

Planned Unit Development (P.U.D.) Review Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
August 18, 2026, 2:00 PM
460 S. Illinois St., Coal City, IL

Call to order and roll call

Village of Coal City Attorney Mark Heinle called the inaugural meeting of the 2026 P.U.D. Review Committee to order at 2:00 P.M. at Coal City Lions Hall, 460 S. Illinois Street, Coal City, Illinois. Attorney Heinle noted that the meeting was being recorded by video and transcribed by a court stenographer, with all records constituting part of the public administrative record. He reminded all attendees that cross-talk and speaking without recognition were particularly problematic given the presence of the stenographer, and asked that those wishing to speak make themselves visually known to the Chair.

Attorney Heinle explained the general purpose of the P.U.D. Review Committee: it serves as an extra layer of review, required by the Village of Coal City Zoning Code, for planned unit developments greater than ten acres. All members were appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the Village Board. The committee's work product will be a written report delivered to both the applicant and the Village's Plan Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals in advance of formal public hearings. He emphasized the committee's proceedings would almost certainly require more than one public meeting.

Present: Bob Koerner (Claypool Drainage District, Chairman); Doug Boresi (Braceville Township Supervisor); Chris Spencer (Coal City School District Superintendent); Mark Heinle (Village of Coal City Attorney); Darrell Olson (Village of Coal City Director of Public Works); Walt Mahaffay (Village of Coal City Planning and Zoning Board); Matt Fritz (Village of Coal City Administrator); Mike Imhof (Coal City Chief of Police); Kyle Watson (Coal City Building Official); Ed Boik (HR Green, Village Planning Reviewer); Gary Grunauer (Resident); Terry Halliday (Resident); Ryan Hansen (Chamlin & Associates, Village Engineer); Alec Macdonald (Grundy County Economic Development Director) Absent: Bill Stahler (Maine Township Drainage District); Nick Doerfler (Coal City Fire District) A quorum of 14 members present was established. The total committee membership is 16, with a quorum requiring 9 members.

General/Administrative Committee Business

Introductions

Each committee member introduced themselves by name, organizational affiliation, and relevant background. Attorney Heinle noted that the Mayor carefully considered appointing a diverse set of voices to represent not only individual perspectives but also the unique viewpoints of the public bodies and entities each member primarily serves. He further noted that, as a Village of Coal City public body, the committee is subject to the Illinois Open Meetings Act.

Selection of Committee Leadership – Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary

Chair: Attorney Heinle invited nominations for Chair. Member Alec Macdonald nominated Ed Boik to serve as Chair. Village Administrator Matt Fritz seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted.

A motion to appoint Ed Boik as Chair of the P.U.D. Review Committee was made by Member Macdonald and seconded by Fritz. The motion carried 13–0, with the two absent members and Chair-elect Boik not voting.

Vice-Chair: Chair Boik then called for nominations for Vice-Chair. Superintendent Spencer nominated Terry Halliday to serve as Vice-Chair. The motion was seconded.

A motion to appoint Terry Halliday as Vice-Chair of the P.U.D. Review Committee was made by Spencer and seconded by Mahaffay. The motion carried unanimously by all members present and voting, except for Halliday along with the two absent members not voting.

Secretary: Chair Boik called for nominations for Recording Secretary. A motion was made to appoint Matt Fritz as Recording Secretary. The motion was seconded.

A motion to appoint Matt Fritz as Recording Secretary of the P.U.D. Review Committee was made by Halliday and seconded by Watson. The motion carried unanimously by all members present and voting, with the two absent members and Secretary-elect Fritz not voting.

Attorney Heinle described the Recording Secretary's role as preparing and maintaining official meeting minutes, noting attendance, recording votes, and delivering approved minutes to the Village Clerk for central retention as part of the public record.

Adoption of PUD Review Committee Administrative Rules

Village Administrator Fritz explained the draft Administrative Rules were provided to outline procedures for public comment, committee conduct, and the scope and responsibilities of the committee's review. He noted the rules are intended to fill in procedural gaps left by the Village's broadly written zoning code provisions governing P.U.D. committees.

Member Koerner raised a procedural question regarding whether a member, specifically Ed Boik of HR Green, who would be providing technical review on behalf of the Village should also be permitted to vote, noting potential conflict-of-interest concerns and the optics of such an arrangement. Attorney Heinle responded that in his professional opinion no conflict of interest existed, as all members would have access to the same technical information and each would bring distinct expertise. He noted that HR Green's role as a technical reviewer was analogous to the unique expertise other members bring from their respective fields. Member Boik clarified that the committee's role was advisory—it would not be making binding decisions for the Village Board or Plan Commission, but would be assembling a record of findings for subsequent review bodies.

Member Koerner further emphasized the importance of all discussions and communications being conducted on the record, and cautioned against ex parte communications. Attorney Heinle agreed with the principle of avoiding ex parte communications, while noting that if a member had a legal concern about a potential conflict of interest, a private consultation with an attorney would be appropriate, with any outcome disclosed publicly.

A motion to adopt the P.U.D. Review Committee Administrative Rules as written was made by Member Mahaffay and seconded by Imhof. The motion carried, with Member Koerner casting the sole dissenting vote.

Public comment

Chair Boik opened the public comment period and noted that all speakers were required to sign in and print their names for the stenographic record. Speakers were allotted three minutes each, with a thirty-minute aggregate limit. Comments were required to be confined to matters before the committee, specifically the Aligned Data Center development.

Bob Jacovec stated that at a prior public forum, residents had been told that the proposed water line would run down Broadway and extend only halfway to Reed Road. He reported that in the two weeks prior to the meeting, surveyors had been in his front yard on Carbon Hill Road locating utilities, and that one surveyor indicated the work was related to a possible waterline for the data center. He requested an explanation for the survey activity on Carbon Hill Road, which appeared inconsistent with prior representations.

Donna Petty presented detailed technical concerns regarding the application's water use figures, arguing there were material contradictions between Aligned's public marketing narrative and its actual engineering filings. She highlighted what she characterized as a 400% discrepancy in projected daily water use, an unexplained daily water deficit suggesting unacknowledged evaporative processes, fire flow deficiencies under maximum demand scenarios, an incomplete noise study omitting certain mechanical equipment, and a lack of specificity regarding generator emissions specifications. She urged the committee to require complete, independently verified documentation before proceeding further, stating that "the discrepancies are not minor clerical oversights—they are fundamental risks to the community's water, fire, and air quality."

Donald Vilt expressed concern about the location of the proposed data center approximately 2.5 miles from his residence, and asked where discharge from the closed cooling loop system would ultimately be directed. He stated general opposition to the project citing reported pollution, water consumption, and electricity grid impacts associated with data centers in other jurisdictions.

Sue Crawford expressed frustration with what she characterized as a lack of transparency and responsiveness throughout the public process. She questioned why no community vote had been offered and raised concerns about long-term health and environmental effects on children and grandchildren living near the proposed site. She called upon the committee to "do the right thing."

Brittany Lindsey identified herself as a Braidwood resident living approximately two miles from the proposed site. She cited a study from George Mason University identifying long-term health impacts—including respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, adverse reproductive outcomes, and mental health struggles—associated with air, noise, and water pollution from data centers. She urged the committee to consider these impacts on the surrounding community beyond the Village of Coal City.

Tom Crawford made comments raising concerns about the composition of the committee and the proximity of the proposed substation to the roadway. He also questioned whether the community had adequate fire and police infrastructure to support the proposed development. Upon his comments became increasingly informal in tone, Vice Chair Halliday reminded him of the rules of decorum adopted by the committee.

Chair Boik closed the public comment period.

Applicant presentation – Aligned Data Center PUD

Christian Jones of Kimley-Horn and Associates, retained as engineering consultant by Aligned Data Centers, provided a comprehensive overview of all documents and studies included in the PUD application submittal. He summarized each of the following categories of materials: the formal PUD application and annexation application; the PUD narrative and project use narrative; the village annexation narrative; land use exhibits including the combined plan, fire truck turning analysis, tree survey, exhibit and tree survey data form, conceptual landscape and ground cover plans, photometrics exhibit, preliminary construction phasing plan, and conceptual substation site arrangement; improvements design documents including the master planning design and materials palette, Apex footprint options, perimeter fence details, ComEd perimeter fence detail, and fuel tank schematics; off-site improvement concept plans for roadways and utilities; and reports and studies covering utility use, traffic impact analysis, hydrology, geotechnical conditions, wetland delineation, environmental constraints, FERC approval, energy storage system code compliance, hazard mitigation analysis, existing and modeled sound conditions, environmental noise study, and an economic and fiscal contribution report including a property value impact analysis. Additional submittal items included ALTA surveys, a two-lot plat, title commitments, adjacent property owner and school district exhibits, municipal boundary mapping, coal mine maps, and documentation related to the proposed closed-loop cooling system and cleaning solutions.

Doug Boresi leaves meeting at 3:05pm.

Following Mr. Jones's submittal overview, Colton Brown of Aligned Data Centers presented supplemental background information. Mr. Brown described data centers generally as critical, invisible infrastructure underpinning digital life, noting that Aligned distinguishes itself as a long-term developer, owner, and operator—having never sold an existing facility since its founding. He stated that Aligned targets approximately 320 direct employees and 340 customer-employed operators at full build-out for the Coal City campus.

Mr. Brown emphasized Aligned's sustainability commitments, including the use of a closed-loop, non-evaporative cooling system that Aligned developed itself, which the company states reduces water consumption by 73 to 99 percent compared to traditional evaporative cooling data centers. In response to a question from Administrator Fritz, he clarified that the company purchases Renewable Energy Credits (RECs)

covering 100 percent of its electricity consumption across its entire portfolio. He noted Aligned's commitments to Green Globes certification for construction, sustainability-linked financing with measurable KPIs, and community engagement initiatives including partnerships with veterans' organizations, junior colleges such as Joliet Junior College, and the development of the Aligned Academy workforce training program.

Application Review discussion

Chair Boik outlined the framework for the committee's review, noting that the application would be evaluated against the standards in Table 16 of the Village's Zoning Code for Planned Unit Developments, the conditional use permit criteria (applicable to all PUD requests), and all relevant zoning code standards including setbacks, building height, landscaping, and parking. He noted that the applicant may request deviations from certain standards as part of the PUD process, and that in exchange, the applicant is expected to provide a superior development product. He indicated this was the first of multiple review meetings and invited each committee member to offer preliminary, high-level comments for the record.

Village Administrator Fritz indicated he would submit written review comments addressing Tables 1 and 2 of the submittal checklist, confirming the materials appear to meet submittal requirements, along with substantive questions generated by his review.

Director of Public Works Darrell Olson indicated he would submit written comments, noting in particular that some submitted plans appeared to differ from materials shown to the public in earlier forums, and flagging questions about the closed-loop cooling system and potential sanitary sewer effects.

Village Attorney Mark Heinle raised several preliminary inquiries: (1) clarification regarding the frequency, duration, and triggers for operating backup generators versus drawing from ComEd's transmission lines, and how the noise study's carve-outs for non-typical operational periods (e.g., emergencies and maintenance) would function in practice; (2) the current stage of ICC approval for the proposed ComEd substation, and the extent to which the Village's zoning jurisdiction is preempted by the Illinois Commerce Commission with respect to utility infrastructure; (3) a question about the campus layout, specifically whether certain mechanical and operational structures that might generate noise or other externalities were situated on the exterior of the building cluster rather than being shielded by surrounding structures; (4) a request for information about ongoing monitoring equipment and data-sharing commitments to allow the Village to verify compliance with noise and emissions standards over time, given the Village's limited resources; and (5) a request for greater clarity on the phasing plan, including what factors could cause the phasing to change significantly, and what process would apply if substantial changes to phase configurations were needed after initial approval.

Superintendent Chris Spencer stated he had no immediate comments but anticipated submitting written questions.

Member Bob Koerner presented a list of procedural and structural items he believed should be resolved before the committee moved deeper into substantive review. These included establishing meeting times, frequency, and workshop meeting policies; a document control process for questions from both the committee and the public; whether HR Green would review committee questions before they were transmitted to the applicant; a long-term meeting schedule; a sequential list of items to be reviewed with anticipated HR Green review; identification of a document control person and system; discussion of agenda format and whether public comment should be placed at the end of meetings so the public could respond to committee discussion; and a policy for swearing in testimony.

Grundy County Development Director Alec Macdonald indicated he would submit formal written comments focused on the safety of county citizens, particularly construction traffic and flow; anticipated use of clean energy within the project including battery energy storage systems; more detailed information on the full economic and community benefit of the project; and the project's compliance with applicable municipal code.

Village Engineer Ryan Hansen indicated he would be submitting a written review focused on ensuring compliance with the Village's subdivision ordinance and storm water ordinance. He specifically echoed Attorney Heinle's questions about ongoing testing and monitoring and stated that from an engineering standpoint, the committee would want more detail about materials to be discharged to the sanitary sewer system from the facility's operations, as well as a thorough review of off-site sewer and water infrastructure capacity.

Chair Ed Boik summarized his own review findings, which included multiple pages of comments and required clarifications spanning the PUD narrative, requested code deviations and their justifications, compliance with industrial design guidelines, and requests for more information on architecture, site design, fencing, and landscaping. He also flagged: the need for greater clarity on phasing, including whether single-story or two-story buildings were planned and how a switch between those configurations would alter the phasing plan; questions about the traffic impact analysis's assumptions, particularly regarding construction traffic impacts potentially reaching Interstate 55 and Reed Road interchange and whether IDOT coordination had occurred; and a question about how the committee would ensure proactive monitoring of noise and other operational commitments rather than relying on resident complaints. Chair Boik also raised a forward-looking concern about the long-term land use implications if technology advances were to render a portion of the campus obsolete, and asked what would become of vacated buildings in that scenario.

Building Official Kyle Watson indicated he would submit written review comments pertaining to Article 10 of the Village Code (performance standards covering noise, vibration, glare, heat, particulate matter, toxic matter, odor, and radioactive matter) and the Village's industrial development design standards and guidelines.

Chief of Police Mike Imhof stated he would be submitting written questions and identified as a preliminary area of interest the traffic impact study and its methodology, the proposed fencing height deviation (from the ordinance's six-foot standard to the requested eight feet), and the proximity of the electrical substation to the roadway.

Member Gary Grunauer, noting his background as a retired chemist, identified the Village's wastewater treatment capacity as his primary concern. He highlighted that the cleaning solution described in the applicant's documentation has a pH of 12 to 12.5—a highly caustic material—and questioned whether the Village's wastewater treatment facility has the expertise and capacity to handle the volumes of such cleaning solutions that would result from commissioning and maintenance of the campus's mechanical systems. He suggested that on-site neutralization of cleaning byproducts prior to discharge to the sewer system might be an appropriate mitigation measure.

Member Terry Halliday indicated no further comments at this time beyond his role as Vice-Chair.

Committee action, if any (motions, votes, direction to consultants)

Following the application review discussion, the committee addressed several procedural and administrative matters related to the process going forward.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Attorney Heinle distributed, on behalf of the applicant's legal counsel, a disclosure document identifying all individual landowners, LLC members, and trust beneficiaries behind the parcels comprising the proposed development, as well as Aligned's corporate parentage. Attorney Heinle explained that the purpose of the disclosure was to give all committee members the opportunity to identify any potential conflicts of interest, whether statutory, common law, or in terms of appearance of impropriety, and to consult with him privately as needed. He noted that the disclosures are public record and should be made available on the Village's website (with any personal identifying information such as addresses or phone numbers appropriately redacted). He clarified that the general legal standard for a conflict of interest is whether a member would benefit or suffer from the project in a manner unique from the general public. Attorney Heinle recommended that members review the disclosed entities against their own financial

interests and contact him with any concerns prior to advancing further into the review process.

Member Koerner suggested that committee members who are not legally required to file statements of economic interest voluntarily complete the same form that elected officials file, even if not for public submission, as a transparency measure. Attorney Heinle stated he was personally willing to do so but acknowledged the committee could not compel members to comply.

Communication Protocol: The committee discussed and reached a consensus on how committee members should submit their written questions and comments. It was agreed that all comments from committee members should be directed individually to Recording Secretary Matt Fritz rather than transmitted as group emails, which could create Open Meetings Act complications. Secretary Fritz would consolidate comments and route them through Chair Boik for refinement into a final comment document to be transmitted to the applicant. Attorney Heinle and Chair Boik agreed that the consolidated comment document, once finalized, should be made publicly available—for example, posted on the Village's website—so that the public would have insight into the topics to be discussed at the next meeting.

Joe Giannini of Aligned's Land Enablement team briefly addressed the committee, responding to the resident comment about surveying activity on Carbon Hill Road. He acknowledged that Aligned had surveyors in the area but indicated to his knowledge they were located at the Reed Road and Carbon Hill Road intersection and farther south—not down the full length of Carbon Hill Road as described by the resident. He also noted that Aligned maintains a public website and a dedicated email address through which community members may submit questions and receive responses between meeting sessions.

Aligned's representative offered to provide the committee with a summary of all questions received to date through public channels, along with any answers already provided, so that this information could be incorporated into the committee's administrative record.

Tentative scheduling for the next meeting

The committee discussed the appropriate next steps and timing for the second meeting. Village Administrator Fritz proposed that the next meeting be held on Tuesday, September 1, 2026, at 2:00 P.M., with the intention of having applicant representatives and relevant technical specialists in attendance to facilitate substantive dialogue on the areas of concern already identified—including building design, noise, traffic, and sanitary sewer impacts. It was agreed that committee members should submit their first-round written comments to Secretary Fritz by end of day on Friday, August 22, 2026, so that the comments could be compiled and transmitted to the applicant sufficiently in advance of the September 1st meeting to allow the applicant to begin preparing responses and identifying appropriate specialists to attend.

A motion to schedule the next P.U.D. Review Committee meeting for Tuesday, September 1, 2026, at 2:00 P.M., and to direct committee members to submit written first-round comments to the Recording Secretary by end of day on Friday, August 22, 2026, was made by Halliday and seconded by Spencer. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote, with no audible opposition.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Grunauer and seconded by Halliday. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 4:35pm.



Matt Fritz, Recording Secretary