

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 28, 2026

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Diane Gallagher called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, April 28, 2026, in the Jo Daviess County Board Room, Jo Daviess County Courthouse in Galena, Illinois.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call was answered as follows: Present – Michael Dittmar, Diane Gallagher, Lynn Gallagher, John Lang, John Schultz, LaDon Trost (arrived at 6:13 PM). Present: 6. Present electronically: 0. Absent – Robert Heuerman. Absent: 1.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2026, Development & Planning Committee minutes was made by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

V. Unfinished Business

FY2025/FY2027 Strategic Goals were reviewed.

VI. New Business

Discussion and possible action regarding market impacts on the assessed value of properties with special use permits for rental activity: The committee held an extended discussion regarding market impacts on assessed values for properties with special use permits (SUPs) for rental activity. C.C.A.O. Laura Edmonds presented a detailed analysis of Guilford Township sales, explaining that detached homes with guest accommodation licenses and SUPs were selling “between 10% and 20% higher” than comparable non-rental homes. She explained how these higher sales depress the township’s sales ratio, requiring equalization factors that raise assessed values across all properties. Edmonds walked the committee through how sales ratios are calculated, why the State requires a median ratio of 33⅓%, and how factors must be applied uniformly when ratios fall short. Committee members asked extensive questions about assessment mechanics, equalization, tax impacts, and whether SUP transferability contributes to valuation distortions. Planning & Development Administrator William Meeker clarified that SUPs are land-use entitlements tied to the property, not the owner, and cannot legally be revoked or made non-transferable upon sale. Members discussed whether reinstating the SUP process for new rentals could allow neighborhood-specific review, though it would not affect existing licenses. The Committee agreed the presentation was informational and would help members respond to constituent questions about rising assessments and tax bills.

Presentation and discussion of the financial impact of sub-market rate loans: The committee reviewed the report provided regarding the financial impact of sub-market-rate loans. County Administrator Angela Kaiser presented a lending-versus-investing analysis showing the measurable opportunity cost of issuing low-interest economic development loans compared to investing funds at current Treasury

rates. She emphasized that the analysis was not a policy recommendation but a factual financial comparison. Committee members discussed the broader economic development value of loans, the difficulty of quantifying indirect benefits such as job creation and increased sales tax, and the tension between fiscal stewardship and long-term growth strategies. Members agreed the information would support further discussion at the upcoming Finance, Tax, & Budgets Committee meeting.

VII. Reports

Building & Zoning Monthly Report: A written report was provided and Planning & Development Administrator William Meeker was present to answer questions. He also announced that the zoning code amendment hearing was scheduled for May 27, 2026 at 6:00 PM at the Courthouse.

Northwest Illinois Economic Development (NWILED) Monthly Report: Written reports were provided and Executive Director David Schmit was present to answer questions.

Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) Monthly Report: Jo-Carroll Depot LRA Board of Directors will meet at 3 pm on the first Wednesday, May 6, at 3651 Crim Drive Savanna Depot Business, Industry & Technology Park Savanna, IL in the JCDLRA Boardroom.

Economic Development Fund (018) Financial Reports: Reports were reviewed and no new loan activity was noted.

Blackhawk Hills Resource Council: A written report was provided.

VIII. Citizens' Comments

Daisha Boehm, Galena resident and County Board Member District #5 expressed concern that short-term rentals are undervalued as economic contributors, noting they support local employment and pay higher taxes due to lack of homestead exemptions. Committee members acknowledged the comment.

IX. Committee Member Concerns

John Schultz emphasized that while economic development is essential and requires investment, the County also needs solid data on the opportunity cost of using public funds for loans, noting he will offer additional thoughts at the upcoming Thursday meeting.

Michael Dittmar shared a help-wanted advertisement from a county business that was a recipient of last year's Small Business Grant program.

Diane Gallagher stated that economic development isn't always about money; sometimes it's our attitude or in the paperwork. By changing some things in the county code of ordinances, by lessening some of the restrictions here or there, we will be doing our part to make things a little easier and convince people that this is a good business location.

X. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made at 7:55 PM by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. Motion carried by voice vote.

Next committee meeting: Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in Hanover