

**VERNON TOWNSHIP LAND USE BOARD
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
June 10, 2026**

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Theobald at 7:00 p.m.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE:

Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, adequate notice of this Regular Meeting has been provided to the public and the press on February 3, 2026, by delivering to the press such notice and posting same at the Municipal Building.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chairman Theobald led the assemblage of the Flag.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Anthony Rossi	P
Natalie Buccieri	NP
Councilmember William Higgins	P
Martin Theobald	P
Richard Spoerl	P
Willard McPeck	P
Andrea Cocula	P
Michael Whitaker	P
Paul Mele	P
Jodi White-Bearstler Alt #1	P
Mark Vizzini Alt #2	NP
Marissa-Groenendaal-Poteete Alt #3	P
Richard Wengenroth Alt #4	P

Also Present:

Steve Tombalakian, Board Attorney
Jessica Caldwell, Board Planner
Kimberley Decker, Board Secretary

Chairman Theobald stated that Ms. Bucceri notified the Board of her absence.

LAND USE BOARD DISCUSSION ITEMS (ACTION MAY OR MAY NOT BE TAKEN)

➤ **ORDINANCE #26-11 – ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 330 OF THE TOWNSHIP CODE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF VERNON TO DEFINE AND PROHIBIT “DATA CENTERS.”**

Board Planner, Ms. Caldwell, explained that proposed Ordinance#26-11 referred by the Township Council defines and prohibits data centers within Vernon Township. The Land Use Board must review to see if the Ordinance is consistent with the Township’s Land Use Element of the Master Plan which was updated in 2010 and reexamined in 2022 as well as the Highlands Master Plan Element. After review of the Ordinance, Ms. Caldwell finds it is not inconsistent with goals and objectives of the Township’s Master Plan which include achieving balance between development and preservation of natural resources; fostering sense of identity of open spaces, tourism, and recreation; providing economic development in locations so natural resources are protected. She added original Ordinance was amended to not prohibit smaller accessory use data centers such as those in banks and hospitals. Board questioned why ordinance is necessary as there are already protections of development and natural resources in the Township code and if Ordinance can be amended at later time should Township feel it was needed. Ms. Caldwell added should this Ordinance be adopted as written, amendments can be made later should governing body feel the necessity of needed changes or have further information on potential impacts of noise, energy or water usage. Mayor Rossi commented that data centers are not noisy unless generators are on due to power

outage, outright ban is extremely broad and added that no entity has approached the Township as of yet with a mega data center proposal.

Ms. Caldwell added Vernon Township is limited as to parcels large enough for a mega data center due to restraints from wetlands, steep slopes or preservation. Advantages include increase in tax rates but with small amount of long-term job growth. Mr. Higgins noted the recent residential uproar in Andover against development of a 500,000 sq. ft. Data Center was due to potential high energy and water use. Board members felt Ordinance is extremely broad and recommended Council research more prior to approving.

Attorney Tombalakian noted role of Land Use Board is to determine if proposed Ordinance is consistent with the Master Plan. Board Members agreed Ordinance #26-11 is not inconsistent with the Master Plan and with recommendation that Ordinance as written is overly broad and more review by the Township is needed.

Chairman Theobald opened the Ordinance #26-11 to the public.

Adam, Congressman candidate, commented to be proactive on environmental standards with construction of data centers but Chairman Theobald explained his comments were better to be brought to the governing body.

Robert Hopkins, Columbia NJ, as member of carpenter's union, offered Board Members invitation to tour data center facilities to educate oneself on construction, operations and potential impacts to address any concerns about any future development of data centers.

Seeing no one further wishing to come forward, Chairman Theobald closed the meeting to the public.

Mr. Spoerl made a motion to forward Recommendation to the Township Council that Ordinance#26-11 is not inconsistent with the Master Plan which was seconded by Mr. Whitaker.

ROLL CALL: ROSSI: Y; HIGGINS: Y; SPOERL: Y; MCPEEK: Y; COCULA: Abstain;
WHITAKER: Y; MELE: Y; WHITE- BEARSTLER: Y; THEOBALD: Y.

Motion Passed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Chairman Theobald opened the meeting to the Public. Seeing no one wishing to come forward, Meeting was closed.

MINUTES

- **MAY 13, 2026 – REGULAR MEETING MINUTES (BUCCIERI, HIGGINS, SPOERL, COCULA, WHITAKER, BEARSTLER, POTEETE, WENGENROTH, THEOBALD)**

Motion: A motion to approve Regular Minutes of May 13, 2026 was made by Ms. Cocula and was seconded by Ms. White-Bearstler. All Eligible Members voted in Favor. Motion Passed

APPENDIX A – ESCROWS, BOARD FEES, BOND REDUCTIONS AND ESCROW CLOSURE

ESCROWS, BOARD FEES AND BOND REDUCTIONS

A. BOARD FEES

- 1. BOARD ATTORNEY – GLENN KIENZ, WEINER LAW GROUP LLP**
 - **LAND USE BOARD BUSINESS – SERVICES THROUGH 4/9/26 (\$162.00)**
 - **WIRELESS EDGE TOWERS – LU# 4-26-5 – SERVICES THROUGH 4/27/26 (\$45.00)**
 - **RED HAND LLC – LU# 2-25-1 – SERVICES THROUGH 4/9/26 (\$198.00)**
 - **MOUNTAIN CREEK RESORT – PB# 2-91-4 – SERVICES THROUGH 4/20/26 (\$22.50)**
- 2. BOARD PLANNER – JESSICA CALDWELL, J. CALDWELL & ASSOCIATES**
 - **LAND USE BOARD BUSINESS – (\$0)**
- 3. BOARD ENGINEER – CORY STONER, HAROLD E. PELLOW & ASSOCIATES**
 - **LAND USE BOARD BUSINESS – SERVICES THROUGH (\$0)**
 - **MOUNTAIN CREEK – PB# 2-91-4 – SERVICES THROUGH 4/29/26 (\$69.00)**
 - **WAHEGURU GAS -LU# 3-22-2 – SERVICES THROUGH 4/21/26 (\$510.00)**
 - **SUSSEX CULTIVATION – LU#2-23-4 – SERVICES THROUGH 4/28/26 (\$300.00)**
 - **BOHO REALTY – LU# 2-23-3 – SERVICES THROUGH 4/23/26 (\$156.25)**
 - **7 PRICES SWITCH – LU#7-24-5 – SERVICES THROUGH 4/17/26 (\$745.50)**
- 4. BOARD RECORDING SECRETARY – IRENE MILLS (\$100.00)**

Motion: A motion to Approve all Board Fees was made by Mr. Mele and was seconded by Mr. McPeck. All Members voted in Favor. Motion Passed

ADJOURNMENT

Having no more board business, a motion was made to adjourn the Regular meeting by Mr. Whitaker and was seconded by Ms. White- Bearstler. All members were in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Irene Mills, Recording Secretary