



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board December 6, 2022

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Jim Corson, Joe Stockburger, Shane Noble, Bret Rutherford, Kathleen Candelaria, Jessica Schmidt, Katrina Kruger

Board Members Excused: Hannah Olson

Absent: None

City Council Representative: None

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

Welcome / Introductions / Announcements: The Community Development (CD) Board met in the 6th Floor Conference Room of the Miller Building. Board Chair Rebecca Noell called the meeting to order at 3:00pm.

Public Comment: None.

Announcements: Wyeth Friday said CD staff will host an Information Session on CDBG, HOME, HOME-ARP and Housing Development Opportunities in the Library Community Room, 2:30pm-4pm, on Friday, December 16, 2022. City Council representatives may also be on hand to discuss City-owned land available for sale that might be used for affordable housing projects. Representatives from the state office of the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) are planning to attend as are representatives of the City's two Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs). There may be an opportunity for participants to attend via Zoom. CD Board members are encouraged to attend.

Brenda said the City Council is considering a Resolution regarding remote meeting participation. If approved, it would also apply to City Boards and Commissions. The draft Resolution is very specific; remote participation up to four times per year, with no more than two consecutive meetings. Brenda said she would keep the Board advised of the status.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Jim Corson moved to approve the November minutes as written and distributed. Board member Shane Noble seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously approved.

Staff Reports:

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Dina Harmon reported despite the slow housing market and the time of year when housing sales are down, she has received two buy/sells in the last week that should close late December/early January. She also has received calls from lenders inquiring if there are funds available for the program.
- **Affordable Housing Development Program:** Brenda said there has been "lots of drumming in the community," but no applications have been received. However, she said HomeWord has inquired about the possibility of making renovations at Southern Lights. HOME funds may not be used because it is still within the period of affordability, but CDBG funds might be used if the CD Board is interested. It would be a loan product and the CD Board could consider requiring an additional Deed Restriction.

The City currently only has two certified CHDOs, HomeWord and NeighborWorks.

Wyeth said he and CD staff recently met with HomeFront about their interest in pursuing an Affordable Housing Development project in the Heights. A concept meeting with City departments is scheduled for tomorrow. HomeFront may submit an application for the project.

- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam reported the Construction Agreement with Majestic Homes, the Final Work List, and the Notice to Proceed have been executed. The project will be completed by June 30, 2023.

Tam showed a video walk-through of a similar home to what will be placed on the site.

- **CDBG-CV:** Tam Rodier gave the following project updates:
 - *Downtown Public Restroom & Handwashing Station:* Due to supply chain and contractor availability issues, the DBA has requested an Agreement of Modification extending the time of performance through June 30, 2023.
 - *Salvation Army:* Grant closeout is in progress.
 - *Comanche Park:* Tam said she would like to discuss the possibility of paving South Plainview Street adjacent to the park using CDBG funds. She received a rough cost estimate from the Public Works Department (PWD). PWD staff also mailed an Special Improvement District (SID) interest survey to area property owners to determine their interest in participating in the costs. There was not a favorable response from neighbors. The Parks Department does not have the capacity to add the project to their workload, nor do they have funds available to pay for street paving. Tam asked if CD Board members were interested in pursuing the improvements using CDBG funds. Board members liked the idea. Brenda suggested that PWD staff be invited to the next CD Board meeting to discuss options.
- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly said she has one confirmed new member who will begin service in January with Chinook Horses. She will continue recruiting through January 16 for a February service start.

She recently completed host site monitoring, which went well.

Current VISTA members attended in-service training yesterday.

VISTA members are planning their MLK Day of Service event at Family Service.

Wyeth commented that at the end of the December 5 City Council meeting, a Council member asked if the City was recruiting for City VISTA positions. A brief discussion regarding recruiting methods followed.

- **HOME-ARP:** Carly reported the survey was sent to 80 organizations; 18 completed surveys were received; 11 incomplete surveys were received. She is following up with several organizations who did not respond, but whose data is important to the needs assessment.

HUD set a March 31, 2023, allocation plan submission deadline. Staff will compile and submit to HUD by the deadline.

HomeFront Collaboration: Wyeth said there was some miscommunication leading up to the City Council action on the Steffanich project. As a result, the City and HomeFront are exploring ways to improve communications. Quarterly update meetings involving CD staff and HomeFront staff have been suggested. HomeFront has a

“development committee” (subgroup of the Board of Directors). CD staff and a City Council liaison may be invited to attend these committee meetings in the future. CD Board leadership will also have the opportunity to participate.

CDBG and HOME Application Process: Board members received and reviewed last year’s application and guidebook. Staff recommends opening CDBG and HOME applications by December 12, 2022, including a new online application. Applications will be due by January 20, 2023. Board members had no suggested changes to the Guidebook, online application form, etc.

Brenda said the CD Board recommended the switch from grants to loan products in 2012, which the City Council approved. The only exception is for City infrastructure projects, which are generally grants. She asked if the Board wished to continue with loan projects. Board members discussed and confirmed their desire to “stay the course” with no changes, except the new online application process.

Brenda suggested that the South Plainview paving project could be an opportunity to “test the waters” as far as a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) project. Staff needs to better understand the CIP process and how CDBG funding could be applied.

Bret Rutherford made a motion to approve the CDBG and Home application process as recommended by staff. Katrina Kruger 2nd the motion. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously approved.

CD Board Member Recruitment: Brenda said the Mayor requested assistance with Board recruitment ideas. She asked why Board members chose to serve or for recruitment ideas. Board members suggested the following:

- Word of mouth; suggestion by a friend, business associate, etc.
- Chamber of Commerce “Next Gen Committee”
- City Public Information Officer focus on Board recruitment, develop “shorts,” etc.
- United Way Volunteer Calendar
- Other City Boards – members cycling out and available

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: None

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:15pm. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on January 3, 2023.