

August 25, 2026
Public Hearing

The public hearing for the proposed 2026-OR-01 amending the Zoning Code: solar and data centers, fire stations, farmers markets, non-conforming lots, was held Tuesday, August 25, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., in the Municipal Building and called to order by Chairman John Beaufort. The hearing was presided over by Solicitor Daniel Hudock, Esquire.

Members Present: John Beaufort, Paul Knupp, Wade Stoner, Stephanie Verna, and Dan Resenic.

Others Present: Township Manager Michael Strelac, Solicitor Dan Hudock, Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Rick Krouse, and Finance Officer Beverly Warfel.

Solicitor Hudock presented that the purpose of the hearing was to allow the public to express their opinions regarding the proposed Zoning textual amendments recommended by the Planning Commission. The court reporter swore in the members of the public who indicated they would speak.

Public Comment

Robert Derk spoke as president of Ligonier Valley Volunteer Fire Department #1 (Waterford). He addressed the non-conforming lot portion of the amendments. He stated the Department agrees with the recommended change regarding non-conforming lots and fire stations.

Jan Milburn spoke for the Citizens to Preserve Ligonier Valley. She stated she believes the majority of residents oppose Data Centers. However, according to state law all land uses must be provided for in the zoning code. Therefore, citizens must rely on local ordinances for environmental protection from the procedures of the centers. She also indicated she appreciates the work done by those involved in preparation of the ordinance.

Jack Milburn stated we must look ahead to fully protect the local environment from the negative impacts of data centers. He listed what he believes the negative impacts to be. He thinks the current Zoning Ordinance falls short. He would like the commission to address an energy generation ordinance which would govern how a data center produces its energy to operate.

James H. Andrews summarized his letter submitted to the Board regarding the changes to the ordinance he is requesting. He believes the current ordinance does not limit the amount of water a data center may use, nor the cooling process of the center, nor eliminate the environmental effect of that process. A capacity letter does not necessarily address all the water usage issues regarding cooling.

Chloe West also addressed the portion of the amendments addressing centers. She put forth five risks which she believes must be addressed: persistent noise; the strain on the water supply during drought; potential increased electrical rates to residents; a lack of protection for

taxpayers when roads may need repair due to the effect of traffic at the centers; and air pollution from diesel generator emissions during outages.

Patrick Dooling spoke to the rapid rise of health concerns in communities due to the effect of data centers on the environment causing health issues. Air pollution, light pollution, noise pollution are among the risks residents in areas surrounding those centers face. He pointed out several medical/health issues residents now experience in those areas. A strong health protection ordinance is necessary to protect our homes and citizens.

Vickie Oles stated that no one she knows wants to live near a data center. She was here to support both the legislation being put forth and a periodic review of those areas already living with data centers for the changing effects there. This review may result in indicating to us a need to further update our ordinance. She would like copies of the reports of those who spoke today for her to study. Finally, she warned the Board against signing any nondisclosure agreement to meet with any company who may potentially have plans to possibly locate a data center in our area.

Jazmin Henkel stated those who had previously spoken have covered a lot of what she wanted to say. She indicated that she appreciates the Board taking this issue seriously. Data centers have been around for a long time. There is one issue that has not been addressed and that is the issue of closed loop centers. A closed loop requires the use of chemicals. The residual of this process is discharged into waterways. It has been recorded that in those areas there is an increase in the stillbirth of calves and other animals. Data centers are not necessarily truthful regarding their effects on the surrounding environment.

Supervisor Knupp asked those who spoke if they had attended any of the Planning Commission meetings to voice their concerns.

James Andrews addressed the question posed by Supervisor Knupp that he did not attend the Planning Commission. He appreciates the question and they do the best they can to be involved. The point he wanted to make was that clearly there were elements missing of significant concern to the public in this proposed amendment. He is therefore requesting that the Board postpone a decision regarding this ordinance until these concerns are addressed.

Cindy Brown responded to Mr. Knupp's question by stating that there are meetings going on everywhere and scheduling conflicts. She urged the Board to get all meetings videotaped and posted on the website the next day or as quickly as possible so residents can be made aware of what is happening prior to reading it in the meeting minutes after they are approved the following month.

Mr. Beaufort responded that the question regarding whether those speaking had attended the Planning Commission meetings was not an attempt to say that because they did not attend, they would not be heard. It was an attempt to emphasize that, although we realize there are scheduling conflicts, it is imperative that residents be heard and attend if they can. Mr. Beaufort stated that your voice is important, which is why we hold these hearings.

Jan Milburn also responded. At the Planning Commission meetings many of the concerns brought up during this hearing were voiced, discussed and researched during the meetings. Many of them could not be addressed due to federal or state law.

Supervisor Beaufort reiterated how important it is to pay attention to the Planning Commission and their work. He believes the Board has a lot to think about.

Wade Stoner wanted to applaud everybody's engagement. He also has a lot of questions.

A motion was made by Supervisor Verna and seconded by Supervisor Stoner to close the hearing. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Beverly Warfel
Finance Officer/Assistant Secretary