COLLETON COUNTY
SOUTH CAROLINA

Colleton County Council Public Hearing
Date: September 14, 2026
Time: 5:30 p.m.

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, the news media was notified, and notice was posted 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Call to Order: Chairman Biering called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Chairman Scott Biering, Vice-Chairman Bubba Trippe, Councilman Steve Murdaugh, Councilman Johnny Frank and Councilman Phillip Taylor were present at roll call, and Chairman Biering declared a quorum present.

Approval of Agenda: Chairman Biering requested a motion to approve the agenda. Councilman Taylor made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Councilman Murdaugh. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing: Chairman Biering requested a motion to open the Public Hearing to hear comments on the following:

a. An Ordinance Adopting Certain Amendments to the Colleton County Comprehensive Plan 2030
b. An Ordinance (1) Amending the Text of the Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Regulations of Colleton County, South Carolina to Authorize the Establishment of a Digital Infrastructure Overlay District and Establishing Conditions for the Development of Digital Overlay Infrastructure Facilities; (2) Repealing and Replacing the Provisions of Ordinance No. 25-O-10 Pertaining to Data Centers; and (3) Other Matters Relating Thereto
c. An Ordinance Amending the Colleton County Zoning Map to Designate Areas Included Within the Digital Infrastructure Overlay District and Other Matters Related Thereto
d. An Ordinance Granting an Easement on a Portion of Real Property Identified as TMS No. 132-00-00-028 to the City of Walterboro to Maintain a 100' Pollution Free Radius Around the Proposed Thunderbolt Drive Well

Councilman Taylor made a motion to open the Public Hearing, seconded by Vice-Chairman Trippe. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing Comments:
Frank Santorella stated that he was tired of the ongoing discussions regarding data centers. He expressed his belief that private property owners should have the right to develop or sell their property as they choose. He asked Council to make the decision that would best benefit Colleton County and encouraged the public to research the organizations opposing data centers.

Marsha Johnson expressed concern that the allotted public hearing time limits the number of individuals who are able to speak. She stated that Council should consider a larger meeting location to accommodate more members of the public. She also stated that those attending meetings are not trying to be difficult and expressed her belief that meeting procedures should be more inclusive.

Cyndi Roberts spoke about the potential benefits and economic growth a data center could bring to Colleton County. She asked Council to be good stewards of the County by addressing potential impacts, including noise, light pollution, and electronic waste. She also asked that a decommissioning plan be established that would remain binding on any future owners of the property.

Kimber Santorella spoke about the economic challenges facing Colleton County and stated that the County is one of the poorest counties in the state. She discussed potential benefits of a data center, including expanding the tax base and providing higher-paying jobs. She asked Council to be good stewards of the County by addressing potential noise and light pollution associated with the development.

George Bauknight expressed his support for the current members of Council and encouraged the public to thoroughly research data centers, including changes and technological improvements made over the years. He discussed the advantages of closed-loop cooling systems and the potential for increased tax revenue. He stated that it was his understanding that the developers had not requested any incentives from the County. He concluded by thanking Council for their service.

Bill Burdick stated that he is an engineer but was speaking in his personal capacity. He expressed his opinion that he had not heard any rational objections to the proposed data center and discussed noise concerns and the use of a closed-loop cooling system. He stated that appropriate safeguards should be established for data centers and expressed enthusiasm about the potential progress and benefits they could bring to Colleton County.

Tim McLaughlin stated that he lives near what he understood to be the proposed data center site and expressed concern about the potential impact of the development on the surrounding area and his property. He referenced the Canadys Power Plant and discussed concerns regarding potential impacts associated with data centers.

Adina Harper spoke about the potential positive impacts of data centers on Colleton County, including attracting additional investment from other industries, increasing County revenue and the tax base, providing additional funding for local services, facilities, and operations, and expanding the local workforce. She asked Council to carefully consider the potential impacts, be good stewards of the County, protect the County's interests, and remain open to opportunities for growth.

Brett Wiggins discussed existing County ordinances and asked Council to table the proposed ordinances, stating his belief that they conflict with ordinances currently in place. He also stated that, to his knowledge, Planning and Development did not have an application on file to rezone the proposed property.

At the conclusion of the allotted public comment period, additional individuals remained signed up to speak but were unable to address Council due to the expiration of the allotted time, Chairman Biering requested a motion to close the Public Hearing. Councilman Frank made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Councilman Taylor. The motion carried unanimously. Chairman Biering stated that public comments can be submitted to publichearing@colletoncounty.org to be put on record.

Adjournment: Chairman Biering requested a motion to adjourn. Councilman Murdaugh made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Councilman Taylor. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

COLLETON COUNTY COUNCIL

Scott Biering

By: Scott Biering, Chairman

COLLETON COUNTY SEAL WALTERBORO SC

ATTEST:

Martha B. Thompson

Martha B. Thompson, Clerk to Council

Approved: 10/5/26