

City of Harmony

Joint Planning Session: Data Center Ordinance

April 15th, 2026

Present: Jesse Grabau, Tara Morem, Kyle Scheevel, Kelsey Bergey, Stuart Morem, Greg Schieber, Erik Olson, Jim Strozyk, Mayor Donney, Rod Johnson, and Keith McIntosh

Absent: Miles Petree

Other City Employees Present: Chris Hahn (CEDA), Alissa Stepflug (City Administrator), Katrina Hurley (facilitator)

Community Attendees: Brad & Sheri Osmonson, Ann Lyons, Zo Masters, Allan Dahl, Nathan Osmonson, Ron Gregg, Amy & Aaron Bishop, Roxanne Johnson, Alex Lange, and Erica Thilges

Harmony Community Center

The joint planning session of the Harmony City Council, Economic Development Authority, and Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Steve Donney. at the Harmony Community Center.

Katrina Hurley, welcomed all attendees and introduced herself as the contracted facilitator for the City of Harmony. She explained that this meeting represented the final joint planning session in the data center ordinance development process. She noted that the City and community members had contributed more than eleven hours of discussion and engagement leading up to this point.

Hurley explained that the purpose of the meeting was to address the remaining outstanding ordinance items, confirm direction before the legal drafting process is completed, and prepare for the formal review process by Planning and Zoning and ultimately the City Council. Attendees were encouraged to sign in, review the meeting materials provided, and participate respectfully throughout the discussion.

Recap of Prior Meetings:

A summary of the community engagement process was presented to provide context for attendees. Hurley explained that multiple joint planning sessions had been held to discuss definitions of data centers, zoning and permitting requirements, environmental standards, project size limitations, noise levels, setbacks, buffering requirements, water use protections, and community benefits. She emphasized that these foundational topics had already been thoroughly discussed with community input and would not be revisited during this meeting. She also reiterated that no formal decisions would be made during joint planning sessions, as final actions would take place through Planning and Zoning and City Council meetings.

Meeting Expectations:

Hurley reminded attendees of the expectations for participation, including assuming positive intent, allowing speakers to finish their thoughts before responding, and encouraging respectful and inclusive dialogue. She reiterated that the purpose of the meeting was to gather input and refine direction rather than conduct formal votes.

Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA's) and Transparency:

The group engaged in a detailed discussion regarding the use of non-disclosure agreements in relation to data center development. Hurley explained that NDAs are commonly used in economic development but have created challenges in other communities by limiting transparency and reducing public trust. Community members expressed concerns about not knowing which developers may be involved in future projects and how that could impact the community.

Board members and participants discussed the balance between maintaining business confidentiality and ensuring transparency for the public. It was noted that while NDAs are typical in many business transactions, data centers present unique considerations due to their scale and potential community impact. The discussion also referenced examples from other communities where NDAs contributed to mistrust or legal challenges.

Through discussion, a general consensus emerged that the City of Harmony should prioritize transparency in its approach. The board members indicated that they did not support the City entering into NDAs for data center projects. This direction will be forwarded to Planning and Zoning for formal consideration as part of the ordinance.

Water Use Monitoring and Enforcement:

The conversation then shifted to water use monitoring. Hurley reminded attendees that the ordinance already prohibits the use of water-based cooling systems for data centers. The focus of the discussion was on how to monitor and enforce compliance over time.

Local water usage data from existing facilities, including the school, community center, and local businesses, was reviewed to provide context. The group discussed the importance of establishing a threshold that would identify unusual water usage without restricting normal operations.

After discussion, the group reached consensus on a monitoring approach. It was agreed that if a data center exceeds 50,000 gallons of water usage per month for three consecutive months, this would trigger a review by the City. This review would allow staff to request additional information and ensure compliance with ordinance requirements.

Project Size and Megawatt Cap:

The group revisited the topic of project size and electrical capacity. Hurley reminded attendees that previous discussions had already established that hyperscale data centers, defined as those exceeding 99 megawatts, would not be permitted.

The discussion focused on whether an additional cap should be established for smaller-scale projects. Participants considered infrastructure capacity, future flexibility, and the importance of maintaining local control over potential expansions.

After discussion, the board reached consensus to establish a maximum project size of 55 megawatts. This cap reflects the current infrastructure capabilities while also ensuring that any larger proposals would require future review and potential ordinance amendments. This approach allows the City to maintain control while still accommodating appropriate development.

Energy Use Reporting:

The group briefly discussed whether ongoing reporting of energy usage should be required. After consideration, it was determined that such reporting would not be necessary due to the established megawatt cap and existing regulatory controls.

Environmental Review Process (EAW and EIS)

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to discussing environmental review options. Hurley explained the differences between an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including timelines, costs, and levels of detail.

Participants expressed concerns about potential long-term environmental impacts, particularly related to groundwater and unknown risks associated with newer data center technologies. At the same time, there was discussion about the need to avoid unnecessarily delaying or discouraging development.

After reviewing updated information that clarified the EAW timeline as approximately four to six weeks, the group reached a consensus approach. It was agreed that the City would require an EAW for proposed data center projects. If the EAW process determines that an EIS is necessary, the City will require per the ordinance that the developer to complete the EIS at their expense.

This approach was viewed as a balanced solution that ensures due diligence while avoiding unnecessary delays when an EIS is not warranted.

Legal Drafting and Next Steps:

The City Attorney discussed the need for specialized legal expertise to draft the ordinance. It was recommended that the City engage outside legal counsel with experience in data center regulations in order to ensure accuracy, efficiency, and alignment with best practices.

The board expressed support for this approach. It was noted that bringing in outside expertise would help move the process forward more efficiently and ensure that the ordinance reflects the complexity of the topic.

Updated Timeline:

Hurley informed attendees that the April 29 meeting would be cancelled in order to allow time for legal drafting. She explained that once the draft ordinance is complete, it will be brought to Planning and Zoning for formal review.

Planning and Zoning will review the ordinance and vote on whether to recommend it to the City Council. The City Council will then conduct its own review, hold a public hearing, and vote on final approval.

Public Engagement and Transparency Moving Forward:

The City will continue to provide notice of upcoming meetings through legally required posting locations, including the Harmony Post Office, the City website, the Community Center, and printed materials available upon request.

Hurley emphasized that additional opportunities for public input will occur during the Planning and Zoning review process and the City Council public hearing. She encouraged community members to stay engaged and continue participating.

Adjournment:

Hurley thanked all attendees for their time, input, and commitment throughout the process. She emphasized that the ordinance has been shaped by extensive community involvement and reflects the values and priorities expressed during these meetings.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m. by Mayor Steve Donney.