Questions to ask about a proposed data center

Pick two or three. Make them about your road, your well, your house. Ask for answers in writing.

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The basics

- ▢ Who is the applicant, and who will own and run the building?
- ▢ What exactly is being asked for: rezoning, a permit, a site plan, annexation?
- ▢ How many buildings and how many megawatts, at first and at full build?
- ▢ What other approvals does the project still need, and from whom?
- ▢ Where can I read the full application and the staff report?

Noise

- ▢ Is there a sound study, and may I have a copy?
- ▢ What sound level is predicted at the nearest home at night, at full load?
- ▢ Does the study cover low-frequency sound?
- ▢ Is the sound limit a written condition of approval? Who measures it, and what is the penalty?
- ▢ When are the backup generators tested, and for how long?

Water

- ▢ How many gallons of water a day, on average and on the hottest day?
- ▢ Where does the water come from, and is there a cap in the service agreement?
- ▢ Where does the wastewater go?
- ▢ Who pays for new water or sewer lines?

Power and bills

- ▢ Which utility will serve the site, and with how many megawatts?
- ▢ Is there a special rate or contract for this customer, and has the utility commission approved it?
- ▢ Who pays for new lines, substations or power plants if the project is delayed or cancelled?
- ▢ How many backup generators, what fuel, and which air permit covers them?

Traffic

- ▢ Is there a traffic study that covers the construction years?
- ▢ What is the haul route, and is it written into the approval?
- ▢ What hours may trucks run? Are school hours excluded?
- ▢ Who repairs the roads afterward, and is there a bond?

Taxes and jobs

- ▢ Which taxes are reduced, by how much, and for how many years?
- ▢ What will the school district receive each year, and is it guaranteed?
- ▢ How many permanent jobs are required, and by what date?
- ▢ Is there a clawback if the jobs or investment do not arrive?
- ▢ Were the revenue and job numbers checked by anyone independent?

The land

- ▢ How far will the nearest building and equipment be from the nearest home?
- ▢ What berm, trees or wall is required, and how tall?
- ▢ What are the limits on lighting at night?
- ▢ How will stormwater be handled, and who inspects it?

Enforcement and the end

- ▢ For each promise, where is it written and who enforces it?
- ▢ What happens if a condition is broken? What is the penalty?

- ☐ Do the conditions still apply if the site is sold?
- ☐ If the project is never finished or closes, who removes the buildings? Is there a bond?

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