



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board
January 2, 2023

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Shane Noble, James Allen, Jim Corson, Joe Stockburger, Erica Doornek, Jenna Martin

Board Members Excused: Kathleen Candelaria

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.

New Board Member Introductions: Chair Rebecca Noell invited new board members to introduce themselves.

Jenna Martin said she has been a resident of Billings for about 20 years. She played softball at MSU-Billings. She applied to serve on the board because she is interested in fighting for decent housing in the community.

James Allen said he read in the Yellowstone County News about board vacancies. As a new homeowner, he is increasingly interested in what is happening in the community and local political issues.

Erica Doornek said she has lived in Billings for six and half years. She worked at the Billings Gazette for five years as an editor. She bought a house in the North Park area and has been concerned about reactions to the Salvation Army's "tiny house village" plans. She currently works for the federal government.

Rebecca Noell noted there is still one vacant position on the CD Board, that must be filled by a low-income area resident. She asked staff to email a copy of the low-income map to board members.

Announcements: None

Public Comment: None.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Jim Corson moved to approve the December minutes as written and distributed. Board member Shane Noble seconded the motion.

Jenna Martin asked for clarification of the remote attendance resolution because she desires to take advantage of the option to attend meetings remotely. Brenda Beckett and Wyeth Friday explained the City Council chose to establish rules authorizing City Council and City board members to participate remotely under specific circumstances while ensuring remote participation fulfills the City's obligation to permit and encourage public participation. Brenda added that she attempted to simplify the Resolution in the "Remote Attendance" section on the back of the CD Board Agenda. She also noted there is no camera in the conference room, so a laptop camera will be used in the conference room when Board members participate remotely.

There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken and the motion to approve the December minutes was unanimously approved.

Staff Reports:

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Dina Harmon reported funds have been committed to two households and they are waiting on a few things before closing.
- **Affordable Housing Development Program:** Dina Harmon said while a few developers have shown interest, no applications have been received to date. She is very hopeful Homeword will apply for a CHDO project.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam Rodier gave a brief overview of the program and then reported the Steffanich Project is moving forward according to the recently-executed Construction Agreement.
- **CDBG-CV:** Tam gave a brief explanation of funding, the survey, CD Board priorities, and City Council approval and then gave the following project updates:
 - *CDBG-CV Projects:* Quarterly performance reports and requests for reimbursements are due by January 5th.
 - *Downtown Public Restroom & Handwashing Station:* The Agreement of Modification extending the time of performance due to contractor issues is pending.
- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly Collins gave a brief overview of BMVP. She said one new VISTA will start in a couple of weeks at Chinook Horses. She continues to interview candidates for February starts. The Request for Proposals is open for host sites.
- **HOME-ARP:** Carly reported she is currently writing the Draft Allocation Plan (required by HUD), which will be sent to Board members by February 21. She asked board members to quickly review in preparation for discussing and taking action at their March 7 meeting.

Brenda gave a quick overview of HOME-ARP, explaining it is a very difficult program for which HUD did not issue rules and regulations for over a year after funding was announced. So far, there is only one approved HOME-ARP Allocation Plan in the state (Great Falls).

At the March 7 meeting, the Board will discuss and take action on the draft Allocation Plan. If the Board approves, staff will submit a City Council memo recommending action to approve during their March 13 regular business meeting. If approved by the City Council, the Allocation Plan will be finalized and submitted to HUD by the March 31 deadline.

Street Paving Adjacent to Comanche Park: Tam explained a new playground will be installed in Comanche Park using CDBG-CV funds. The three streets around the park (north end of S Plainview Street, Kalmar Drive, and the north end of S 12th Street W) are gravel. She asked if the Board was interested in using CDBG funds to pave all or part of the streets surrounding the park. She said the Board could chose not to pave any, all, or a portion. The general Board consensus was yes to paving, but no action was taken. The Board asked for the following before taking action at their February 7 meeting:

- Perform an eligibility assessment to ensure the service area is ≥51% residential (required by HUD).
- Consider having a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) assessment completed. Specifically look at lighting. As per the website ([CPTED](#)), "CPTED is a multi-disciplinary approach of crime prevention that uses urban and architectural design and the management of built and natural environments. CPTED strategies aim to reduce victimization, deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts, and build a sense of community among inhabitants so they can gain territorial control of areas, reduce crime, and minimize fear of crime."

- Increase project contingency, if approved, from 10% to 20%.

Officer Elections:

- Jim Corson made a motion to nominate Rebecca Noell to serve as 2023 Chair. Jenna Martin seconded the motion. Rebecca accepted the nomination. No other nominations were made. A vote was taken, and the motion unanimously approved.
- Jim Corson nominated Joe Stockburger to serve as 2023 Vice-Chair. Shane Noble seconded the motion. Joe accepted the nomination. No other nominations were made. A vote was taken, and the motion unanimously approved.
- Wyeth explained HomeFront, which is the public housing authority in Billings, has a Board of Directors appointed by the Mayor and City Council. HomeFront also has a Development Committee that meets at least quarterly. With the goal of improving communication between the City and HomeFront, it has been suggested that the Mayor appoint a City Council Liaison to the HomeFront Board of Directors and the CD Board appoint two CD Board Liaisons to the HomeFront Development Committee. The Board discussed the idea of having the CD Board Chair and Vice Chair serve as the default liaisons, but no action was taken. Wyeth said he would get the meeting schedule to the Board as soon as it was available to help them in deciding how to proceed.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings:

Shane said he volunteered at Shelter First the first night it opened. It was about 20 degrees below zero and 15 people checked in. The shelter does intake every night from 6:30-9:30 p.m. and Crisis Center staff is on hand to assist. Billings Event Services handles security every night.

December 16, 2022, Public Information Session: Brenda reported about 20 people attended the session at the Library, including Jim Corson. CD staff gave program overviews and described application processes and timelines. CDBG & HOME applications are due by January 20. Affordable Housing Development applications are accepted 365 days a year. The session ended with a City-owned properties presentation and sharing of the [new online map](#), etc. Most of the questions following the session were asked by developers interested in City-owned properties.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:35 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on February 7, 2023.