

As advertised in the Journal Herald, the Packer Township Supervisors held a special meeting on Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at the township building. Bob Selert called the meeting to order and roll call was taken. All were present.

Ordinances and Resolutions – Susie Gerhard made a motion to ratify sending a proposed zoning ordinance amendment to the Carbon County Planning Commission and the Packer Township Planning Commission for review and comments. Terry Davis seconded the motion and Bob Selert agreed. Vote 3-0

The meeting was opened to the floor. Michelle Davis asked if anyone from Doyle Heffley’s office was present. There was not. Sharlene Bittner talked about a conversation she had with Rep. Heffley. Dan Dargay asked what a zoning overlay was. Bob explained that the Supervisors are doing a zoning amendment with restrictions. Northpoint has proposed a data overlay. They want the township to allow this with fewer restrictions. We can turn that down. If we do not do the process started by allowing data centers in I-1 they can ask for a curative amendment. When they ask for a curative amendment they can ask for language that we do not want. If we turn a curative amendment down they can appeal in county court. There is so much case law that when municipalities do not allow the curative amendment for a certain activity, the municipalities lose.

Ginny Kerslake of Chester County with nonprofit Food & Water Watch spoke. Over the last decade Food & Water Watch has done a lot of municipal ordinance work to protect the communities in Pennsylvania. She provided a copy of the Food & Water Watch ordinance pertaining to data centers which is very similar to the Penn Futures model ordinance. She talked about protections in the ordinance such as conditional use, setbacks and decommissioning.

John Zola of Sugarloaf spoke to the reason for the ordinance and putting in as much restrictions as possible. Sugarloaf chose to not allow the citizen to have any input as far as zoning upgrades. Bob commented regarding the approximately 100 people in attendance. The Supervisors understand where they stand on the topic. Mr. Zola continued to discuss his fight with PPL and the issues with data centers which require a lot of electricity, leading to running new lines close to people’s homes and in their yards. He told the resident to remain diligent that the transmission lines are not going to destroy the people’s lives, ruin properties, expose you to harmful electric magnetic fields (EMF) and PPL will tell you it won’t hurt you. He also cautions about Loudoun County, Virginia. It started with 1 data center and is now referred to as data center alley. It is proven 1 turns to 10. Jason Venne adds that it is proposed 1 million square feet, 18 buildings, about 1000 acres. Mr. Zola continued to speak of a data center that Northpoint is doing in Humbolt North, which butts up against Sugarloaf’s industrial zone, the township is dealing with a curative amendment because they weren’t prepared. Another will be put at this end of the Sugarloaf industrial area. He talks about other existing and proposed data centers including in West Hazleton and Dorrance. You lose your trees and deer, animals will be displaced. The residents will pay for the new transmission lines. He discusses the recent and future electric bills. His research shows electric will go up 35% to 65%. Mr. Venne added that Loudoun County bills are up 600%. He encourages the residents to stay involved. Don’t be afraid to call you Representatives and remember their stances on Election Day. He also touched on proposed bills that would take the power out of the hands of the local officials. The bills are SB 939 and HB 502.

Ms. Kerslake spoke again with examples of data centers that have applied to PPL with their requests for power which is 5.5 GW. One GW powers 1 million homes. There are 5 million homes in Pennsylvania. Energy costs will go up. She spoke of the water demand, jobs and the impact on resident during construction. Permanent jobs created will be very small even if given to locals. She talked about a data center constructed in Chester County. The fiscal impact study from the developer says it will create just 30 full time jobs. You will have all of the harms and no benefits from it. She spoke of SB 939 and HB 502 and is glad word is getting out. Even if the state reps seem to be onboard with the data centers they answer to the residents. They are up for election and half of the state senators are also up for election in 2026. She urges residents to call them and tell them to vote no on these bills. It is possible that the representatives and senators are not aware of the bills because they are so early in the process but keep calling them. If your district office is close by stop in. She provided flyers that Food & Water Watch prepared.

Andy Sanko of Sugarloaf Township urged those in attended to take action and stick together. He spoke of the curative amendment in Sugarloaf and how it takes the decision making power away from the local

government. We are a Commonwealth and that means local control. SB 939 HB 502 takes the power away from local government. In 2022 Google put out a report that they used 5.6 billion gallons of water to cool their data centers. He mentions that data center companies have been known to drill illegal well which will impact the residents, their children, grandchildren and neighbors. The website started by Sugarloaf residents, alliancetostoptheline.com has a link to follow them on Facebook. Reading showed EMFs 250 yards in any direction under a 500kV line in Dorrance. This will have effects on residents. PPL has about 50,000 miles of electrical wires, many of which don't carry power and PPL won't tell which do and which don't. On the 12 mile transmission line they are trying to run from the Susquahanna power plant to Humbolt, they have 2 switch stations proposed. Talon Energy does not produce enough power for the 500kV lines. Emily Forlini with PC Mag did an article on this and the distrust and underhandedness of PPL. He spoke about Loudoun County, VA and the data center park which is 15 sq. miles, 144 buildings with a proposed 122 additional buildings. The data centers proposed in Sugarloaf and Hazle Township is 21 sq. miles. Besides the water needed to cool data centers, the heat coming out of them is like a volcano in that when a storm comes in, rain or snow, it splits because of the heat. They have not seen rain or snow in Loudoun County in years. Everything is dead. Little League baseball players play on a field surrounded by data centers. People cannot go to a cemetery to mourn the dead with constant humming and clicking and the generators running. They will say the generators will run for 4 hours and shut off but they won't tell you that one generator will run for 4 hours and another for a different 4 hours and so on. You have to pay attention to the fine print. He applauds the Supervisors for involving the residents because he feels the Sugarloaf Supervisors keeps its residents in the dark. Make sure you fully trust your attorney and work with people who have your best interest in mind because that is not happening in Sugarloaf Township. If you ban together you can stop the onslaught. They won't be stopped completely but you can put the right parameters in and the rules that have to be played by. Just like they partnered with Dorrance they will partner with Packer because there is strength in numbers.

Robert Bryan spoke of EMFs being radiation. It is the only form of radiation that humans allow themselves to be exposed to. If you hear of radiation anywhere else it becomes a big concern. If there is any way to stop the lines that is how the data centers will be stopped. He talks of the movie Distinguished Gentleman in regards to negative impacts of EMFs. You should not be in any line of sight of something that is putting out that much electricity. If you can see a data center or a power line you are being poisoned. He points to why you are not supposed to sleep with your cell phone near your bed or use ear buds, because of the EMFs. If they install a power line you should immediately move.

Tom Russell asks a question about conditional use. Is there any reason once the zoning amendment is in place, that we have to give them a zoning overlay under conditional use? If industrial is shored up now with an amendment, before HB 502 and SB 939 are enacted the township will be in a better position. Whatever is offered, make sure it is in writing. He thanks the Supervisors for their service and believes the people of the township can make a difference.

Old Business – Waiting to hear back from the County on the ADA ramp.

New Business – Stephanie gathered three quotes that ranged from \$1500-\$3500 for a mass communication system. She also looked into another company that would allow the township to send text and emails only. With Project Broadband, the cost would be \$84 a year plus cost of credits per use. For example, 500 credits can be purchased for \$25. Each text is one credit, 20 emails can be sent for 1 credit. This service will not work with landlines but with most residents having cell phones, a short list of landlines can be called directly.

Bob Selert made a motion to sign and approve the checks drafted. Susie Gerhard seconded the motion and Terry Davis agreed. Vote 3-0

Bob Selert made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Susie Gerhard seconded the motion. Terry Davis agreed. Vote 3-0

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m. Approximately 100 residents attended the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Stephanie Stolpe, Packer Township Secretary/Treasurer