



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

### Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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#### Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

March 3, 2020

**Board Members Present:** Rebecca Noell, Joe Stockburger, Katrina Kruger, Bret Rutherford, Jim Corson, Jessica Schmidt, Hannah Olson, Shane Noble, Council Member Denise Joy

**Board Members Excused:** Laura Gittings-Carlson

**Staff Present:** Brenda Beckett, Dina Harmon, Tam Rodier, 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. Newly appointed Board Members, Hannah Olson and Shane Noble, were introduced to the Board.

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

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

**Affordable Housing Development:** Mary Lou, staff member from NeighborWorks, attended the meeting to discuss the organization and their application for funding for infrastructure improvements at the C & C Mobile Home Park. NeighborWorks is a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). Mary Lou provided background information on NeighborWorks' extensive investment in Resident Owned Communities (ROCs) and explained that NeighborWorks has a designated ROC team that works to improve the properties long-term. She provided context regarding the social economic benefit of ROCs, as their operations open up communication among members and strengthen the sense of community. This often helps members start to address neighborhood issues that may have been overlooked for several years. NeighborWorks also provides leadership training for board members that manage the ROCs. C & C is the second largest community to be converted to a ROC through NeighborWorks.

Mary Lou shared C & C's most pressing needs and recommendations identified in the recently completed Capital Improvement Plan. These included the need for asphalt improvements, drainage corrections, and installation of fire hydrants. The C & C community proposes to contribute \$10,000 for these improvements. Staff asserted that no City dollars will be used for this project, as the funds will come from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Income repayments as well as from a new allocation following approval. Staff shared that they may propose the project be a grant product, as this is a forever investment in a low-income community. Additionally, the project would assist the CD Division in meeting their expenditure deadline for CDBG funds. The CD Board requested emailed copies of the application and breakdown of expenses in order to review prior to the next meeting.

Staff has completed a first draft of a Subrecipient Agreement for consideration if the project moves forward. City staff recommends the project be fully funded. The CD Board will vote on a recommendation at the April meeting. City Council is required to review the proposal and vote on the allocation at the first Council meeting in April. The project could start in May, pending approval.

#### Staff Reports:

- **Housing Rehabilitation:** Two new applications were received in February. Staff continues to advertise in Tidbits and Senior News.

- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Demolition on 930 Steffanich has begun. Windows, light fixtures and fans have been donated to Habitat for Humanity ReStore. Staff re-advertised the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Affordable Housing Development for this property, as no proposals were received by the previous deadline. The deadline will be open ended until staff receives and executes a contract.

Staff purchased a HUD foreclosure property at 817 N 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. Inspections have started and staff continues to work through various action items to ensure rehab moves forward efficiently. A site visit for CD board members will follow the April meeting.

- **Billings-Metro VISTA Project:** Staff and VISTA members are currently attending the ServeMontana Symposium in Helena. Active recruitment has been closed, and staff will now focus on engaging new sites and members to begin terms in July / August.

### **Consolidated Plan / Annual Action Plan Review / Staff Allocation Recommendations**

- Brenda shared a draft of work completed on the Consolidated Plan to date. It was reported that required information is being uploaded into the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS) as the document is drafted. HUD representatives noted that analysis will occur through review of hard-copy documents provided to them by the City moving forward. Brenda noted that through the report, the division will gather evidence to shape strategic planning goals as well as provide funding recommendations for the City's future projects. Public Comment will be open at end of March and the CD Board will vote on allocation recommendations in April.

### **VISTA Application Memo**

- The AmeriCorps VISTA Application Memo was presented for review. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has requested that the Division submit an application for resources in FY2021-2022. If approved, Staff will prepare and submit the application in the Fall. Board member, Jim Corson, mentioned that the current administration has proposed cutting funds for CNCS. Staff shared that the application will still be submitted prior to that type of decision. Staff recommended that the CD Board authorize submission of an application for AmeriCorps VISTA and authorize City staff to negotiate and finalize the project if awarded. The CD Board will vote on their recommendation at the next meeting so that it may also be presented to City Council in April.

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

- Board Chair, Rebecca Noell, reported that she recently attended a meeting with the Housing Authority of Billings (HAB). Rebecca stated that HAB indicated it has offered several tours of their assets to City Council, however only one Council Member has attended. It was discussed that affordable housing does not appear to be a current priority. Council member, Denise Joy, also shared concerns that local low-income properties could eventually be sold to corporations. Brenda noted that it is imperative to keep City Administration informed through public comment and supporting transitions to organizations like Homeword, which provide tax credits to develop and sustain housing for low income communities. There must also be an urgency to retain housing contracts with non-profit organizations, specifically CHDO's like NeighborWorks.

**Next Meeting:** Board Chair, Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:00pm in order to proceed with the Site Visit at C & C. The next meeting will be held on April 7, 2020.