

**Village of Bellaire
Downtown Development Authority**

July 29, 2026

Minutes

Members present: Shelly Dayton, Margie Boyd, Jamie Creason, Dan Bennett, Dawn DeHeer, Tammy DeWulf

Members absent: Don Hoyt, Courtney Bittner, Libby Hiser

Others present: Angela St. Pierre, Nora Stead

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Shelly Dayton.

1. **Pledge of Allegiance**

2. **Attendance**

3. **Consent Agenda**

Ms. Boyd pulled the minutes from the June 24 meeting from the consent agenda.

Motion by Creason, second by Boyd, to accept the consent agenda as amended.

Motion passed – unanimous

4. **Public Comment on Agenda Items**

None

5. **Unfinished Business**

- a. **Buy Local** Ms. Dayton updated members on the results of the most recent event. She indicated some businesses saw an increase in sales and foot traffic. The event will continue annually. Ms. Creason let members know she has started helping the Chamber of Commerce with some of its events, as well.
- b. **Village Update:** Council President Bennet informed members that playground equipment is in place at Richardi Park.
- c. **Grant Committee:** No update
- d. **Marketing & Communications:** Ms. Creason said the views on the DDA social media pages has increased.
- e. **Banner Program Update:** Ms. Dayton spoke with Libby Hiser about the banners, noting the banners have been picked up and will be placed.
- f. **Outdoor Art Exhibit Update:** Ms. Dayton the DDA will ask the Village Council to allow the DDA to hang art pieces from previous years on the walls of the Village offices in an attempt to further the sales of the art.
- g. **Parking Committee/Signs:** Ms. Dayton noted some of the existing signs need to be replaced. She will get those ordered.

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- h. **Selfie Station:** Ms. Dayton spoke with Don Hoyt. He said he will continue working with the Chamber of Commerce. Communications will be sent to Chamber members. There is a potential for a Spring 2027 launch.
- i. **Financial Update:** Ms. Dayton said she reminded Ms. Bittner the deadline to submit the DDA report to the State of Michigan was August.
- j. **DDA Director:** Ms. Dayton informed members that the candidate that was to be reviewed at this meeting had contacted her this morning to remove herself from consideration. The position will continue to be posted.
- k. **Locked Filing Cabinet:** Members noted the fire safe cabinets had arrived. Ms. DeWulf volunteered to organize them.
- l. **DDA Bylaw Review:** A redlined draft of the bylaws was provided in the agenda packet. Ms. Boyd provided a brief summary of those changes to the Board (attached). Ms. DeWulf asked for more time to consider the proposed changes. Ms. St. Pierre told members the process to amend they bylaws would involve changes to the existing ordinance governing the DDA. She gave a brief out line of that process.
- m. **Michigan Downtown Association:** No update.
- n. **Flowers:** No update.

6. New Business

- a. **Rubber Ducky Drop Fundraiser & Event**
Ms. Creason and Ms. Dayton updated members on the status of the proposed Rubber Ducky Drop. Ms. Dayton indicated the DDA will have a table set up at the Rubber Ducky Festival to begin pushing information to the public. Buttons and handouts will be available. She also noted donations for the event have already started coming in and currently sits at approximately \$2,200. Ms. Creason has been working on marketing material (see attached) and noted an announcement will be going out in the quarterly newsletter. Donation request letters will be going out. Ms. Boyd asked Ms. St. Pierre whether these funds would be considered restricted and if a new budget line item would be necessary. Ms. St. Pierre recommended a revenue line item be created to accept the donations and an expenditure line item be created for use of funding.

Motion by Creason, second by DeHeer to add donation/sponsorship line items for revenues and expenditures for the Rubber Ducky Drop event.

Motion passed – Unanimous

- b. **DDA Boundary Adjustment**
Members reviewed a request from Joe Short to expand the DDA district boundaries. Ms. Boyd provided members with a map showing the proposed expansion (both attached). Members discussed the possibility of adding Riverside Marina to the district. Ms. Boyd indicated this would also involve a change to the existing ordinance that established the original boundaries. Ms. St. Pierre said she will provide contact information to the MEDC

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for guidance.

7. **Miscellaneous Business:** Ms. DeHeer shared with members an activity from the National Cherry Festival that she felt would make a nice addition to the Rubber Ducky Festival. She will get Ms. Dayton information on a paint-by-numbers event.
8. **Public Comment**

Meeting adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

DRAFT

Proposed revisions were prepared using the following guiding principles:

- Preserve existing governance practices where practical, while incorporating actual practice
- Eliminate conflicting or obsolete provisions
- Clarify procedures without creating unnecessary burdens on Village or DDA staff
- Ensure consistency with Michigan's DDA Act and applicable village ordinances

Significant revisions are:

- Modernization of statutory references
- Clarification of member appointments, vacancies, and terms of office
- Clarification of officer election procedures
- Removal of conflicting provisions regarding the employment of the Secretary and Treasurer
- Recognition that the Director's authority, duties, and compensation are established by contract rather than the bylaws
- Revision of conflict-of-interest provisions to provide a clear and practical standard
- Clarification of meeting procedures
- Addition of provisions addressing contract authority and execution of agreements
- General corrections to grammar, formatting, and terminology throughout

Because the bylaws are currently incorporated in the Village Code, any amendments must ultimately be approved by the Village Council before becoming effective. Should Village Council subsequently remove the bylaws from the Village Code and authorize the DDA to maintain its own standalone bylaws, additional revisions can be made more easily and in a timelier manner.



BELLAIRE DUCK DROP

COUNTDOWN TO 40

LAUNCHING DECEMBER 31, 2026

THE VISION

LAUNCH A NEW YEAR'S EVE DUCK DROP IN
DOWNTOWN BELLAIRE TO KICK OFF THE 40TH
ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION YEAR OF ONE OF THE
COMMUNITY'S MOST RECOGNIZABLE TRADITIONS.

COMMUNITY GOALS

INCREASE WINTER VISITATION
SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES
CREATE A NEW ANNUAL TRADITION
ENCOURAGE YEAR-ROUND TOURISM ACTIVITY
STRENGTHEN DOWNTOWN ENGAGEMENT

PARTNERS

BELLAIRE DDA
BELLAIRE CHAMBER
VILLAGE OF BELLAIRE
BUSINESSES
TOURISM PARTNERS

FAST FACTS

VILLAGE POPULATION

APPROXIMATELY 1,100 RESIDENTS

EXISTING TRADITION

NEARLY 40-YEAR SUMMER FESTIVAL TRADITION

LAUNCH TIMELINE

39TH FESTIVAL PROMOTION: AUGUST 2026
DUCK DROP LAUNCH: DECEMBER 31, 2026
40TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR: 2027

FUNDING SUPPORTS

ILLUMINATED DUCK STRUCTURE
SAFE RIGGING AND INSTALLATION
LIGHTING AND EVENT SETUP
INITIAL PROMOTION AND LAUNCH

ESTIMATED PROJECT RANGE

APPROXIMATELY \$10,000–\$25,000
SCALABLE IMPLEMENTATION

#LIGHTUPTHEDUCK



Bellaire, Michigan is known for its charm, natural beauty, and strong sense of community, anchored by the beloved Rubber Ducky Festival, now in its 39th year and drawing thousands of visitors each summer. As the community approaches the festival's 40th anniversary in 2027, the Bellaire Downtown Development Authority and Bellaire Chamber of Commerce propose a bold and highly visible new tradition: a Bellaire "Duck Drop" winter celebration designed to activate downtown during the off-season and build year-round momentum for this signature event.

Inspired by successful destination events such as Traverse City's Cherry Drop, Bellaire's Duck Drop will feature a large-scale, illuminated rubber duck lowered in a coordinated countdown event to ring in the New Year. Rather than competing with larger communities, this effort thoughtfully builds on proven success and adapts it to Bellaire's unique identity, scale, and character. It is a natural extension of a tradition that has been part of Bellaire for nearly four decades, where thousands of numbered ducks are released into the river each August as part of a community-wide celebration.

What makes this idea uniquely Bellaire is its authenticity. The Rubber Ducky Festival began as a simple, community-driven idea and has grown into a cherished tradition that reflects the spirit of the village. The Duck Drop carries that same spirit into the winter season, creating a recognizable and meaningful connection between seasons while generating excitement leading into the 40th anniversary celebration.

This project will put Bellaire on the map by creating a signature visual moment that is memorable, shareable, and distinctly tied to place. A glowing duck descending over downtown Bellaire offers a compelling and family-friendly experience that will attract residents, visitors, and guests from surrounding lodging destinations, including Shanty Creek Resort and area vacation rentals. The event has strong potential to generate regional media attention and social media engagement, reinforcing Bellaire as a creative and welcoming rural destination.

Equally important, the Duck Drop supports economic vitality and community connection. By drawing visitors during the winter months, the event helps support local businesses during a traditionally slower season while creating opportunities for partnerships among the DDA, Chamber, Village of Bellaire, nonprofits, and community groups, reinforcing strong public and private collaboration. It also creates a shared experience that brings residents together and strengthens community pride.

By extending a beloved summer tradition into a new winter experience, Bellaire is creating something memorable, meaningful, and uniquely its own—an idea ready to take flight, and at just the right moment, make a perfect drop.

June 24, 2026

Bellaire Downtown Development Authority
202 N Bridge St
Bellaire, MI 49615

Subject: Request for Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Boundary Amendment

Dear Bellaire DDA,

I, Joe Short, am formally requesting that the Bellaire DDA initiate a boundary adjustment to the current DDA district.

Proposed Adjustments:

Requesting the addition of the following two properties/parcels to the Bellaire DDA district:

- Parcel 05-41-010-078-00, 107 E Broad - Current Owner: Shortses LLC
- Parcel 05-41-010-034-00 - Current Owner: Shortses LLC

Reason for Adjustment:

These parcels are currently contiguous to the existing district. Expanding the boundary in this area will allow investment into the property that is otherwise not possible without being located in a DDA. Specifically, grants are available through the State and Federal government to encourage investment into the property. Of course any future plans would still have to conform to existing zoning requirements and be approved as normal.

Thank you for your consideration of our request for these parcels to be added to the Bellaire DDA district. I look forward to working with the DDA and Village of Bellaire on this amendment and next steps.

Regards,



Joe Short
Shortses LLC

