status of the power grid, and utility infrastructure constraints.

Mr. McLeod outlined the legislative process for the draft provisions under the City Council's active moratorium. First, the Planning Commission reviews and discusses the draft provisions until a final version is settled upon. A formal public hearing will then be scheduled in the future to officially receive public testimony. Following that, the Commission will forward a recommendation to the City Council, which will hold two separate meetings consisting of a first and second reading before the ordinance officially takes effect.

He explained that the draft ordinance categorizes data centers into two distinct types.

Large-Scale Data Centers: These are the massive facilities frequently featured

in national news that require hundreds of acres and consume vast amounts of water and energy. Under the draft ordinance, these facilities would be strictly relegated to the Industrial district. They would require a minimum lot size of 10 acres and would be classified as a conditional use, giving the City discretionary review authority subject to a multitude of protective regulations covering environmental and utility impacts.

Ancillary Data Centers: These are smaller, secondary facilities intended strictly to support the existing local business environment, particularly research, technology, and robotics companies that rely heavily on data and intelligence. They would be permitted as an accessory use to allow firms to function efficiently, rather than for broader commercial representation. While this opens up eligibility to the EC (Employment Center) district, the ordinance enforces significant setback requirements from all residential properties, drastically limiting the number of eligible parcels.

Mr. McLeod pointed out on a displayed zoning map that Rochester Hills possesses very little purely industrial land, noting the primary zones are located along the north side of Hamlin Road west of Dequindre Road near the landfill area, around Crooks Road and M-59, and near Adams Road and M-59. He suggested that the panel proceed directly to public comment before addressing specific questions from the Commission.

Chairperson Hooper opened the floor for public comment, reiterating that no data center developments were under proposal or active consideration by the City of Rochester Hills. He noted that approximately 25 comment cards had been received, officially marking this as the final opportunity for attendees to submit a card, and set a three-minute time limit per speaker.

Magdalene Rose - 402 Timberlia Drive, Rochester Hills - emphasized that water is an essential life resource and shared the personal impact of past water access challenges and recent local boil-water advisories. She noted that even smaller-scale data centers can consume up to 300,000 gallons of water daily through evaporative cooling, which can severely impact municipal water pressure. Ms. Rose questioned how the City plans to prepare for the massive infrastructure strain caused by such intensive water usage, asking if the City is prepared to establish water distribution centers or reimburse citizens for associated utility fees. Furthermore, she expressed concerns regarding the broader economic and employment impacts of artificial intelligence on everyday and creative workers. Referencing active data center developments in Saline, Michigan, she highlighted reports of local property damage and vandalism, asking if Rochester Hills is prepared to handle similar community backlash. She thanked the panel for clarifying that no data center is currently proposed and urged the Planning Commission to reject any future applications to protect the community's clean water supply.

Carlos Pizano - Washington Township, Michigan - informed the Planning Commission that on November 13, 2025, real estate developer Prologis had submitted a rezoning application to construct a 312-acre technical campus and data center on the south side of 32 Mile Road, between M-53 and Powell Road. He stated that members of his community have worked diligently to protect the

Township by packing local board and planning meetings to demand accountability from their officials. Mr. Pizano announced that Prologis had officially withdrawn its application earlier that day, electing to wait until Washington Township completes its own regulatory framework. He emphasized that the broader effort is not over and stressed the importance of neighboring municipalities showing solidarity to protect the state and the Great Lakes.

Mr. Pizano shared several specific recommendations for the Planning Commission to consider while drafting the Rochester Hills data center ordinance. Regarding acoustic studies, he suggested that the City explicitly mandate which specific independent institutions are authorized to perform the required 3D acoustic studies, warning that developers possess the financial resources to hire firms that will simply sign off on favorable results. For baseline noise levels, he recommended requiring a consecutive 72-hour baseline noise study that must be conducted during normal peak seasonal days, rather than allowing developers to measure ambient noise during quiet winter weekends when baseline levels are artificially low. On compliance enforcement, he advised the City to strictly define compliance penalties and avoid leaving terms open to renegotiation if a facility violates noise thresholds, urging the panel to make the rules as restrictive as possible. Finally, he flagged a lack of concrete penalties regarding municipal water draw and wastewater discharge, noting the current draft only requires a plan review. He urged the Planning Commission to implement a strict "no discharge" mandate within the ordinance text to protect the local water infrastructure.

Noel Chan - 2130 Reagan Dr., Rochester Hills - thanked the panel for clarifying that no data centers are currently proposed in the City, but expressed her strong opposition to ever allowing them. She urged the community to act as responsible environmental stewards for the Clinton River Watershed, citing recent public health data highlighting the detrimental impacts of data infrastructure. Ms. Chan noted that data center equipment can emit up to 96 decibels of noise pollution, which exceeds the safe threshold of 85 decibels and is louder than a typical subway station. She also raised concerns regarding air pollution from fine particulate matter released by backup generators and supporting fossil-fueled power plants, referencing a predictive modeling study that indicates U.S. data center emissions could contribute to nearly 1,300 premature deaths annually and more than \$20 billion in healthcare burdens by 2030 due to respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses. Furthermore, Ms. Chan highlighted the heavy natural resource demands of these facilities, stating that hyperscale data centers consume an average of five to seven million gallons of water daily. She warned that the resulting heat and water pollution threaten native wildlife species and accelerate the spread of disease, while compounding the types of local utility anxieties recently highlighted by the City's water main break. Acknowledging that many modern conveniences carry environmental drawbacks, she emphasized that Rochester Hills is in a unique position to use existing industry data proactively to safeguard its residents. She questioned whether escalating energy grids, skyrocketing utility bills, and severe public health risks are a justifiable price to pay for automated tech conveniences like auto-generated emails or novelty artificial intelligence videos, concluding that local residents are closely watching the panel's actions.

Troy Butzin - 1870 Campus Court, Rochester Hills - shared his perspective based on his seven and a half years of professional experience in the technology sector. He noted that even smaller, ancillary-scale data centers present severe environmental and infrastructure drawbacks that are fundamentally identical to those of large-scale facilities. He highlighted that such data centers would place a massive strain on the local power grid, warning that while utility companies like DTE Energy routinely spike electrical rates, the immense energy demands of these operations would make utility costs substantially worse for average residential consumers.

Mr. Butzin stated that one of the primary reasons he and his wife choose to live in Rochester Hills is the abundance of local wildlife, noting he regularly observes turkeys, deer, skunks, raccoons, opossums, and groundhogs in his own backyard. He voiced concern that the severe noise pollution generated by data infrastructure would disrupt these natural habitats and drive wildlife away, diminishing the community's natural environment for future generations. He argued that municipal leaders currently lack sufficient data regarding the long-term environmental consequences of data infrastructure, warning against making a rash decision that could negatively impact the City 10 to 15 years down the line. Drawing from his technical background, Mr. Butzin dismissed the general utility of modern artificial intelligence, describing it as operating on a "garbage in, garbage out" principle where widespread misuse outweighs its practical benefits. He urged the Planning Commission to craft extremely strict, airtight ordinance language that leaves no room for developers to exploit loopholes, stating that his ultimate preference would be to bar data centers from the City entirely.

Dennis Talluto - 2769 Rhineberry Rd., Rochester Hills - said that he is a 35-year resident of Rochester Hills whose children and grandchildren were raised in the community, and he shared an alternative viewpoint on the data center discussion based on his 45 years of professional experience in the information technology sector. He noted that public concerns are heavily driven by an intense media hype cycle, comparing the current narrative surrounding data centers and artificial intelligence to previous speculative investment cycles involving electric vehicles and battery plants. He warned that some market analysts predict a massive economic contraction if data center investments fail to deliver business utility before capital resources run out.

To contextualize local data infrastructure, Mr. Talluto cited a real-world example on West Entrance Drive in neighboring Auburn Hills, where Electronic Data Systems (EDS) successfully constructed two 75,000-square-foot data centers on two separate nine-acre parcels, operating safely at a standard capacity of four megawatts. He stated that while land use regulations are appropriate, the public narrative surrounding data center water usage is significantly overhyped. He explained that large-scale, water-intensive developers looking at the west side of the state or areas near Saline are specifically seeking hundreds of thousands of acres of virgin, clear-cut land, which does not reflect the land dynamics of Rochester Hills. Mr. Talluto applauded the Planning Commission for starting the proactive zoning review, noted he had reached out to Mayor Bryan Barnett and members of the City Council to offer his technical consulting services pro bono, and reiterated his availability to help the City navigate

complex technical policies.

Taara Donley (no address provided) - *stated that this was her first time attending a Planning Commission meeting, thanking the panel members for their time and applauding the City Council for proactively implementing the temporary moratorium. She noted that under the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, municipalities are legally prohibited from implementing outright bans on data centers, meaning the City is highly restricted in the absolute actions it can take. Because the active moratorium is slated to expire in September, Ms. Donley inquired whether the City intends to extend it further once the deadline approaches. She supported the ongoing efforts to adjust City ordinances to implement hard caps on megawatt capacity and water usage.*

Speaking from her professional background as a chemical engineer, Ms. Donley challenged the notion of low-impact facilities. She explained that a perfectly closed-loop system does not exist in reality; leaks inevitably occur, necessitating the safe treatment and purging of cooling chemicals that could otherwise contaminate the groundwater. She stressed that groundwater contamination is a severe hazard for the numerous Rochester Hills residents who rely exclusively on well water. Additionally, Ms. Donley informed the audience that while Rochester Hills does not have an active proposal, Oakland University is exploring a 26-megawatt public-private data center proposal on its campus. She noted that because state universities are exempt from local zoning, the project is moving forward independently, and she urged concerned residents to attend the upcoming Oakland University Board of Trustees meeting on Friday, June 26th at 10:00 AM to voice their concerns before a formal vote occurs. Chairperson Hooper confirmed that the university meeting was scheduled for June 26th, correcting a brief mention of October. Ms. Donley concluded by thanking the Commission for the information and their time.

Holli Munro - 110 Longford Dr., Rochester Hills - *admitted she was unaware that there was no active data center proposal before the City and apologized if her prepared wording seemed mismatched. She expanded upon previous resource concerns by highlighting hidden environmental hazards associated with data infrastructure, noting that the massive heat generated by servers can create a regional data center heat island effect that elevates immediate local temperatures by as much as 35.6°F. She warned that this artificial temperature spike would disproportionately harm vulnerable demographics, such as children and the elderly, while driving up home cooling costs for all surrounding residents. Furthermore, Ms. Munro noted that security floodlights operating around the clock would produce light pollution, disrupting neighborhood sleep cycles and distressing local vegetation and wildlife.*

Ms. Munro highlighted significant chemical risks, citing data from the Environmental and Energy Study Institute indicating that specialized cooling fluids and fire suppression foams utilized by data centers contain toxic PFAS forever chemicals. Because these substances resist natural breakdown, she warned they pose severe long-term cancer and immune system risks, accumulate permanently in local soil and water tables from even microscopic leaks, and leave a legacy of electronic waste and toxic burdens in local landfills. She also cautioned that around-the-clock fuel deliveries and heavy equipment

operations would trigger a notable uptick in commercial truck traffic at nearby intersections.

Regarding noise pollution, Ms. Munro described the persistent, low-frequency hum generated by server cooling systems and cooling towers, noting that its multi-frequency nature makes it incredibly difficult to block or mitigate. She shared a real-world example from Chandler, Arizona, where residents blocks away from a facility reported suffering from chronic stress, elevated blood pressure, and sleep disruption due to an inescapable, structural vibration that could not be blocked even with industrial earplugs. Finally, she challenged the economic promises of the technology sector, noting that while massive projects claim to generate thousands of jobs during their initial construction phases, permanent staffing is minimal. She cited the Switch advanced technology data center near Grand Rapids as a cautionary example, stating that the company initially promised 1,000 jobs on paper but left only 26 direct positions remaining years later. She urged the panel to protect the City from these combined hazards and thanked them for their consideration.

Pamela Wallace - 168 Cloverport, Rochester Hills - introduced herself as a 58-year-old resident of Rochester Hills and an expert in environmental health education and policymaking. Speaking from both her personal and professional background, she explained that she has collaborated with prominent technical, engineering, scientific, and legal entities globally to address the complex community balancing act required by evolving technological infrastructures. Ms. Wallace emphasized that the current unprecedented proliferation of data infrastructure across the state and country represents a highly accelerated friction point between powerful economic drivers and fundamental community stability, outpacing the public's ability to stay informed or implement sound governance. To illustrate these emerging risks, Ms. Wallace highlighted mounting documentation concerning biological health hazards, including rare cancer clusters, respiratory illnesses, and cardiovascular diseases associated with data center corridors. She specifically noted that the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) had just issued a rare, high-level operational alert in response to massive, sudden power oscillations and abrupt computational load drops that threatened to destabilize regional bulk power grids. She praised the 51 cities and townships throughout Michigan that have already enacted temporary bans or moratoria, noting that active legislative discussions are intensifying at both the state and federal levels. Ms. Wallace affirmed the Planning Commission's legal right to strictly regulate these developments, particularly regarding geographic placement, stringent noise controls, and multi-frequency sound thresholds. She introduced a new concern regarding facility abandonment and technical lifecycle management, pointing out that data centers require core hardware and cooling infrastructure upgrades every two to five years. She questioned whether future modifications would require developers to return for public Planning Commission reviews or if they could alter equipment independently, which could retroactively worsen local sound or light impacts. She concluded by invoking a statement from former City Council President Ryan Deal, who noted that Rochester Hills does not need to be everything to everyone, including heavy industry. She urged the Commission to implement the strictest possible ordinance provisions to shield the community.

Andrew Krupp - 168 Cloverport, Rochester Hills - noted that while major technology conglomerates pitch data warehouses as cloud facilities essential to future progress, their primary commercial objective is to collect, store, and process massive volumes of personal digital data to track locations, purchases, and personal habits for corporate monetization. He argued that turning residential communities into industrial factory sprawl is not necessary for innovation. While acknowledging that landowners possess development rights, Mr. Krupp emphasized that the City holds the authority to implement highly aggressive regulations. He urged the Planning Commission to adopt extremely strict setback boundaries to isolate these facilities from residential neighborhoods, even if they are situated inside designated industrial corridors. Furthermore, he suggested enacting rigid spatial restrictions by enforcing hard caps on building height and maximum square footage. Mr. Krupp concluded by recommending that the final ordinance text require developers to submit comprehensive environmental impact assessments guaranteeing that their projects will not deplete local natural resources or trigger grid destabilization, asserting that big tech corporations should not profit at the expense of quiet neighborhoods, local power grids, and community health.

Bernadette Walli (no address provided) - thanked the Commission for their time and careful deliberation on the matter. She challenged the underlying administrative assumption that an outright ban on data centers is legally impossible due to exclusionary zoning restrictions. Referencing the specific language of the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act, Ms. Walli argued that the statutory prohibition against exclusionary zoning applies only in the presence of a demonstrated public need for that specific land use within either the local municipality or the surrounding region. She asserted that a colorable legal argument can be made that there is no demonstrated public need for data center infrastructure within Rochester Hills. Additionally, Ms. Walli highlighted the statutory exception allowing a municipality to exclude a land use if no appropriate location exists within its boundaries. She argued that Rochester Hills lacks an appropriate location for such developments, noting that the primary industrial site discussed by staff already houses a municipal landfill. She cautioned that placing high-impact data infrastructure there could trigger unforeseen environmental complications and leave the City without a viable location for future landfill expansion. She suggested that the recent water main break, regional electrical vulnerabilities, and the City's high population density provide ample empirical evidence to support a total ban, urging the Commission to pressure-test this option with the City Council or an external law firm. Ms. Walli concluded by stating that if a total ban is deemed legally unfeasible, the City Council should enact a much longer moratorium to provide adequate time to consult outside experts and properly evaluate the highly nuanced risks. She also recommended that the draft ordinance expand beyond individual developer requirements to specify which municipal or regulatory body will be responsible for conducting cumulative regional impact assessments if multiple data facilities cluster in the area.

Carol Morlan - 2761 Rhineberry Drive, Rochester Hills - thanked the panel members for their time and dedicated service on the Planning Commission, acknowledging that the role demands an immense amount of work. Speaking

from her perspective as both a local resident and a former Rochester Hills City Council member, she commended the Commission for taking a proactive leadership position on the issue by mapping out defensive regulatory policies before an active project emerges. She emphasized that the technical and environmental nuances surrounding data infrastructure represent a highly complex issue with a vast influx of competing information. Noting that the community is placing a high degree of trust in its local officials to get the regulations right, Ms. Morlan strongly urged the Planning Commission to recommend an extension of the temporary moratorium to ensure that City Council, municipal staff, and the panel have adequate time to fully educate themselves, maximize protections, and establish the highest standard of zoning safeguards for the residents.

Jo Soko - 751 Ironwood Drive, Rochester - introduced herself as a cybersecurity professional who holds a Security+ certification and is actively pursuing advanced technology credentials. Drawing from her background in the technology sector, she validated previous comments regarding the severe infrastructure complexities and financial volatility of the modern artificial intelligence market, noting that the industry is operating under an intense investment bubble. She emphasized that municipal leaders must focus heavily on community health and resource protection when evaluating data utilities.

To quantify the regional threat to water infrastructure, Ms. Soko cited a research study published by the Houston Advanced Research Center and featured in Fortune magazine, which calculated that data centers are projected to consume 49 billion gallons of water annually, with that figure modeled to escalate to as much as 399 billion gallons by 2030. She warned that communities across the nation forced to host these facilities have suffered from severe water pressure drops, sediment contamination in municipal water mains, lack of transparency from developers, and doubled utility pricing. She argued that Michigan residents are already struggling with inflationary costs and should not be subjected to skyrocketing public utility bills driven by commercial server demand. Ms. Soko pointed out that Michigan's existing data infrastructure is fully capable of supporting the state's technological needs for the foreseeable future, noting that the state already houses 75 operational data centers, 33 of which are concentrated right in the metropolitan Detroit area. She implored the Planning Commission to recommend extending the data center moratorium into mid-2027 or beyond to guarantee that the City has adequate time to communicate with expert stakeholders and draft a highly responsible, protective ordinance.

Rhonda Yates - 57 Texas Avenue, Rochester Hills - noted that both the data center ordinance and the preceding multi-family apartment proposal had successfully engaged the community's younger demographic. As a regular attendee of Planning Commission meetings, she observed that seeing young people fill the chamber is a rare occurrence and underscores how deeply these developmental policies resonate with local families. Ms. Yates echoed the recommendations of former Councilwoman Morlan, imploring the Commission to extend the active moratorium to buy more time for comprehensive evaluation. She stated that the long-term biological, environmental, and mental health implications of even small, ancillary data facilities remain completely

unquantified. Furthermore, she criticized the lack of regulatory oversight by state and federal governments regarding how artificial intelligence entities capture and manipulate personal consumer data. Ms. Yates shared that in her professional role as a linguistics instructor at Oakland University, her students routinely voice their intense dislike for artificial intelligence tools rather than actively pursuing them. She concluded that the evening's testimony demonstrated a clear, unified mandate from residents against hosting data infrastructure, urging the panel to maximize the moratorium extension and implement rules so restrictive that developers will bypass the City entirely.

Erin Pruitt - 2541 John R Rd., Rochester Hills - cited Article 1, Section 1 of the Michigan State Constitution, which establishes that all political power is inherent in the people and that government is instituted for their equal benefit, security, and protection. She said that the residents of Rochester Hills were exercising this constitutional right by explicitly instructing their local officials to use their municipal authority to ensure the security and protection of the community where data centers are concerned. Ms. Pruitt explained that data center infrastructure introduces an array of severe, long-term human health risks that have not yet been fully studied or transparently presented to the public. She emphasized that Rochester Hills is far too densely populated to avoid the direct physical and environmental effects of industrial server facilities. Ms. Pruitt warned that when surrounding neighborhoods inevitably suffer from the resulting air, noise, and environmental pollutants, residents will be forced to abandon their homes, causing local property values to become worthless because no one will choose to move to a city hosting a data center. She told the commissioners that they have a defining opportunity to place themselves on the right side of history by choosing to protect the people over industrial interests. She challenged the commissioners to consider the historical legacy they will leave behind, questioning whether they would be remembered as community heroes or as officials who were bought off by tax incentives. Demanding that local leaders put the well-being of people ahead of corporate profit, Ms. Pruitt concluded by stating that the community wants an absolute rejection of data infrastructure rather than just temporary moratoriums, explicitly declaring a stance of "no moratoriums, no data centers."

Werner Gottschalk - 2726 Midvale Dr., Rochester Hills - noted that because the preceding speakers had already thoroughly covered the primary environmental and infrastructure arguments, he would keep his remarks concise. He stated that he is counting on the Planning Commission to handle the issue in a balanced manner that serves the best interests of the community so that everyone comes out a winner at the end of the legislative process. While acknowledging that a certain level of data infrastructure is necessary to sustain modern technical systems, Mr. Gottschalk questioned the overarching public need for these facilities given the current, intense media and investment hype cycle. He made a clear distinction between scales of development, arguing that the massive, hyperscale operations, rather than smaller local uses, are the ones generating severe, documented problems for host communities. He urged the Planning Commission to recommend an extension of the temporary moratorium to allow municipal leaders to finalize a robust, protective policy that all Rochester Hills residents can live with.

Scot Beaton - 655 Bolinger St., Rochester Hills - addressed the Commission by pointing out that Rochester Hills has successfully maintained an active moratorium on marijuana for over three years. He argued that because the City can freeze that land use for three years, it can do the same for data centers. He then transitioned to the topic of consent judgments, noting that a major conversation regarding these legal agreements had taken place earlier. He highlighted a significant, 30-year-old consent judgment attached to the corridor extending from Hamlin Road and Adams Road down to M-59.

Chairperson Hooper interjected to ask what a consent judgment had to do with data centers.

Mr. Beaton clarified his point, explaining that if the final ordinance language fails to account for historic legal agreements, a developer could exploit the loophole. Specifically, they could take a parcel governed by an old consent judgment, such as one originally authorizing a 10-story hotel at that corner, and demand to build a data center in its place instead.

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Additionally, Mr. Beaton highlighted regional land vulnerabilities, pointing to the SOCRRA compost site located north of School Road by Dequindre Road. He noted that the site composts leaves and grass clippings and generates a strong odor in the summertime, identifying it as a gigantic tract of land where a data center could be built. He observed that while Rochester Hills is technically built-out, it contains multiple landfill sites, and the City has secured significant money to clean up these properties. He strongly cautioned against a scenario where public funds are spent cleaning up an old landfill site, only for a developer to come back down the road wanting to build a data center. He urged the Commission to insert a simple requirement into the ordinance explicitly stating that data centers cannot be built on existing or pre-existing landfill sites.

Lisa Winarski - 194 Bedlington, Rochester Hills - expressed confusion regarding the panel's earlier assertions that no data center projects were under consideration. She stated that discussions have already taken place concerning data center placement at School Road and Dequindre Road. She noted that an active Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) project is underway in that area, pointing out that the purple-shaded zones on the displayed zoning map are concentrated in a single sector, which presents a significant health concern for neighboring communities. Accusing local officials of a lack of transparency, Ms. Winarski reported that water testing had been conducted at the site a week and a half prior, DTE Energy is currently expanding its nearby power plant, and a large drain pipe was recently installed to support local infrastructure. Furthermore, she stated that the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) contains a \$198 million capital plan allocation intended to support data centers and related municipal infrastructure. Speaking as a medical and research professional with over 25 years of experience, Ms. Winarski warned against the health risks of building data infrastructure on top of a landfill. She referenced a past methane gas explosion that occurred at the

School Road landfill, arguing that compounding existing methane hazards with the air pollution generated by data centers is a dangerous combination. She concluded by requesting that the City Council extend the temporary moratorium indefinitely, asserting that the draft ordinance provisions currently under review are far too basic and minimal to protect residents.

Chairperson Hooper responded to the testimony, noting that the School Road property continued to be mentioned. He stated that he was not aware of any development proposal whatsoever coming before the Planning Commission, and indicated that Ms. Roediger was similarly unaware of any such project.

Ms. Roediger directly addressed the speaker's comments to clarify the nature of the active infrastructure work. She explained that the city had received an environmental grant from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to conduct essential remediation and environmental assessments on the city-owned landfills at Hamlin Road and School Road. She confirmed that technicians were out in the field testing water exclusively for this remediation project, and that City staff are actively working with individual property owners to complete these safety assessments.

Ms. Roediger stated that the Planning Department has had absolutely zero discussions regarding a data center development on those properties or any other parcel within the City of Rochester Hills. She concluded by stating that she took offense to the insinuation that city staff were being untruthful or hiding information from the public, reiterating that no data center projects have been proposed or discussed internally.

Chairperson Hooper called upon the next scheduled speakers, Leah Whetstone and Linda Whetstone. He noted that Leah Whetstone had left the meeting.

Linda Whetstone - 6687 Wellsdale Ct. Washington Township - shared her ongoing experience attending municipal meetings to draft restrictive zoning rules in her own community. While confirming that the developer in her township had recently paused its application, she emphasized that the regulatory battle is far from over. She commended the Planning Commission for enacting a proactive moratorium and urged local officials to exercise their municipal authority to craft regulations that prioritize the community over corporate interests. Ms. Whetstone targeted the concept of closed-loop water cooling systems, labeling them a farce. She explained that these systems are highly prone to pipeline blowouts that release hazardous technical chemicals, which cannot be filtered out by standard water treatment facilities. Additionally, she shared a recent news item regarding Lake Tahoe, claiming that a power company had just notified 49,000 residents, thousands of businesses, and a major tourism sector that all regional electricity would be redirected exclusively to feed incoming data centers. She warned that local utility providers like DTE Energy could enact similar energy deflections if data infrastructure is left unchecked. Stating that modern data campuses represent a completely new, high-impact threat that cannot be compared to historic technical facilities, she urged the panel to slow down and conduct exhaustive research.

Chairperson Hooper officially closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

He noted that in addition to the evening's live testimony, the City had received approximately 39 public emails regarding the data center ordinance. He confirmed that all received emails had been posted to the municipal website and were officially entered into the public record.

Addressing the audience's feedback, Chairperson Hooper acknowledged that while various environmental and utility impacts were raised, the most predominant request from the public was to extend the temporary moratorium. He clarified that the legal authority to extend or alter a moratorium rests solely with the City Council. He explained that if the Planning Commission requires additional time to properly vet and draft the text as the ordinance review process moves forward, the City Council will make the ultimate determination on extending the timeline.

Chairperson Hooper then transitioned the meeting to board deliberation and called upon Mr. Struzik to open the discussion.

Mr. Struzik opened the discussion by noting that the draft ordinance before them introduces heightened regulations on data centers to provide extensive protections for nearby property owners, local water bodies, and subterranean water tables. He pointed out that the current draft explicitly prohibits evaporative cooling systems, which addresses a major concern raised during public comment. Drawing from his 20 years of professional experience as an IT industry worker, Mr. Struzik noted that he has never encountered an evaporative cooling system in any data center he has worked in, adding that Michigan's climate is poorly suited for them anyway. He explained that while banning evaporative cooling protects local water resources, the technical trade-off is an increase in electrical consumption because facilities must run heavy condensers instead.

Mr. Struzik expressed his overall support for the ordinance but emphasized the need to protect existing and future local employment. He explained that many businesses, such as office, industrial, or technology prototyping firms that employ hundreds or thousands of people, utilize smaller-scale, ancillary data operations on-site. He cautioned the panel to ensure that the final zoning language does not inadvertently penalize these operations or discourage employers who rely on smaller, secondary data storage to function.

Additionally, Mr. Struzik recommended specific text modifications to strengthen the ordinance against potential regulatory loopholes. He referenced a recently revised provision stating that a data center shall not be permitted to utilize well water or draw water from a creek or river. He suggested broadening this restriction to encompass all surface water to prevent developers from exploiting semantic workarounds involving county drains, private lakes, or ponds. He proposed alternative language stating that a data center shall not be permitted to utilize well water or be permitted to draw water from a creek, river, pond, lake, or any other surface-level body of water, leaving it to City staff to refine the final legal phrasing.

Chairperson Hooper thanked Mr. Struzik and asked if he could pinpoint the exact paragraph and section of the draft text containing that water provision. As

Mr. Struzik looked up the specific section, Chairperson Hooper called upon Ms. Neubauer to share her comments.

Ms. Neubauer stated that based on the substantial amount of public feedback received via email and during the evening's testimony, she did not feel comfortable recommending the draft ordinance for final approval without further research. She expressed her desire to make a formal motion recommending that the City Council extend the temporary moratorium to grant the Planning Commission additional time to investigate the matter thoroughly.

Addressing allegations made during public comment, Ms. Neubauer strongly defended the transparency and integrity of staff members Chris McLeod, Sara Roediger, and Jennifer MacDonald. She emphasized that the Planning Department operates with the highest level of integrity and noted that the Commission only knew to be proactive about data infrastructure because staff brought the issue forward. She stated that the administrative goal is to establish restrictive, fair zoning provisions that protect the community. Ms. Neubauer noted that while panel members occasionally disagree on votes, they maintain mutual respect and a shared commitment to the community.

Ms. Neubauer then made a formal motion to recommend that the City Council extend the data center moratorium to allow for further research.

Chairperson Hooper asked if her motion should specify a time frame, such as an additional six months. Ms. Neubauer replied that the specific duration should be left to the discretion of the City Council based on research needs, noting she could not establish a definitive deadline at that moment.

Chairperson Hooper noted the motion by Ms. Neubauer and a support of the motion by Mr. Struzik to forward a recommendation to City Council to extend the moratorium, confirming with Ms. Neubauer that the language of the recommendation should be kept simple.

When Chairperson Hooper called for discussion on the active motion, Mr. Struzik noted he had located the water provision section discussed earlier, confirming it was under Section E1. Chairperson Hooper then called upon Mr. Hetrick for further discussion on the active motion to extend the moratorium. Mr. Hetrick clarified that his intended comments were meant for general board deliberation rather than discussion on the active motion.

Chairperson Hooper asked if there was any further discussion on the motion from the panel. Hearing none, he called for a roll call vote on Ms. Neubauer's motion to recommend that the City Council extend the data center moratorium. The vote was passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Neubauer, seconded by Struzik, that the Planning Commission recommends to City Council to extend the data center moratorium. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye 8 - Brnabic, Denstaedt, Hooper, Neubauer, Struzik, Hetrick, Dettloff and Gallina

Excused 1 - Weaver

Resolved, that the Rochester Hills Planning Commission hereby recommends to City Council to extend the data center moratorium.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

June 16, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Planning Commission and upon motion by Neubauer, seconded by Denstaedt, Chairperson Hooper adjourned the Regular Meeting at 10:23 p.m.

*Greg Hooper, Chairperson
Rochester Hills Planning Commission*

*Jennifer MacDonald, Recording Secretary
Rochester Hills Planning Department*