

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 23, 2026

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Diane Gallagher called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, June 23, 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 6:15 PM). Present: 6. Present electronically: 0. Absent – Robert Heuerman. Absent: 1.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2026 Development & Planning Committee meeting with a citizen comment by Steve Endress added was made by John Schultz and seconded by Michael Dittmar. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

V. Unfinished Business

FY2025/FY2027 Strategic Goals were reviewed.

The Committee discussed the proposed ordinance addressing unsafe, dangerous, and uninhabitable structures. Prompted by complaints of a burned-out home in East Dubuque, the ordinance was drafted to provide a legal mechanism to remove long-neglected properties. Members discussed concerns about agricultural buildings, IRS depreciation rules, demolition costs, and administrative burden. Despite reservations, the committee is willing recommend the ordinance to the full County Board, with the understanding that further information may be needed before board approval. **A motion to recommend an Ordinance Creating Title 5, Chapter 13 of the Jo Daviess County Code of Ordinances Regarding Unsafe, Dangerous, and Uninhabitable Structures was made by John Lang and seconded by John Schultz. The motion carried by voice vote with nay votes recorded for Michael Dittmar and Lynn Gallagher.**

The committee continued its discussion from the prior month regarding economic development programs. Member Dittmar presented proposals including reinstating the Small Grant Program, establishing a targeted grant/loan program for priority projects, and exploring housing-related loan initiatives. He emphasized the value of past grants and the need for structured, competitive processes. The County Administrator clarified the distinction between program design (committee recommendation) and funding (budget process), noting that cannabis revenue is the only dedicated revenue stream for this fund. Members discussed priorities, process, and the need for a committee-generated list before budget season. **A motion to postpone action until a prioritized list of programs could be provided and discussed was made by John Schultz and seconded by Michael**

Dittmar. The motion carried by voice vote.

VI. New Business

A motion to recommend an Ordinance Amending the Boundaries of the Joint Northwest Illinois Certified Enterprise Zone to include AutoSmart, Inc was made by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. The motion carried by voice vote.

A motion to recommend a Resolution to Authorize an Amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement for the Operation of an Enterprise Zone to include AutoSmart, Inc, a car dealer specializing in classic car consignment was made by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. The motion carried by voice vote.

A motion to recommend an Ordinance Amending the Boundaries of the Joint Northwest Illinois Certified Enterprise Zone to include the Village of Lena, Illinois was made by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. The motion carried by voice vote.

A motion to recommend a Resolution to Authorize an Amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement for the Operation of an Enterprise Zone to include the Village of Lena, Illinois was made by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. The motion carried by voice vote.

Discussion and possible action to recommend to the County Board that it direct the Planning & Development Department to proceed with an amendment to the Jo Daviess County Zoning Ordinance to list short-term rental/guest accommodations of a residence (less than 30-days) as a use requiring a Special Use Permit in all zoning districts where residential uses are permitted: At a committee member's request, staff prepared a memo addressing a potential amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to require a Special Use Permit (SUP) for new short-term rental/guest accommodation licenses. Existing licenses would remain valid if continuously renewed. Members discussed impacts on tourism, neighborhood concerns, enforcement limitations, and the role of resort communities' covenants. Several members opposed the SUP requirement, citing economic impacts and lack of complaint data. No motion was made, and the item did not advance.

Member Lynn Gallagher proposed forming an informal study group to proactively assess the impacts of potential data center development. Members discussed regional moratoriums, infrastructure requirements, and the need for informed planning. **A motion to form an informal study group organized by Lynn Gallagher to conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of the potential impacts of data center development within Jo Daviess County was made by John Schultz and seconded by Lynn Gallagher. The motion carried by voice vote.**

VII. Reports

Building & Zoning Monthly Report: A written report and William Meeker, Planning & Development Administrator was present to answer questions. He reported 28 building permits in May totaling \$2.4 million in construction value, including two new homes and multiple accessory structures. Twelve guest accommodation inspections were completed.

Northwest Illinois Economic Development (NWILED) Monthly Report: Written reports were provided and David Schmit, NWILED Executive Director was present to answer questions. He provided updates on business financing tools, workforce initiatives, data center inquiries, and upcoming programs. He also discussed state-level changes affecting data center incentives.

Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) Monthly Report: Steve Keeffer, LRA Chairperson reported progress on natural gas distribution planning, clean energy grant work, and potential industrial park transfers to the Port Authority. Members discussed long-term redevelopment opportunities at the former Savanna Army Depot.

Economic Development Fund (018) Financial Reports: The committee reviewed current balances, noting that cannabis revenue had not yet begun flowing into the fund due to bond repayment thresholds.

VIII. Citizens' Comments

There were no citizens' comments.

IX. Committee Member Concerns

Members shared updates on tourism trends, guest accommodation issues, and community meetings. No formal concerns were raised.

X. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made at 8:14 PM by John Schultz and seconded by John Lang. Motion carried by voice vote.

Next committee meeting: Tuesday, July 28, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.