

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Date: July 14, 2026

9:00 a.m.

Place: Commissioners Room, Courthouse, Caledonia, MN

Members Present:

Cindy Wright, Kurt Zehnder, Robert Schuldt, and Greg Myhre

Others Present:

The Caledonia Argus Associate Editor Kaita Gorsuch, Finance Director Carol Lapham, Coordinator Brent Parker, EDA Director & Coordinator Support Allison Wagner, Interim Attorney Suzanne Bublitz, Interim Recorder Michelle Werner, Assessor Luke Onstad, Environmental Services Director Amelia Meiners, City of Caledonia Clerk Administrator Jake Dickson, and Todd Lemke

Board Workgroup Session

The board discussed data centers and battery storage facilities with Coordinator Parker, Environmental Services Director Meiners, and Attorney Bublitz. The board discussed the possibility of a moratorium on data centers that could also include things like battery storage facilities. Coordinator Parker said the closest data center being proposed was in Goodhue County. He said many places were considering moratoriums. Commissioner Zehnder asked what the benefit of a data center would be to Houston County residents. Commissioner Myhre said he had heard data centers used a lot of water. Commissioner Wright said it was important to provide definitions. Meiners recommended looking at all alternative energies. She said the County needed to determine if something like a data center would be allowed under the County's current ordinances. She said the State classified data centers as an industrial use. She also said the matter was being looked into at the State level. It was the general consensus of the board to continue researching the matter and find out where the County currently stood.

Resident Todd Lemke and Caledonia Clerk Administrator Jake Dickson spoke to the board about the possibility of future UTV trails in Houston County. Caledonia Clerk Administrator Dickson said the City of Caledonia was interested in being a hub for trails. He said their focus was on recreation instead of transportation. He said there would be economic benefits to UTV trails. Lemke said he had been in contact with the DNR regarding the matter. He said there was a possibility of snowmobile trails becoming UTV trails and trails going through State land and on roads. The trails could be managed by a club similar to snowmobile clubs. Commissioner Schuldt said he had seen a recent push from the DNR to convert snowmobile trails into an ATV structure. He said he was not 100% for that because he didn't want to see the County lose the snowmobile trails. Economic Development Director and Coordinator Support Wagner said UTV trails would be different from snowmobile trails in that they would be open during warmer months and some snowmobile trails went through pastures and fields. She suggested getting additional feedback

from the public on the matter. The Commissioners discussed how different Houston County communities had different rules around UTVs. Commissioner Wright asked about the route and Lemke said his plan was to start with roads where UTVs could already travel and DNR land. Commissioner Zehnder and Myhre said they were in favor of UTV trails in Houston County. No official decisions were made on the matter.

Assessor Onstad said he was working on restructuring his office and that the office needed more help. He asked that the current tech position in the office be turned into a hybrid position. He said it would be a benefit to the office if everyone knew how to do everything. He said since 2020 there had been lots of new changes and regulations. He said his office worked for the County but was governed by the Department of Revenue and the State.

The workgroup session ended at 10:32 a.m.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HOUSTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA

By: _____
Greg Myhre, Chairperson

Attest: _____
Brent Parker, Coordinator