

**TOWN OF HILDEBRAN
Council's Chamber
Albert Parkhurst
Municipal Complex**

**MARCH 11, 2026
5:30 PM**

**SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hildebrand called the special meeting of the Town Council to order at 5:38 p.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

The following members of the Board were present: Mayor Wendell Hildebrand and Council Members Ben Honeycutt, Mike Smith, Mike Stroupe, Terry Weaver, and Jody York.

STAFF PRESENT

The following staff members were present: Town Manager Logan Shook, Town Clerk Alice Sanders, Finance Officer Fredrick Rankins, Town Planner Katelyn Smith, and Town Attorney Jared Amos.

CITIZENS PRESENT

See attached sheet.

ADOPT AGENDA

Council Member Honeycutt made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented. All voted in favor.

**ORDER OF BUSINESS:
PUBLIC HEARING
ZTA 26-1 AMENDING
SECTION 10:10
CRYPTOCURRENCY
MINING TO CRITICAL
INFRASTRUCTURE
FACILITIES**

Mayor Hildebrand opened the public hearing for proposed Zoning Text Amendment 26-1 amending section 10:10 Cryptocurrency Mining to Critical Infrastructure Facilities at 5:38 p.m.

Town Planner Katelyn Smith stated that the Town was recently approached regarding the potential development of a data center within the municipal limits. The current zoning ordinance does not explicitly address data centers; however, it includes language regulating cryptocurrency mining.

Due to the intensity and infrastructure demands associated with these facilities, staff determined that additional clarity and updated standards were necessary to ensure appropriate regulation under Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Rather than relying on interpretation of existing language, staff believes that a zoning text amendment provides greater transparency, legal defensibility, and predictability for both the Town and future applicants.

Ms. Smith reviewed all proposed amendments to Section 10:10.

Key Components of the Amendment

A. New Use Category

- Establishes “Critical Digital Infrastructure Facilities” as a defined use category, encompassing data centers and similar digital infrastructure operations.

B. Conditional Zoning Requirement

- Requires Conditional Zoning approval, ensuring Town Council retains discretion over site-specific impacts.

C. Performance Standards

- Includes measurable standards for:
 - Noise
 - Vibration
 - Generator operation and testing
 - Lighting
 - Buffering and setbacks
 - Ongoing compliance monitoring

D. Utility Capacity Verification

- Requires written verification from:
 - Electrical service providers
 - Potable water providers
 - Public sewer providersconfirming adequate system capacity without adverse impacts to existing users.

E. Water Use and Conservation Planning

- Requires applicants to submit a water use and conservation plan demonstrating minimization of potable water demand.

F. Lifecycle Provisions

- Expansion triggers requiring review
- Discontinuation/abandonment provisions

G. Enforcement Clarification

- Clarifies that failure to submit required studies or monitoring constitutes a zoning violation.

Consistency with Zoning Purpose & 160D

The proposed amendment is consistent with the intent of the Hildebran Zoning Ordinance and Chapter 160D in that it:

- Regulates land use impacts rather than internal engineering processes;
- Protects adjacent properties from potential noise, vibration, and infrastructure impacts;
- Ensures orderly development and infrastructure adequacy;
- Preserves Town Council discretion through Conditional Zoning; and
- Defers appropriately to state and federal regulatory agencies where applicable.

Ms. Smith stated that the Planning Board suggested a few revisions that include:

- Under section 3 of Noise Mitigation, the Planning Board wanted to change the time frame from 6 months / 180 days to just 90 days. They additionally wanted to add certificate of occupancy instead of just occupancy.
- These same changes were made under section 3 of Vibration.
- Under section 2 of Financial Assurance within Decommissioning and Site Restoration, the Planning Board wanted the following statement added, "This value shall be reevaluated by the Town every 4 years, or if there is an expansion of the site."

The Planning Board met, provided a written recommendation, and approved the consistency statement recommending approval of ZTA 26-1 with the aforementioned amendments.

The Planning Board Consistency Statement, signed by Chairwoman Diane Speigle, is provided in the packet.

There was a brief discussion regarding the authority of the ordinance with Ms. Smith stating that the Town is doing its due diligence by having an ordinance in place.

There being no comments from the floor, Mayor Hildebrand closed the public hearing at 5:55 p.m.

Consider Approval of ZTA 26-1

There being no discussion, Council Member Smith made a motion to approve the recommended Ordinance #03-11-26.1 / ZTA 26-1 and consistency statement, as amended by the Planning Board and Town Council, which amends Section 10:10 and establishes standards for Critical Digital Infrastructure Facilities.

The Town Council finds that the amendment ZTA 26-1 is consistent with the Town of Hildebran Comprehensive Plan, particularly the Plan's goals related to Land Use and Growth Management, Infrastructure and Public Services, and Economic Development. The amendment supports orderly growth and land-use compatibility by requiring conditional zoning review, measurable performance standards, verification of utility capacity, and enforcement of lifecycle provisions to ensure long-term compliance. The Town Council further finds the amendment reasonable, consistent with Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes, and in the public interest as it protects the quality of life of existing residents and commerce. All voted in favor. A copy of the ordinance and ZTA are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes (Attachment A).

**PUBLIC HEARING
ZTA 26-2 PROPOSED
AMENDMENT TO
SEPARATE SCHOOL AND
COLLEGE USES &
PERMITTING OF K-12
SCHOOLS BY RIGHT**

Mayor Hildebran opened the public hearing for ZTA 26-2 proposed amendment to separate school and college uses and permitting of K-12 schools by right at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Smith stated that the Town of Hildebran Zoning Ordinance currently groups "Schools and Colleges" as a single land use category and requires approval of a Special Use Permit for this use in all zoning districts. Under the current framework, primary and secondary schools (K-12) are subject to the same approval process as colleges and universities, despite significant differences in scale, intensity, and operational characteristics.

Staff is proposing a zoning text amendment to separate this combined use into two distinct land use categories: Schools (K-12) and College/Universities as uses requiring a Special Use Permit.

K-12 schools are typically community-serving civic uses that are commonly located within or adjacent to residential and mixed-use areas. Their operational characteristics such as hours of operation, enrollment scale, and site impacts are generally more compatible with surrounding neighborhoods than those associated with colleges or universities, which often include residential facilities, expanded parking demands, and higher-intensity campus activities.

By separating these uses and allowing Schools (K-12) by right in appropriate zoning districts, the proposed

amendment would reduce unnecessary quasi-judicial review for school projects, improve regulatory clarity, and allow such developments to proceed through an administrative site plan review process while remaining subject to all applicable zoning and development standards.

Ms. Smith reviewed the proposed changes. An overview of the changes include:

Schools (K–12) – Permitted by Right

Staff proposes that Schools (K–12) be permitted by right in the following zoning districts, subject to all applicable development standards:

- Residential Districts (including R-10)
- Neighborhood Business (N-B)
- Highway Business (H-B)
- Central Business District (CBD)

Colleges / Universities – Special Use Permit

Colleges and universities would remain subject to Special Use Permit approval in all zoning districts

The Planning Board met, provided a written recommendation, and approved the consistency statement recommending approval of ZTA 26-2.

The Planning Board Consistency Statement, signed by Chairwoman Diane Speigle, is provided in the packet.

There being no comments from the public, Mayor Hildebrand closed the public hearing at 6:04 p.m.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL OF
ZTA 26-2**

There being no discussion, Council Member York made a motion to approve the proposed Ordinance #03-11-26.2 / ZTA 26-2 and consistency statement separating schools (K-12) and colleges/universities as distinct land uses and permits schools (K-12) by right within specified zoning districts.

The Town Council finds that the amendment ZTA 26-2 is consistent with the Town of Hildebran Comprehensive Plan, particularly its goals related to Land Use, Growth Management, and Orderly Development. These goals encourage the provision of community-serving public facilities in appropriate locations and support clear, predictable development regulations. The amendment improves zoning clarity by distinguishing between primary and secondary schools and higher-intensity post-secondary

institutions, allowing K-12 schools to be reviewed administratively while retaining discretionary review for colleges and universities. Town Council further finds the amendment reasonable, consistent with Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes, and in the public interest as it promotes a zoning process designed to ensure quality K-12 educational facilities. All voted in favor. A copy of the ordinance and ZTA are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes (Attachment B).

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF
CHANGE ORDER 15 WITH
DDI OF HICKORY
CONCERNING UPGRADES
TO THE PROP ROOM IN
THE AUDITORIUM

Town Manager Shook stated that in the original renovation plans for the auditorium, the original drop ceiling in the prop room was to be removed. Council should consider if it wants to reinstall the drop ceiling to help make the room sound proof. The change order is to drop the ceiling, remove the cabinet/sink feature, and cap the plumbing. He stated that the Town can do that now, or wait and do it later. Council Member Stroupe stated that an option for the future is to build stairs and add a floor for additional storage. It was the consensus of Council to not approve the change order and wait until later to take any action.

Mr. Shook suggested painting the floor black to help the room blend in with the curtains.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF
CHANGE ORDER 16 WITH
DDI OF HICKORY TO
DRYWALL AND PAINT
FRONT OF STAGE IN THE
AUDITORIUM

Town Manager Shook stated that the front wall of the stage is damaged and since it has been painted, it stands out more. DDI provided a quote to drywall and repaint the area for \$4,280. It was the consensus to not approve the change order and preferred to purchase beadboard instead and install over the existing surface.

ADJOURN

All business being concluded, Council Member Honeycutt made a motion to adjourn at 6:12 p.m. All voted in favor.

I attest these are the approved minutes of the Board.

Alice Sanders, Town Clerk

Wendell Hildebrand, Mayor