



BLACKMAN CHARTER TOWNSHIP
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
SERVED BY ACCELERATE JACKSON COUNTY

BDDA Board Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2026, at 7:00 a.m.
Blackman Charter Township Meeting Hall

Members Present (7): Mike Ambs, Kevin Ganton, Jeff Kinney, Steve Shotwell, Raymond VanZandt, Greg Vogt, and Pete Jancek.

Members Absent (4): Dan Decker, Arnold Dolman, Stephanie Hinkle, and Rebecca Stewart.

Others Present: Jack Ripstra, Blackman Township Engineer.

Staff: Marcia Gebarowski and Heather Holleque, Accelerate Jackson County.

Chairman Jancek called the meeting to order at 7:01 a.m.

Public Comment:

None.

BDDA Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2026:

Mr. Shotwell moved to approve the BDDA Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2026, as presented, with Mr. Ganton supporting. Unanimously approved.

BDDA Invoices and Budget Reports through April 30, 2026:

Mr. Vogt moved to approve the BDDA invoices and budget reports through January 31, 2026, as presented, with Mr. Ganton supporting. Unanimously approved by roll call vote.

DDA GOALS AND PROJECT UPDATES

Marcia Gebarowski, Director of Economic and Community Development for Accelerate Jackson County, provided updates regarding recent accomplishments and upcoming goals for the DDA.

Wetland Delineation and Site Preparation:

The DDA successfully completed the wetland delineation for DDA-owned property during the previous year.

Future goals include:

- Evaluating wetland mitigation options
- Determining development strategies for the property
- Preparing marketing materials for development opportunities
- Continuing site preparation activities

It was noted that EGLE no longer allows wetland mitigation within the State of Michigan. Current mitigation requirements involve purchasing wetland credits, estimated at approximately \$112,000 per acre.

Website and Marketing Updates:

Accelerate Jackson County is undertaking a comprehensive website update.

The updated website will include:

- DDA property listings
- Development opportunity information
- Required PA 57 documentation and contracts

The goal is to launch the updated website by November 2026.

Road and Sidewalk Projects:

Ongoing projects discussed included:

- O'Neill Drive sidewalk reconstruction
- Bob McClain Drive reconstruction
- Airport Road sidewalk improvements

Township representatives reported that construction is progressing well.

DISCUSSION: DRAINAGE AND WETLAND CONCERNS

Steve Shotwell discussed drainage concerns related to DDA property near the Airport Road interchange.

Discussion included:

- Historical placement of spoil material along the drain corridor
- Potential future coordination with MDOT and the Jackson County Drain Commissioner
- Long-term opportunities related to future Airport Road interchange reconstruction projects
- Concerns regarding permitting requirements and EGLE regulations affecting drainage modifications

OTHER BUSINESS

Tax Capture Discussion:

- The Board discussed a prior proposal to return a portion of DDA tax capture revenues to public safety operations.
- After consultation with auditors and legal review, it was determined this action could not proceed without amending the original language establishing the DDA.

TOWNSHIP UPDATES

Public Safety Building:

- Construction has begun on the new Blackman Township Public Safety Building.
- Footing and foundational work are underway.
- The Township received notification of a federal grant award through Congresswoman Slotkin's office to support interior furnishings and security systems.

Parks and Recreation:

- Pickleball court surfacing remains dependent on the weather.
- Increased demand for athletic field space was reported, including interest from:
 - Lacrosse organizations
 - Youth football programs
- Township officials reported continued investment in recreational facilities and park property.
- The County approved the memorandum of understanding with Blackman Township regarding right-of-way matters.

COUNTY UPDATES

Commissioner Steve Shotwell provided updates regarding several county initiatives:

Jackson County Parks and Recreation, in partnership with Vandercook Lake, is developing a new community dog park featuring:

- Separate fenced areas for small and large dogs
- Water access for dogs
- Resting areas and site improvements

Renovations at the Jackson County Airport terminal are ongoing, including:

- Updated bathrooms
- Lobby improvements
- Continued building upgrades

The airport restaurant under new ownership is performing well, with increased patron traffic and improved food quality.

Progress continues with the planned aircraft maintenance training school at the airport:

- Letters of support have been received from Congressman Tim Walberg and Senator Sue Shink
- The program is planned for the former Aeroquip hangar ("big brown building")
- Target launch is Fall 2026
- Programming expected to serve approximately 30 Career Center students and 30 adult students annually
- Career opportunities for graduates were highlighted, with salaries ranging from approximately \$76,000–\$108,000 locally and higher at larger airports

The County is working with JDOT and local municipalities on a coordinated roadside and illegal dumping cleanup effort:

- Development of a memorandum of understanding for trash removal
- Increased enforcement efforts for illegal dumping
- Use of cameras at chronic dumping locations

Updates regarding the Cascades restoration project:

- The County plans to rebid portions of the project
- Construction activity is expected to resume following the current season

Jackson County Fair updates included:

- Multiple themed and appreciation days planned
- A 250th anniversary drone light show scheduled for Thursday evening during the fair
- Continued sponsorship support providing free parking opportunities

Farmers Market updates:

- Grow Jackson continues operating the market on Fridays and Saturdays
- Upcoming annual plant sale benefiting Career Center agricultural and horticulture scholarship programs was announced.

ISD FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. VanZandt with the Jackson County ISD provided updates regarding facility improvements at the Career Center, including:

- Traffic flow and parking lot redesign
- Safer student drop-off and bus circulation
- New secure building entrances
- General campus modernization efforts

Next Meeting:

The next Blackman Charter Township DDA Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at 7:00 a.m. at the Blackman Charter Township Meeting Hall.

The meeting adjourned at 7:32 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by Heather Holleque, Accelerate Jackson County.

Pete Jancek, BDDA Chairman and Township Supervisor
Confirming approval of these BDDA Meeting Minutes on _____.