

**City of Evansville Plan Commission
Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 4th, 2026, 6:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order at 6:00pm.

2. Roll Call:

Members	Present/ Absent	Others Present
Mayor Abbey Barnes	P	Colette Spranger, Community Development Director
Aldersperson Bill Lathrop	P	Nancy Greve
Aldersperson Chuck Boyce	P	Cassie Steiner
Susan Becker	P	Karl Lauterbach
John Gishnock	P	Jared Micks
Mike Scarmon	P	
Ry Thompson	P	

3. Motion to approve the agenda, by Lathrop, second by Gishnock. Motion to move item 6 to after discussion of 8A. Approved unanimously.

4. Motion to waive the reading of the minutes from the July 7th, 2026 meeting and approve them as printed by Lathrop, second by Boyce. Approved unanimously.

5. Civility Reminder.

6. Citizen appearances other than agenda items listed. None.

7. Action Items

8. Discussion

A. Zoning and Regulation for Data Center Land Uses

Review of materials provided by staff. Spranger first addressed why the City was working on data center zoning and site regulation when, in general, there is no interest from these companies in investing in Evansville. In short, the City can make better decisions by being proactive about such uses rather than being surprised by them when they show up unannounced. This is a good exercise for Plan Commission to envision how they would like such a use to look and operate within the City. She then went over what can and cannot be achieved by a moratorium, noting that Evansville did not meet the legal requirements to enact one. They can, however, spend time to create a thoughtful zoning land use that captures the public's concerns and looks out for the city's best interests.

Thompson mentioned he was curious about wastewater reuse and noted that closed loop cooling systems make water usage less of an issue. Spranger noted that zoning regulation could not dictate how the utilities are regulated or operated.

Gishnock voiced his support for an ordinance. He would like the City to "ask for the sky" in reference to this kind of use, noting that the nearby Village of DeForest did exactly that and

rejected a proposal because the developer could not or would not meet those expectations. He would like to see the surrounding townships work together if there is a shared interest in limiting development of this particular use. He is in favor of bringing any kind of development to the public early in the process and is against the City signing any non-disclosure agreement (NDA). He wonders if the City has the capability of banning them.

Lathrop found the Boardman Clark write up very useful. He wonders if there is support in the Town [of Union] for data center development, as the City's regulation would not pertain beyond its boundaries. He is mindful of the impact, both physically and financially, such a use may have on residents.

Scarmon notes that zoning can restrict things like size and height, and that the City's industrial districts can limit the intensity of any project. He would like to see a reclamation plan or strategy if such a development goes belly up.

Boyce notes that data centers are the latest "boogeyman" in popular culture. We don't have a project in front of us, so that buys us time to think. He is of the opinion a smaller center might be okay for the City, but that in no way can the City support a hyperscale model that is creating controversy elsewhere in Rock County. He considers NDAs and tax implications/incentives all part of the negotiation process.

Barnes echoes the previous concerns and wonders if the City's lighting ordinance is strong enough to address what is typical at a data center. Spranger does not think it goes far enough for this use, which is often lit 24/7 for security purposes.

The Commission then opened for public comment, as all in the audience were in attendance for this topic.

- Jared Micks would like there to be strong enforcement if any agreement is violated. He also notes that the closed loop system is not 100% efficient and expresses the opinion that such a facility is very unlikely to operate as advertised.
- Cassie Steiner appreciates the conversation and notes 76% of Wisconsinites think the costs outweigh the benefits when it comes to data centers. She cites that 73% of water withdrawal comes from electricity generation, and closed loop water systems shift the demand back to electricity, so there is no clear winner in terms of impacts to public utilities. The closed loop system also is a source of PFAS in the water supply.
- Karl Lauterbach echoes previous concerns and is particular concerned about decibel levels generated by these uses.
- Nancy Greve appreciates the proactive discussion.

Commissioners thanked attendees for participating and welcomed them back to future discussions.

B. 2025 Wisconsin Act 173 Updates

Spranger reported briefly that it was likely the City would need to update its comprehensive plan, particularly the land use and housing chapters, in 2027 in order to be compliant with this legislation by January 1, 2028.

9. Community Development Report

A. Building Permit Activity – June

B. Code Enforcement Activity - June

10. Upcoming Meeting: September 1st, 2026 at 6:00pm

11. Adjourn at 7:13 pm.