

SPRINGFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP



SEAN R. MILLER, CLERK

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Data Centers Pre-App Meeting

Springfield Township
12000 Davisburg Road, Davisburg, MI 48350
Monday, December 15, 2025
1:00 PM

PRESENT: Richard L. Davis, Township Supervisor
 Lori Beatty, Trustee
 Steve Felix, Planning Commissioner
 Amanda Gruzin, Resident
 Julia Upfal, Giffels Webster
 Stephen Sevenich, Cushman and Wakefield
 Reuben Maxbauer, Levy Representative
 Danielle Sink, Supervisor's Assistant/Recording Secretary

Supervisor Richard L. Davis convened the Data Centers Pre-Application Meeting on December 15, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. Ms. Upfal began by reviewing the zoning composition of the surrounding area and the proximity of the DTE substation and transmission line. She noted that nearly all data center proposals statewide follow transmission corridors and referenced Saline Township's lack of water and sewer, which resulted in the use of higher-energy air-cooling systems. When Amanda asked about backup generators, Ms. Upfal explained the differences between battery storage systems and large-scale gas-powered generators.

As discussion shifted to taxation, Commissioner Steve Felix asked what benefit the community would receive. Ms. Upfal explained that Michigan exempts data center equipment from sales tax and that the Township would rely on standard property tax revenue. At this point, Supervisor Davis took firm control of the meeting, clearly outlining that he would ask a structured series of questions required for the Township's evaluation and emphasizing that this was a preliminary review intended to guide a thorough and expert analysis.

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When Stephen Sevenich joined virtually, Supervisor Davis introduced himself and informed him that the Township Board had approved a 180-day moratorium on data centers at its most recent meeting. He explained that the moratorium was necessary for Springfield Township to update its ordinances, definitions, and regulatory framework. He confirmed that the moratorium began the prior Friday, clarified that it could be revised if needed, and ensured that Mr. Sevenich understood the timeline.

Mr. Sevenich provided an overview of his client, a long-established data center development group that constructs facilities for future tenants rather than building speculatively. He described the 84-acre Andersonville Road parcel as the primary area of interest, noted discussions with nearby landowners, and explained that his group had previously purchased residential homes at two to three times market value to address proximity concerns in prior projects.

Supervisor Davis then began his formal series of inquiries, reiterating that written responses would be required. He asked what the total square footage of the facility would be and how many buildings were proposed. Mr. Sevenich estimated two to three buildings of approximately 250,000 square feet each and confirmed he would obtain definitive information from his client. Supervisor Davis next asked whether the facility would be developed in phases, how many phases were anticipated, and what the timeline would be. Mr. Sevenich again confirmed he would obtain the information. Supervisor Davis continued by asking how many acres would be used during the first phase, how much land the applicant intended to control long-term, and whether residential acquisition was part of that strategy. Mr. Sevenich agreed to confirm these details with his client. Supervisor Davis then asked whether the facility would be owner-operated or leased, what the expected operational lifespan would be, and whether the project constituted an edge facility, a regional data center, or a hyperscale campus. For each of these, Mr. Sevenich confirmed he would obtain the answers from his client and provide them to the Township as soon as possible.

Turning to zoning and compatibility, Supervisor Davis asked whether the proposed location was zoned appropriately. Ms. Upfal explained that although the property is zoned M-1, data centers are not currently permitted and that new regulations would be created during the moratorium. Supervisor Davis continued with questions regarding minimum lot size, setbacks, buffering, building height, exterior design, fencing, and lighting, emphasizing that ordinance development would address each item. He asked what steps the applicant would

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take to mitigate visual and noise impacts on nearby residential properties. Mr. Sevenich confirmed that he would obtain generator specifications, noise mitigation strategies, and all other related information from his client.

Addressing energy use, Supervisor Davis asked for the projected peak and average electrical demand, whether DTE had been engaged to assess grid capacity and infrastructure needs, whether the applicant would fund all required electrical upgrades, and whether a full utility impact study would be submitted, including 20-year power modeling. He also asked whether battery energy storage systems were proposed and whether the facility would pursue LEED or Energy Star certification. For each of these questions, Mr. Sevenich confirmed that he would obtain the required details from his client.

Turning to water and cooling, Supervisor Davis asked which cooling method would be used and explained that Springfield Township has no municipal water or sewer. He noted that Independence Township's system lies across Andersonville Road but may not have sufficient capacity to support a data center. He requested the estimated daily and annual water usage—including the initial draw—the water source, whether groundwater would be used, and what steps would be taken to protect private wells and the Township's aquifers. He emphasized that Springfield Township possesses some of the most unique and sensitive water systems in Michigan, including pristine prairie fens and habitat for rare and endangered species such as the Poweshiek skipperling butterfly. He made clear that the Township would halt any project posing risk to natural resources or residents. Mr. Sevenich confirmed he would obtain all hydrological information from his client.

Ms. Upfal added that undeveloped sites require hydrological studies and noted that the neighboring depleted gravel mine had extensive subsurface challenges due to prior industrial dumping. Supervisor Davis strongly encouraged extensive soil borings before the applicant proceeded further.

Discussion then moved to fiber and digital infrastructure. Supervisor Davis asked what fiber connectivity the facility would require, whether new ductwork or trenching would be needed in Township rights-of-way, and whether the project would improve local digital infrastructure or public broadband access. For each, Mr. Sevenich confirmed he would obtain the information from his client.

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Environmental requirements were then addressed. Supervisor Davis stated that a comprehensive Environmental Impact Study would be required and must evaluate air quality, stormwater, wildlife, soil disturbance, vegetation removal, and cumulative impacts that extended beyond the site. He explained that the Planning Commission, ordinance committee, Township Board, and residents would expect full accounting of these impacts. He required generator emissions modeling, noise studies with baseline and projected decibel levels at all property lines, and full stormwater and erosion control plans. Mr. Sevenich confirmed he would obtain all details from his client.

Supervisor Davis then reviewed traffic and construction requirements, including a full traffic impact study for both construction and operation, truck and employee vehicle counts, designated hauling routes with approval from RCOC or MDOT, and a construction management plan aligned with Township construction hour regulations. Mr. Sevenich again confirmed each answer would be obtained from his client.

Regarding emergency services, Supervisor Davis asked whether the facility would have 24/7 staffing, required coordination with the Fire Department, emphasized compliance with IFC 2015, and requested hazardous materials management plans. He also required participation in Township-wide emergency planning. Mr. Sevenich confirmed he would obtain all information from his client.

Supervisor Davis then asked whether the applicant intended to seek tax abatements, stating that any such request must be justified by measurable community benefit. He required a cost-benefit analysis, job creation details, local contractor commitments, and financial guarantees. He also stated that any facility over 250,000 square feet would require a community benefits agreement. Ms. Upfal confirmed that the Township does not currently have a community benefits ordinance and will develop one as part of the moratorium. Supervisor Davis confirmed his intent to include such requirements in forthcoming regulatory updates.

Supervisor Davis continued with questions on decommissioning, including cost estimates, performance bonds, closure procedures, and update schedules throughout the facility's lifespan. He emphasized expectations for public engagement, including participation in public forums and Planning Commission meetings, the designation of a public contact for complaints, and annual reporting on energy use, water consumption, generator activity,

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staffing, and operational changes. Mr. Sevenich confirmed that he would obtain all of this information from his client.

Supervisor Davis reinforced his commitment to open, honest, and transparent government and emphasized the Township's dedication to environmental protection and resident involvement. He reiterated that the Township would not rush the 180-day review process and would not compromise public resources or safety, noting that the Township had taken a similar approach in pausing the gravel mine application.

Ms. Upfal requested examples of other data centers developed by the applicant's client to assist the Township's research. Supervisor Davis stated he would send the full question list and approved minutes as a roadmap and reiterated the requirement for written answers before any application could proceed. Ms. Upfal noted that a site plan application could only be submitted after the moratorium unless lifted early.

The group then discussed next steps, including ordinance drafting, legal coordination, and required environmental and invasive species studies. Ms. Upfal noted that invasive species assessments must address Phragmites, Japanese knotweed, and swallow-wort. Supervisor Davis asked Ms. Sink to schedule follow-up meetings with himself and Attorney Need.

Toward the end of the meeting, Trustee Beatty asked which company Mr. Sevenich represented, and he confirmed it was Cushman & Wakefield. Supervisor Davis surveyed the room and reiterated that the Township would proceed deliberately and methodically. He asked Mr. Sevenich whether this meeting aligned with his expectations, and Mr. Sevenich replied that it exceeded them and complimented the Township's preparedness and clarity.

Supervisor Davis closed by reaffirming that Springfield Township will move step-by-step and expects full cooperation from the applicant. With no further questions raised, he adjourned the meeting.