

BUTLER COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

February 25, 2026

A public hearing of the Planning Commission of Butler County, Nebraska, was held on the 25th day of February 2026 at the Butler County Highway Building in David City, Nebraska, at 6:00 p.m. Present were the following: Roger Topil, Kevin Hotovy, Devin Jakub, Will Reiter, John Kobza, Jesse Hough, Steve Barlean.

Notice of the public hearing was given in advance thereof by publication, a designated method for giving notice, as shown by the Proof of Publication attached to the minutes. Notice of this public hearing was given to all members of the Planning Commission. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to all members of the Planning Commission of this hearing. All proceedings shown hereafter were taken while the convened hearing was open to the attendance of the public.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present. Chairman Roger Topil opened the public hearing and announced that a complete copy of the Open Meetings Act is posted in the meeting room. Moved by Reiter, seconded by Jakub, to approve the minutes from the last meeting. All ayes; motion carried.

Chairman Roger Topil stated that the purpose of the hearing was to allow members of the public to speak for or against a possible moratorium on specific types of land development during the comprehensive planning process. He announced that those wishing to speak would be allowed four (4) minutes each. Public comments were made by the following individuals:

Dan Schmid, Dwight, reminded Planning Commission members to consider short-term and long-term effects of their actions and that they are tasked with looking out for everyone. He voiced support for a moratorium on large commercial/industrial projects, particularly wind and solar, citing concerns about grid instability and environmental impacts.

Jen Frasher, Surprise, encouraged a moratorium on solar, wind, data centers, and CAFOs, and urged Planning Commission members to prioritize community interests over personal interests.

Mike Ebel, Columbus, owns property in Butler County. He questioned the need for a moratorium, suggesting the Planning Commission should focus on completing the comprehensive plan instead.

Joe Peterson, Bellwood, an environmental engineer, expressed concerns about commercial wind farms (noise, shadows), solar farms (inefficiency), data centers, and battery storage centers (water consumption, noise).

Elijah Frasher, Surprise, expressed support for a moratorium to pause development while property regulations are created. He noted that Butler County is enticing to developers because we have no rules. He urged Planning Commissioners to follow the suggestions of the planners (Hanna:Keelan), as they are the experts.

Patrick Meysenburg, David City, opposed the moratorium, noting it was not part of the original comprehensive planning timeline provided by the planners.

Robert Kobza, Bellwood, strongly opposed the moratorium, stating it would deter growth and that the planning process is already behind schedule. He also stated that his survey and comments were not included in the survey results.

Jessie Perry, Rising City, supported a moratorium to slow things down and allow for proper conversation about future development. He expressed appreciation for the Planning Commission's work.

Jonathan Leo, Omaha, a retired land use attorney, commended the Planning Commission on their progress so far. It is difficult for a planner to come into a county with no previous zoning. He expressed support for a moratorium as a standard planning procedure to "level the playing field." He urged Planning Commission members to recommend a moratorium to the County Board to allow the consultants to finally do what they were hired for.

Sam Barlean, David City, noted that he never used to like the idea of zoning and did not like the idea of anyone telling him what he could or could not do with his own property, but he has since changed his mind. He supported slowing things down, sharing personal experience with chicken houses being built near his property.

Bruce Bostelman, Brainard, reminded everyone that a moratorium is only a temporary pause, not a permanent prohibition. He recommended that Planning Commission members listen to the planner and reminded them that they are charged with land use planning for the health, welfare, and safety of Butler County residents. He cited the Republican River contract and how they would not have had an over-appropriation of wells if a moratorium had been imposed.

Edmund Hein, Ulysses, said he was surprised to learn that Butler County is one of only 2-3 counties in the state without zoning, making it attractive to large commercial developers. Zoning is needed to stop the commercial/large projects from coming in.

Jeff Eller, David City, expressed concern about potential impacts on his new pumpkin patch business if large operations such as chicken barns were built nearby. Coming back home five years ago was a dream come true and he wants more families to have that opportunity if they wish; large development like chicken barns would put a stop to that.

No other public comments were made. Chairman Topil closed the public hearing at 6:43 p.m.

Lori Aschoff
County Clerk

Roger Topil
Planning Commission Chairman