



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

### Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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#### Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

February 4, 2020

**Board Members Present:** Rebecca Noell, Joe Stockburger, Katrina Kruger, Bret Rutherford, Laura Gittings-Carlson, Jessica Schmidt, Council Member Denise Joy

**Board Members Excused:** Jim Corson

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

**Welcome / Introductions / Announcements:** The Community Development (CD) Board met in the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, Miller Building, 2825 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, Billings, Montana. Board Chair, Rebecca Noell, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00pm. There are two CD Board positions available; however, Brenda reported that two candidates may be announced by the mayor soon.

**Public Comment:** No additional public comment.

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

#### Staff Reports:

- **Billings-Metro VISTA Project:** One additional VISTA member has been recruited and will begin their service term in March. For the time being, Carly will be focusing on reporting requirements, and will attend the three-day ServeMontana Symposium in Helena with current VISTA members in March. The focus will be on additional host site development, summer associate, and full-year recruitment beginning in late March/early April.
- **First Time Home Buyer Program:** Dina has funding available for several additional households through the remainder of the fiscal year. Funds have been committed to several applicants that should close on properties in February.
- **Affordable Housing Development:** Both NeighborWorks properties have buy/sell agreements submitted. Dina shared information regarding the new NeighborWorks application for infrastructure improvements at C & C Mobile Home Park for the Board to review. An official memo will be drafted for March's CD Board Meeting. A NeighborWorks representative will attend, and an on-site visit will be scheduled for Board Members following next month's meeting. City Council is required to review the proposal and vote on the allocation at the first Council meeting in April.
- **Housing Rehabilitation:** One loan was closed in January. Tam has run a new advertisement in Tidbits as well as with other target agencies in town to encourage more households to apply.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** The asbestos abatement at 930 Steffanich is complete. Demolition has not begun yet due to pending negotiations with Heights Water. Tam will be attending Heights Water's next board meeting to discuss a possible retainage fee waiver, as this is not a CDBG eligible expense. Tam encouraged any interested board members to attend this meeting with her on February 12<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Staff has re-advertised the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Affordable Housing development for this property again, as no proposals were received by the previous deadline. Proposals are due by February 28<sup>th</sup>.

Staff placed an offer on a new foreclosed property and the offer was accepted. Tam will plan to arrange for a site visit for CD board members after the April meeting. Board member, Joe Stockburger, mentioned that there is a vacant property on his block that might be eligible. Tam agreed to look into it further.

#### **Application Review**

- Brenda presented information on proposed activities for Community Development. No changes were made to the First Time Home Buyer program, Affordable Housing Development, Foreclosure Acquisition, or VISTA programs. Funding for Housing Rehabilitation will be reduced, as there have been fewer applications in recent years. This may be due to significant weather events causing homeowners to use insurance rather than loan programs for rehab projects. Tam will likely reduce time spent on Housing Rehab projects to dedicate assistance with the C & C project. Staff has suggested that the Manufactured Home Repair program be eliminated.

#### **Project Activity Summary, Preliminary Revenues**

- Brenda reviewed current figures and estimates for all CD programs. The amounts will likely be adjusted more as projects move forward. Activities and revenues will be monitored with staff up until the month a decision is made. Brenda will get Quarter 3 figures prepared by the April meeting and will document notes on expected expenses through June 30.

#### **Neighborhood Concerns and Happenings:**

- Wyeth reported that several court-ordered abatements on Southside properties will begin in the coming weeks. The property owner would not make a deal to sell, but the structures will still be demolished.
- Project Re:Code work continues. Topic specific zoning commission hearings are scheduled regularly in order to provide the most concise format for sharing and gathering information with the public. The recommendations will be incorporated into the finalized draft. Staff is currently assessing how best to incorporate codes and regulations for Air B&B and VRBO properties, which are currently not allowed within the city. More work will be done to provide a middle ground for both the city and property owners.
- Council member, Denise Joy, shared that the City Council has narrowed down their priority list to forty items, however none of the top priorities were encompassing of affordable housing. Many of them are concerning public safety at this time. Council member Joy shared that the council agreed on pursuing the public safety mill levy. The first reading will need to occur by June 8, 2020.

**Next Meeting:** Board Chair, Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:45pm. The next meeting will be held on March 3, 2020.