Ralls County Planning and Zoning Meeting Minutes

Meeting Information

Date: September 30, 2026
Location: Ralls County Courthouse
Purpose: To discuss possible county regulations and safeguards for data centers and to receive public questions and suggestions. No data-center rezoning application was pending, and no final data-center ordinance or project approval was considered.

Officials and Board Members Identified

Shane McClelland, Director of Planning and Zoning; John Lake, Presiding Commissioner; Junior Muehring, Eastern District Commissioner; John Wieczorek, Western District Commissioner; Planning and Zoning Board members David Locke, Glen Wiley, David Talbott, Lowell Jackson, and Jeff Thompson. John Robison and Caleb Thompson were absent. It was noted that Ryan Flynn, board member for the Saverton area, had resigned on September 29, 2026. The meeting also included county officials, legal counsel, and members of the public.

Call to Order and Opening

The meeting opened with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. McClelland introduced the county commissioners and Planning and Zoning Board members.

Approval of Prior Minutes

The minutes of the May 13, 2026, meeting concerning E&K Properties LLC were read. Junior Muehring made a motion to approve the minutes, and John Wieczorek seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

Planning and Zoning Process

Mr. McClelland reviewed the county rezoning process. An applicant submits an application identifying the property and proposed use; owners within 1,000 feet are notified; the Planning and Zoning Board conducts a public meeting and makes a recommendation; and the County Commission makes the final decision at a subsequent meeting. He stated that, as of the close of business that day, no application had been submitted to rezone property for a data center.

The meeting was described as an informational work session. Attendees were asked to submit legible written questions and suggestions, with names included, so officials could research and respond at the next meeting.

Moratorium and Regulatory Review

Officials explained that the county moratorium was intended to provide time to develop rules and regulations for data centers and other affected developments. The moratorium had also delayed an unrelated solar project. The Board emphasized that all regulations should apply countywide and to future applicants, not solely to one potential project.

Discussion included whether a data center would require rezoning or a conditional use permit. Counsel explained that a conditional use permit would require a site plan and would authorize only the use and development shown on the approved plan. Material expansion or changes would require further review. The county may process and approve or deny an application under its ordinances and may impose appropriate conditions.

Potential Project and Revenue Information

County officials reported that they had limited preliminary discussions with a developer but had no final plans, application, or firm project details. The potential project discussed was approximately 30 megawatts, with a possible building footprint of about 10 acres within a larger parcel; these details were preliminary and not an approved proposal.

The County Assessor presented preliminary, conservative estimates of possible tax revenue from real estate and business personal property. The estimates were expressly described as subject to change based on construction, equipment, depreciation, ownership, use, and any state-authorized incentives. The Assessor stated that no county-level abatement was being proposed.

Public Discussion and Concerns

Members of the public and officials discussed the following subjects:

- Water demand, closed-loop cooling, groundwater protection, runoff, possible contamination, and baseline well testing.
- Noise, air emissions, backup generators, environmental effects, setbacks, buffers, and impacts on nearby agricultural land and residences.
- Electric capacity, utility infrastructure, possible effects on residential rates, and responsibility for upgrading costs.
- Potential employment, ownership changes, future expansion, transfer of permits, and long-term enforcement.
- Tax revenue, depreciation of business personal property, possible state incentives, and protection of school and local-government revenue.
- Independent environmental, engineering, health, and utility studies paid for by an applicant but performed by qualified independent professionals.
- Inspection requirements, annual compliance reviews, enforcement authority, permit fees, and whether specialized inspectors would be needed.
- Decommissioning requirements, financial security or bonding, and responsibility for cleanup if a facility closes or becomes obsolete.
- Whether data centers should be limited to industrial districts or allowed by conditional use permit in agricultural districts.
- Public access, meeting schedules, written public input, and whether future meetings could be held on a night other than Wednesday.

Officials repeatedly stated that no project was a "done deal," that no application had been filed, and that public input would be used to develop appropriate safeguards.

Developer and Counsel Comments

Representatives associated with a possible project stated that they were willing to provide a conceptual site plan and discuss setbacks, water use, electric service, independent studies, and other conditions. They indicated that ownership could include partners or future users, but any successor would remain subject to applicable permit conditions. They also stated that the location was being considered in part because of nearby electric infrastructure.

Decisions and Formal Action

No data-center ordinance, rezoning, conditional use permit, site plan, tax incentive, or project approval was adopted. Other than approval of the prior meeting minutes, the session was informational and no final action on a data-center proposal was taken.

Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting was announced for October 14, 2026. The meeting concluded after final questions and thanks to attendees.

Approval of Minutes

Date Approved: 14 OCT 2026

Motion Made By: Lowell Jackson

Seconded By: David Lochhe