



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board October 1, 2019

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Joe Stockburger, Jim Corson, Katrina Kruger, Bret Rutherford, Laura Gittings-Carlson, City Council Member Denise Joy

Board Members Excused: Jessica Schmidt

Staff Present: Brenda Beckett, Dina Harmon, Tam Rodier, Wyeth Friday

Welcome / Introductions / Announcements: The Community Development (CD) Board met in the 6th Floor Conference Room, Miller Building, 2825 3rd Avenue North, Billings, Montana. Board member Rebecca Noell, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00pm. There are still two CD Board positions available.

Beckett noted that one of the City's AmeriCorps VISTA alums is gravely ill. This VISTA alum and their partner both served two years with the Billings Metro VISTA Project and have been working in Billings for several years post-service. Board Member Laura Gittings-Carlson has a Go Fund Me page established and is willing to send the link to anyone who wants to contribute.

Carly Collins has been hired on as the new Grants Technician for the Community Development Division. She will begin employment on October 15.

Public Comment: No additional public comment.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Katrina Kruger moved to approve the August meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Board member Bret Rutherford. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Staff Reports:

- **First Time Home Buyer Program:** The program is up and running and there is funding available for 33 households. There are 12 closings scheduled to close next month and one additional closing scheduled in November so far.
- **Affordable Housing Development:** The Riverfront Pointe properties are now available for FTHB clients to view. Homebuyers will need to complete some work on the concrete floors and other items to build up required "sweat equity" on the home prior to closing.
- **Housing Rehabilitation:** Applications have slowed down since the last CD Board meeting.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** The Request for Proposals is nearly ready for release for the demolition of the Steffanich buildings. The lot is half an acre and is very narrow, so there could be several options for housing development. Once buildings are demolished, staff will invite developers to submit proposals through the Affordable Housing Development program. Financing structure could include partial repayment to the City as part of the deal, if the CD Board recommends it. Staff is ready to accept any suggestions the Board may have on financing structure. Staff would like to keep options open for developers so they can propose a viable, functional project.
- **Billings-Metro VISTA Project:** Staff provided absolutely riveting training on the Quarterly Reports for the VISTA members this week. Staff member Tam Rodier is also gathering winter clothing donations for our members without options. One of the VISTA members is looking for a one bedroom or studio apartment and a board member may have a lead.

Comprehensive Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER): Staff member Beckett reviewed the CAPER presentation that was shared at the City Council meeting September 23 (see attached). Board member Jim Corson asked about City Council member questions. Council member Joy noted a question about race / ethnicity percentages. Beckett noted use of the American Community Survey data as a baseline percentage for minority and non-minority beneficiaries. With the use of federal funding, staff must do their best to ensure equal opportunity for racial / ethnic minorities and should meet or exceed the baseline percentages for minority populations. In FY2018-2019, over 30 percent of the City's beneficiaries in CDBG and HOME were minorities.

Mr. Corson also noted the high number of minorities recruited for the AmeriCorps VISTA program in Billings, which is also representative of minorities across Montana.

Board member Katrina Kruger asked about setting the goals higher for the Consolidated and Annual Action Plans. For example, an annual goal for home buyer was set at 20, although staff closed nearly 60 loans. Beckett explained that the five and one year goals for the Consolidated and Annual Action Plans are set on estimated allocations of new CDBG and HOME funding, rather than including additional revenues received from loan repayments. These repayments are difficult to project, as they are determined by the housing market, home sales, mortgage loan interest rates, and other economic factors. There could be a year when the City receives much less revenue than anticipated, and the goal may be set too high to meet.

HUD has required Consolidated and Annual Action Plan amendments if the City does not reach goals and it reflects negatively on performance reporting. Staff has also been required to amend the Consolidated Plan if a goal is exceeded; this occurred with the goal for the Billings Metro VISTA Project. City staff is unable to project how much new CDBG and HOME funding will be allocated each year from HUD to meet the goals of the five-year Consolidated Plan. Staff is also unable to predict the amount of revenue the City will receive for loan repayments over a five-year period.

Board member Joe Stockburger asked about the Division's needs, as leveraging figures are excellent. Beckett noted that the Division would benefit from the half-time Grants Technician position being elevated to a full-time Coordinator to assist with grant management overall. Staff cannot currently dedicate time to anything other than home buyer, home repair, foreclosure and VISTA programs and are not able to assist with other great initiatives. Staff would also like to explore the option of a City Corps, as many professions offer routine internships as a professional development option for graduated students.

Neighborhood Concerns and Happenings:

- None were noted.

Next Meeting: Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:10pm. The next meeting will be held on November 5, 2019.