Item No. 42

MEMO

To: Mayor & City Council

From: Council Member Gloria Betcher

Date: September 22, 2026

Subject: Appointments to Data Center Committee

At the July 28, 2026, meeting, the City Council approved a motion "to form a study committee to look at environmental impacts not considered within the previous 12 items, including heating generation and localized temperature increases, and impacts on wildlife habitats, and human health."

At the August 11, 2026, meeting, the City Council discussed the study committee and determined that Council Members Betcher and Beatty-Hansen, alongside Ex-Officio Anderson, would serve on a subcommittee that would report back to the City Council a plan for recruiting and selecting study committee members, as well as identifying the scope of work and timeline. That plan was approved at the August 25 meeting, with committee applications opening on August 26 and closing on September 9. Fifty-four applications were received, representing applicants from academic and professional backgrounds, in fields related to the committee's charge.

The application review and selection process involved an initial pass by subcommittee members, who reviewed each application individually, with names and addresses removed to reduce bias in committee selection, and identified their top applicants. The subcommittee then convened to compare their selections and come to a consensus on the top 15 choices. Those choices, shown below with a sample of the extensive expertise they will bring to the committee, include members in all decades of life from 18-29 years through 70+, though age was not considered in decision-making:

Name	Brings expertise in
Merate Barakat	soundscape ecology, psychoacoustics, and aural architecture, how sound and acoustic environments shape human health, cognition, and well-being

Jacob Gallagher	exercise physiology, health, and human physiology, consideration of socioecological factors in human health and longevity
William Gutowski	meteorology and climate, with an emphasis on climate variability and change
Sid Juwarker	identifying and understanding site, environmental, and geotechnical considerations in the development of data centers and supporting infrastructure; environmental consulting
Jeff Kopaska	conservation and sustainability of fishery resources, and data center impacts on water quality, fish populations, habitat, and aquatic ecosystem health
Lu Liu	water, energy, and climate systems, focus on data center water impacts and the interactions among water use, energy demand, and climate outcomes
Scott Nelson	evaluating new technologies, their commercial applications, infrastructure requirements and broader impacts on communities
Timothy Stewart	ecology, specifically aquatic ecology
Chloe Parsons	mechanical engineering, heat transfer, fluid flow, thermodynamics, and system properties
James Pease	wildlife ecology
Robert Pfaff	urban planning for public utilities, community development, zoning ordinances, local government regulation
David Taylor	chemical engineering, water treatment, and chemical treatment, for industry, including data centers
Lee Anne Willson	physics of fluids, radiative transfer, spectroscopy, interpreting data, and modeling complex systems, issues related to climate change
Duane Wolf	mechanical engineering consultancy, forensic-based approach to work with lawyers, insurance companies, and equipment manufacturers
Yiwen Wu	planning for climate resilience, sustainable land use and climate change resilience, research on land use and the design of data centers

Those on this list were notified that Council would be voting on the committee make-up at tonight's meeting and were asked to confirm by meeting time that they are still willing to serve on this study committee. At the time of writing, we

have not heard from all list members. **In the event that any names are withdrawn, the subcommittee has a list of alternates. We would like approval now to appoint from that list without further Council votes, should members on the list in this memo opt not to participate.**

Given the amount of time spent by the subcommittee carefully assessing the applications and weighing the expertise of the applicants, Council Members Betcher and Beatty-Hansen, alongside Ex-Officio Anderson, recommend the approval of these individuals to the data center study committee, with understanding that the subcommittee may appoint other members from the alternates list if necessary to fill the complement of 15 members (Option 1). Staff is comfortable with the proposed list of recommended appointees and acceptable alternates.

OPTIONS

1. Approve the appointment list and allow the subcommittee to appoint members from the alternate list to fill the complement of 15 members, should any approved member decide not to accept appointment.

2. Approve the appointment list with recommended changes, and allow the subcommittee to appoint members from the alternate list to fill the complement of 15 members, should any approved member decide not to accept appointment.

3. Send the subcommittee back to do more work on configuring the list.

ATTACHMENT(S):
Action Plan for Resident Data Center Study Committee.pdf