

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of **Greenfield Township Trustees** *Hearing*
June 3, 2026 - Held 6:30 PM

The Greenfield Township Trustees met for a public hearing at the Greenfield Township Firehouse. Trustee Sitterley called the hearing to order, and then led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance. Jennifer Sitterley, Lonnie Kosch and Dave Cotner were present. Zoning Inspector Jeff Williamsen was also present.

Trustee Sitterley opened the hearing by giving the following information: Zoning Application 26-022 - to amend the current resolution for data center conditional use in the industrial district.

Trustee Sitterley reminded all in attendance that the Board asks for respectful testimony for public comment; anyone wishing to speak needs to respect the three minute limit; behavior that disrupts the hearing or intimidates the participants will not be tolerated. Those that cannot participate appropriately will be asked to leave, and the hearing will proceed in their absence. Anyone who does wish to speak will be asked to be sworn in. There are copies of the proposed resolution available for those who wish to have one.

She then asked Jeff Williamsen, Zoning Inspector, to speak on behalf of the Zoning Commission, who is the applicant, by summarizing the information to be presented: Jeff explained two changes to the Township Zoning Resolution; one in the definition section, defining what a data center is; and the other is in 355.04, which is industrial - conditional use; adding Number 8 - Data Centers; under that "Intent to Build Data Center - to regulate the placement and construction of data centers as a conditional use". In Section B: Along with the requirements in Section 230, the Board of Zoning Appeals may issue a conditional use permit when a proposed data center complies with all of the conditions listed below:

- Building should not exceed 60 feet in height.
- All exhaust systems and mechanicals must be less than 90 feet in height.
- Sound emitted by the data center cannot exceed 70 decibels at the property line.
- All data centers must connect into central water and sewer services.
- Data centers shall be required to adhere to all requirements of Section 445, the landscaping section, in addition to the requirements of this section.
- Data centers shall maintain minimum setbacks (the copy provided to the participants was an old copy); it is now a 1,000 feet setback from any property line abutting a parcel zone or used for residential purposes at the time of the application.
- The Board of Zoning Appeals may require an increased setback from the findings upon finding that site-specific conditions, including building height, equipment placement, topography, layout design warrant additional separation from capability with adjacent residential uses.
- No principal building generator, mechanical equipment yard, area, loading yard, fuel storage, or parking area shall be located within the required setback.
- The required setback area shall be maintained as a landscape cover, and shall include, at a minimum, a combination of berming, evergreen plantings and/or fencing opaque designed to mitigate noise, light spill and visual impact.
- A continuous six-foot hedgerow planted atop an eight-foot tall earth berm or mound shall be required at the time of planting.
- The hedgerow must have minimum winter opacity of 50 percent, and minimum summer opacity of 70 percent.
- Berms or mounds shall be constructed with a three to one foot slope; low maintenance ground cover shall be utilized for earth berms and mounds, and dead trees and other landscaping material shall be promptly removed and shall be replaced within six months.

With no further testimony from the applicant, Trustee Sitterley opened the floor to public comment.

Kent Searle, 5375 Coakley Road, was the first speaker. After being sworn in, Mr. Searle expressed his concerns over having data centers in the township, stating these facilities use a tremendous amount of electricity and water, driving up costs. He noted the Google facility had reneged on their water contract

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with Lancaster. He stated no one in the room wanted one of these data centers within sight of their home, and asked that the Board prohibit data centers in the township in the future.

William Boyer, 3305 Election House Road, was the next speaker. After being sworn in, Mr. Boyer stated he agreed with what Mr. Searle had stated regarding the Board trying to be proactive rather than reactive; however, he asked what was going to happen when they did not do what they said they would do. He noted Grove City and the state of Ohio had placed a moratorium on data centers, according to the news. Trustee Sitterley noted the temporary moratorium was in place; however, it can only be temporary.

Susan Boyer, 3305 Election House Road, was the next speaker. After being sworn in, Mrs. Boyer stated she agreed with what had been stated, and asked where the industrial district referred to in the resolution was located. Jeff Williamsen explained it was primarily along route 33; however, he noted parcels could be rezoned to industrial. He explained the process would require the entity wanting the rezoning to request this before the Zoning Commission; then it would go to Regional Planning. If they are successful with getting it rezoned to industrial, then they would need to request conditional use with the Board of Zoning Appeals. The Board of Zoning Appeals could apply many conditions to the conditional use request, if they wish. Mrs. Boyer confirmed there was no current applicant to build a data center, and then asked why this amendment needed to be done. Jeff explained if it was not done, any request to build a data center would be based on the resolution as it is currently written, which would make the process much easier for the applicant. She asked if the resolution could state "no data centers at all"; Jeff stated this was a legal question, and that he was uncertain as to whether a certain kind of business can be prohibited in the township.

Trustee Sitterley stated she knew moratoriums can only be temporary, and that she had heard of another township being cited by the AG's office for extending their moratorium by three month increments; this is not allowed. The amendment that Greenfield Township is considering is what townships are being told they need to do to address the situation.

Mrs. Boyer asked how much research had been done on this subject. Trustee Cotner stated landowners have a right to sell their property as they wish; the township has no say in that matter. However, the township wants to have this amendment in place in order to have more control over the data center issue. Trustee Kosch also explained that the township has a Comprehensive Plan which includes a map with zoning and industrial designations. He explained that property can be annexed to the city of Lancaster (as long as it is adjacent to Lancaster), at which time the property would be under the rules of the city; the township would have no say in what is done with the property. He noted there were some items in the plan which he did not agree with and wanted to discuss. He reiterated that the Zoning Commission had spent many hours researching the issue, working with the county, and that's how the amendment had gotten done to come before the Board. He noted the township cannot stop it completely; however, there is a temporary moratorium in a small section of the township - Wilson Road - not the whole township.

Mrs. Boyer asked what the local residents could do to try to stop data centers from coming to the township. Trustee Kosch recommended they contact their congressman at the statehouse and voice their concerns. Jeff Williamsen pointed out a section of the amendment required that the data center connect to central water and sewer services, and noted 90 percent of the township doesn't have that.

Debbie Fisher, 1903 Rainbow Drive NW was the next speaker. After being sworn-in, she asked the Board if they could require a data center to have solar power/solar energy on their roof so they don't make such a demand on the electric grid; Trustee Sitterley responded this was unknown. Jeff Williamsen stated that the center in Millersport was going to generate their own electricity; solar panels won't work because they need power 24 hours per day. He also noted if there were to be a data center that came to the area, they would need to go before the BZA, and the BZA could present options to the applicant, such as they are required to generate their own power, and/or they have to have a closed-loop cooling system so they are not drawing so much water from the water table. Trustee Sitterley also noted this was something that

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was also being proposed by the federal government. Jeff also noted that Regional Planning wrote the amendment.

Jack Barr, 1642 Winding Oak, was the next speaker. After being sworn-in, Mr. Barr stated he was a member of the Zoning Commission, and that they had worked on the amendment for some time. He also questioned the 200 foot buffer zone; however, it was determined he had an old version of the code; it has been changed to 1,000 feet.

Kent Searle asked to speak once more to clarify something. He noted anyone can sell their land to anyone they wish, and that is why the township has a zoning resolution. He noted different types of zoning can be prohibited, as it is already in the zoning resolution (recreational marijuana). Jeff Williamsen responded regarding solar, which was mentioned. It was addressed in the ORC that counties could ban large scale solar; there is nothing in ORC regarding banning data centers at this time.

Trustee Sitterley emphasized that she would research the subject/question further; however, she noted she had not seen anyone successfully ban it as yet.

Trustee Kosch went on to address the height restriction issue in the amendment. He noted the area where a potential data center could be built (from the airport to Coonpath Road) is in a radius where height is governed by the FAA, and is included in the zoning resolution. This is why there is a height restriction of 35 feet. He recommended this be changed/added to the amendment in order to restrict the height of any data center that would be built.

Discussion continued as to the current restrictions in the zoning code, as well as the amendment, and the process for editing the amendment with the height restrictions, rather than needing to send the edit back and forth to various groups for approval. After further discussion, Trustee Sitterley edited the amendment as follows: Subject to existing FAA regulations on attached Exhibit A.

Trustee Sitterley asked if there was a motion to approve the amendment with the edit; Trustee Cotner made a motion to approve the amendment with the edit; seconded by Trustee Kosch, with the edit.

ROLL CALL: Cotner: Yes Kosch: Yes Sitterley: Yes Motion Passed 3-0

Before adjourning, Trustee Cotner stated that Greenfield Township is not putting any data centers on Wilson Road or Whiley Road. He stated there have been rumors going around about this, and the Board received several emails to this effect; he stated the land was already annexed into the city of Lancaster; it is not Greenfield Township. Trustee Kosch confirmed there have been no applications for a data center in Greenfield Township at this time.

Mrs. Boyer asked how a fire emergency would be handled at a data center with the height of the facility, etc. Discussion continued regarding mutual aid between the local fire departments, and the need for a ladder truck for Greenfield Township. Jeff Williamsen stated this was something that could be required by the BZA if an applicant applies to build a data center - to buy the township a ladder truck. Trustee Cotner reiterated that the Board will do all they can to keep the data centers out of the township.

With no further business to come before the Board, Trustee Sitterley made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Trustee Cotner.

ROLL CALL: Cotner: Yes Kosch: Yes Sitterley: Yes Motion Passed 3-0

The meeting adjourned at 7:08 p.m.