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WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026



Lancaster County Council members listen to Ben Johnson, a representative of CF Smith Group, during his request to postpone an ordinance reading.

Rezoning hearing pushed back again

BY ANDREW WRIGHT
REPORTER

The rezoning of 71.1 acres in the Indian Land area has once again been delayed.

Item 8a. on Monday's agenda was Ordinance 2026-2012, which was the following ordinance:

"An ordinance to amend the official zoning map of Lancaster County to rezone approximately 71.1 acres, which is located at Charlotte Highway and Laurel Hill Road, from the Low Density Residential (LDR) District to the Regional Business (RB) District."

The first reading of the ordinance took place all the way back on Feb. 9. CEO of the Smith Group Neil Robinette presented the newer plans for the 71.1 acres if rezoned at first reading and laid it out before the Council members.

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Neighboring counties taking action on data centers

BY TRAVIS JENKINS
EDITOR

There are no present plans for data centers to be located in neighboring Chester and Chesterfield Counties and there likely will not be given recent actions by their county councils.

At last week's meeting of

Chester County Council, Planning Director Jeremy Ward brought forward a pair of ordinances dealing with the structures. A data center is a physical facility that houses the entire IT infrastructure of a large company or organization. The usually large facilities can contain acres of servers, storage

systems, networking equipment and other related items. They have begun to spring up across South Carolina in areas like Berkeley, Dorchester, Charleston, Spartanburg, Rock Hill and others locales. They have become controversial

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Recommended budget is major increase

BY ANDREW WRIGHT
REPORTER

Lancaster County Council got its first look at the proposed budget for the coming fiscal year on Wednesday, a budget set to grow drastically over the present one.

Council met with the budget department and interim County Administrator Steve Willis at a special called budget meeting. Wednesday. The starting point for a new budget is often

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Council rejects resolution for Conditional Use Permit for Mosque

BY ANDREW WRIGHT
REPORTER

At Monday's County Council meeting, The Lancaster County Council rejected a resolution that would have allowed a conditional use permit for a mosque to be constructed and opened in the Indian Land area.

The resolution would have allowed a conditional use on a five-acre parcel on Harrisburg Road, on which a home presently sits, to be used as a "place of assembly." Specifically, the plan by the applicants would have eventually seen it used as a Muslim house of worship. The use is allowed if a special variance is granted though the area is zoned for low-density residential. The Lancaster County Technical

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Sophie and Winston Walker, the founders of the Make A Splash Foundation.

From sibling bond to lifesaving beyond Indian Land twins found nonprofit

BY ANDREW WRIGHT
REPORTER

It's not often that two teenagers have the thoughts and ideas to found a nonprofit organization. It's even more rare that the two teenagers that team up to do it are twins.

Sophie and Winston Walker are twins that attend Indian Land High School. Along with being outstanding students at ILHS, the Walker twins founded the "Make A Splash Foundation," a nonprofit organization that focuses on helping underprivileged children learn how to swim. The twins realized the importance of swimming lessons for people of all ages and wanted to provide that service in a caring way.

We've both been competitive swimmers for years, and we also work as lifeguards, so we've seen how important swimming lessons really are. We learned about the drowning

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TWINS

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statistics especially in our state and how many families cannot afford swim lessons. That really made us think because swimming is such an important life skill, not just a sport. We started talking to our parents about how we could actually help in our own community instead of just talking about the problem. So, we came up with the idea of creating a nonprofit and our parents guided us how to provide swim scholarships for kids who otherwise wouldn't have access to lessons. What's been really cool is seeing how many people in the community wanted to support the idea once they heard about it. At the end of the day, we just wanted to use something we love to make a difference for other kids and could literally save lives someday."

"Not only did their urge to help others come from their background of swimming and working as lifeguards, but the Walker twins also got inspiration from their home church, Transformation Church Indian Land.

"Although we are only teenagers, we knew we can do something in our own community right now. Just like our church, Transformation Church Indian Land, we saw how they help the community and we wanted to do something similar in our own way."

"Local Historic Paradise Foundation run by Danielle Redmond. Sophie and Winston are hopeful that people will continue to donate to their foundation, so they are able to provide many more scholarships to those in need.

"We'd love for people to support



Sophie and Winston are presented with a gift bag due to their outstanding work done in the community.



Sophie shows one of the gifts given to her and Winston.

what we're doing. Every donation, no matter the size, helps another kid get access to swim lessons and learn skills that

could one day save their life." To make a donation to the Make A Splash Foundation, visit www.make-a-splash.org.

DATA

FROM PAGE A1

because they use immense amounts of power and other resources (which can lead to higher electricity bills for residents), there are often complaints of noise and despite their size, and they often don't provide a lot of jobs.

Ward noted at the outset there have been no applications to build a data center in the County but that the Council and administration had urged a proactive approach on these types of matters. Ward noted that industrial growth is in line with the wishes of citizens to increase the tax base overall.

"But they also highly value our rural lifestyle. You can't put a dollar sign on quality of life, on peace and quiet or being able to see the stars at night," he said.

"So, the first step, he said, would be to require data centers to go in the most restrictive zoning classification Chester County has, that being ID-3, which is where utilities and some industries must currently locate. He also mentioned that there are only a handful of sites in the County that are actually designated as ID-3. So, any plans for a data center would likely require rezoning, which would

allow Chester County Council to solely decide whether or not to allow such a rezoning.

The next step would be to put in place a number of supplemental regulations. Data centers would have to maintain a minimum of a 500-foot buffer between it and any commercial property and 1,000 feet of buffer from the property line of any residential property. The buffer must either be completely filler with trees or have trees and a berm added.

There would also be restrictions on water use, noise, the height of the building and other related matters. Ward called it the most intricate document he had crafted and said he reached out to a number of other counties and experts in the field before beginning work on it.

Both of his proposals were passed unanimously.

Two weeks ago, Chesterfield County Council took action on data centers, but chose a different tact in the form of an outright moratorium.

It was noted, however, that now only does the County not have an ordinance of any kind dealing with data centers, no County code even defines what one is.

County Attorney Coleman Bryant said the moratorium ordinance was proposed by Code Enforcement Director Derrick Outen and

Councilman Donald Kirkley. Specifically, it would place a moratorium on data centers locating in Chesterfield County until January 1, 2028. The measure is not just stall, however, as work has to be done on the County's part between now and then. A study will be done on the impact of data centers, including what having one locate in Chesterfield County would mean for infrastructure. Regulatory measures taken in regards to data centers by other areas would also be studied. A presentation would ultimately be delivered to Council.

Councilman Douglas Curtis said he believed the pause would be beneficial. "We need to slow down the process...a lot of places in South Carolina and North Carolina got ahead of themselves," he said. The reading two weeks ago was actually the second go-round and it passed unanimously. Third and final reading could be held this month.

The Lancaster News reached out to Lancaster County about the status of data centers. Interim Administrator Steve Willis said it had not been discussed since he ascended to his present role in the last few months, but said "I understand this is on the UDO Committee's radar for potential discussion."

AGAIN

FROM PAGE A1

He showed some of the developments the company has undertaken over the years. He noted the company's long history, the 200-plus clients and the millions of square feet developed. Ultimately, first reading was passed by a vote of 5-2, with councilmen Jose Luis and Stuart Graham being in opposition of the rezoning.

Second reading was scheduled for Feb. 23, but it has been postponed for the past couple of months due to a recommendation from councilmember Luis for Council to slow down and take their time to evaluate all the plans laid out from the group.

Fast forward to Monday and the second reading of the ordinance was

scheduled to take place. At Monday's meeting, Ben Johnson, a representative of the Smith group asked Council to once again postpone the reading of second ordinance for another 60 days.

The request from Johnson was due to a lack of resolution between the Smith group and the property to the north of the proposed rezoning area. Johnson told Council that he and the Smith group were "very optimistic" that with another 60 days, the two sides would meet a resolution, and the Smith group could return to Council in July fully prepared for second reading of the ordinance.

Before the final vote to postpone second reading, councilmember Luis reiterated a stance he's taken several times. He was strongly against the postponement for another 60 days and

overall, against the rezoning entirely.

"I would like to just reiterate again, we do not have the infrastructure to support this project," he said. "We don't have the expertise or skills that I believe are needed for a project like this. I do not believe that this project should go forward. I think we're just kicking the can down the road. If Council feels like we need to move this 60 days again, I guess we can do that, but I'm not seeing anything that's going to change my mind as to the fundamental issues of this project."

The vote to postpone second reading another 60 days was ultimately passed 6-1, with the lone opposition coming from councilman Luis. Councilman Graham had a bit of pushback on the request from the applicant, but did vote in favor of the postponement.

I am warning you ...

It's an embarrassing admission, but my car smells.

When you don't have trash pickup where you live and have to carry it off yourself, when you have two large dogs that have to be taxied around to the vet and groomer, when you have a kid (just in general) and when you yourself are basically a sloppy farm animal that eats at least one meal a day in the car, that is going to happen.

So, the other day I did some vacuuming, some spraying and even bought some orange-scented wipes for the dashboard. As I glanced at the container holding the wipes, I noticed a warning.

"Do not use for personal hygiene."

I'm sorry, what? Every time I see a warning like that, it dawns on me that it is there for a reason. That means at some point in time, some doofus was cleaning his car interior and said to himself "You know, Darlene is partial to the smell of citrus, so if I rub myself with these, she'll be on me like stink on Travis's car."

Or worse yet, maybe summer was coming up and the doofus thought "You know what would really make me stand out from all the other fellows at the beach would be super shiny legs. These wipes make my steering wheel gleam, so why don't I..."

Because it has weird chemicals in it and was made to remove grease and bad smells from car interiors? I mean, I'm not a doctor or a scientist, but that seems like a bad idea to me.

That isn't the only seemingly unnecessary warning label I have encountered lately. There I was, minding my own business, applying some deodorant when I glanced at the label and noticed the warning "not for

intimate use." Now, I have made some rather sophomoric, bawdy references in this column and even I'm afraid to "go there" with this... although the label was probably necessary because someone wasn't afraid to go there. OK, I'm moving on, enough of that one.

I've never seen this one myself, but apparently there is or was at one time a warning on bottles of dog shampoo urging you not to use it as fish food. That sounds ridiculous but again IT IS THERE FOR A REASON.

"Honey, did you feed the fish and walk the dog like I asked you to?"

"Oh, check this out honey, I totally killed two birds with one stone on that one and washed the dog in the fish tank. Actually I mis-spoke there... I actually two fish, but yeah, the dog is clean."

Some computer company has a warning that the mouse should not be swung around by its cord or thrown at other people. Well, whoever wrote that nonsense never had to work with the nerve-wracking so-and-sos that I do. A mouse to the face every once in a while keeps folks in line. All this stuff, man...SOMEBODY DID IT AT SOME POINT AND SUED THE COMPANY and so they have to cover themselves legally.

That's why a brand of curling iron has a warning that it is for external use only (I do not want to know details on that one), Silly Putty encourages you not to use their product as an earplug and urinal cakes let you know the product is not edible somewhere on the package. I am not touching one of those, much less putting it in my mouth. Man, I'd rather sit and smell my stinky car than do that.



TRAVIS JENKINS

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