P&Z Data Center Legislation Discussions: Community Voices and Public Engagement

October 26, 2026 | Session Three

Discussion recap

The October 26 P&Z Committee discussion provided an opportunity for community members to ask questions, share concerns, and offer ideas about data center development in Memphis.

Key discussion points

- **The development pause provides time to prepare permanent standards.** Councilman Warren explained that the recently passed 135-day pause within Substitute Ordinance No. 5986 allows the Division of Planning and Development to draft recommendations to regulate future data center development. He discussed potential protections near homes and schools, cooling methods, and cleaner power options. These details remain part of the work to develop permanent standards.

- **Residents requested clearer information and easier access to documents.** Councilman Spinosa announced a new City Council webpage intended to consolidate meeting recordings and documents for public access. The P&Z Data Center Committee Hearings Webpage can be accessed at https://memphistn.gov/planning-zoning-committee-hearings-on-data-center-legislation/

- **Future locations and neighborhood protections remain central questions**. Residents requested maps showing potential locations for data centers and asked how future facilities could be separated from homes, schools, and sensitive areas.

- **Community members proposed broader ways to share economic benefits.** Speakers emphasized including residents in developing community benefits arrangements. Ideas included job training, residential solar investment, a community wealth fund, and opportunities for local residents to share in ownership or financial returns. Councilman Warren discussed a proposed community benefit agency and said he would bring suggestions for larger contributions to business leaders.

- **Speakers offered different perspectives on investment and timing.** Some comments emphasized the economic opportunity associated with data centers and the importance of establishing clear rules promptly. Others emphasized community trust, meaningful participation, and protections for residents.

Follow-ups raised during the discussion

- **Public information**: Consolidate recordings and documents on the City Council's P&Z Committee Hearings webpage.
- **Siting and neighborhood protections**: Continue DPD's review of existing zoning and potential locations. Residents requested maps and clarification about available land.
- **Community benefits:** Continue discussing resident participation, investment and ownership ideas, contribution levels, and questions about state authority. |

- **Continuing oversight**: Councilman Warren proposed planning staff updates approximately every two weeks as recommendations develop.

What comes next?
The **Thursday, October 29** session will focus on community benefits and continued discussion of outstanding questions. Community input from October 26 will help inform that conversation as Council continues reviewing proposed protections and benefit arrangements.
The Final Session on Data Center Legislation is scheduled for Monday, November 9th.

All sessions are scheduled for **1:00–3:00 p.m. in the Council Committee Room, 5th Floor, City Hall**. The public may attend in person or watch online at https://memphistn.gov/watch-city-council-meetings/.

Questions may be sent to **jia.robinson@memphistn.gov**.