



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board April 4, 2023

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Jim Corson, Kathleen Candelaria, Joe Stockburger, Erica Doornek, Jenna Martin

Board Members Excused: James Allen

Absent: Shane Noble

City Council Representative: Denise Joy

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 3:00 p.m.

Announcements: None.

Discussion / Highlights: CD staff thanked Board members for attending and participating in the March 13 City Council meeting during which the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan was presented, discussed, and approved. The notes of support afterward were also very much appreciated. Brenda said she would forward a link to the meeting recording and timestamps so Board members could listen to key Council member feedback.

Jim Corson and Rebecca Noell attended the *Boards, Commissions & City Council Training* on March 29. They agreed it was a worthwhile training. They gave a brief recap of some of the key points and discussion topics.

Public Comment: None.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Jim Corson made a motion to approve the March 2023 minutes as written and distributed, with one minor edit. Board member Kathleen Candelaria seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the March 2023 minutes were unanimously approved.

Staff Reports:

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Dina Harmon reported one family is scheduled to close the first week in May. Two other families are working through issues before they can close their loans.
- **Affordable Housing Development Program:** Dina Harmon said there have been no applications to date.

The Salvation Army is looking for funding for their [William Booth Village](#) on 6th Avenue N. Wyeth Friday said the Building and Planning Divisions have signed off on their plans. He said the plans are for “sleeping cabins” and common facilities similar to KOA’s cabin arrangements. Brenda Beckett said the project may be eligible for CDBG funding. Monitoring would be required, and the term would be specified in the Agreement. The CD Board would provide input about the monitoring term and other details. CD staff is available to assist the Salvation Army in preparing an Affordable Housing Development application.

- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam Rodier reported the Steffanich Project continues to move forward toward completion by June 30, 2023. The home would then be offered for sale to approved First-Time Home Buyers.
- **CDBG-CV:** Tam Rodier said quarterly progress reports and reimbursement requests are due this week from all projects that have not already been completed and closed.
 - Comanche Park:
 - City Council approved the Paving Project and CPTED Recommendations and allocated funding on March 13th.
 - The Environmental Review for the additional work is complete.
 - The site work contract for the playground, accessible curb-side parking, and walkway to the playground is routing for signatures.
 - A Request for Written Quotes for CPTED improvements was sent out with proposals due April 21.
 - North Park:
 - Orders have been placed for the restroom, shade structure, and adult exercise equipment.
 - Requests for Quotes are being prepared for 1) Demolition of the existing restroom and site work for the new restroom, and 2) Site work for the shelter, exercise equipment, and concrete walkway bulb-outs.
 - North Park Center – specifications are being developed for accessibility improvements (push button doors, touchless restroom features) and air circulation improvements.
 - North Park Task Force presentation scheduled for Wednesday, April 5th.
 - Pioneer Park – specifications are being developed to:
 - Correct water intrusion issues and install accessibility improvements (push button doors, touchless features) for the restroom near the wading pool.
 - Installing touchless features in the Zimmerman Center restrooms.

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly Collins passed out copies of the Summer Associate and Full-Year VISTA positions. All positions have been posted. She has her first interview scheduled for tomorrow.

During March, current VISTA members attended the ServeMontana Symposium in Helena. The VISTA members enjoyed gathering with hundreds of other service members from around the state. The training sessions were also timely, inspiring, and well received.

She submitted the Billings Metro VISTA grant application for next year, as well as the VISTA amendment to include Summer Associates.

- **HOME-ARP Allocation Plan:** Carly Collins reported she submitted the Allocation Plan to HUD before the March 31 deadline. HUD has 45 days to review and approve.

She is currently working on next steps, which include developing grant application(s), written policies and procedures, monitoring plans, etc.

Recusals & Budget Recommendations: Brenda Becket explained the Code of Conduct and recusals process and distributed the recusal forms. All CD Board members completed, signed, and returned their forms. Staff will retain scanned copies of the forms.

FY2023-2024 Annual Action Plan and Funding Recommendation: Brenda distributed copies of the Annual Action Plan and Draft funding recommendations, explained the budget rationale, and answered questions.

The draft [FY2023-2024 Annual Action Plan](#) (AAP) was posted on the City website March 20 and is open for public comments from March 25 through April 24.

CD Board members discussed increasing the VISTA CDBG budget by \$3,000, to accommodate staff support and training, and reducing the Affordable Housing Development (AHD) budget by the same amount.

CD Board member Jim Corson made a motion to recommend the City Council approve the FY2023-2024 Annual Action Plan and staff's proposed funding allocations, with a \$3,000 increase to VISTA and \$3,000 reduction to AHD, and direct staff to finalize and submit to HUD by May 15, 2023. CD Board member Kathleen Candelaria seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken and the motion unanimously approved.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: Wyeth said the City Council previously established a Housing Strategy Process that HomeFront is leading and is supported by other partners. They are planning a stakeholder event May 10 to which they will invite people to attend and provide feedback. More information to follow.

Wyeth said VISTA Ellie Stanton is serving with the Police Department on a project to set up a Family Justice Center. The group has been invited to make a presentation about their plans and process to the City Council.

City Council Member Denise Joy noted the following key takeaways from the recent City Council Retreat:

- There was quite a bit of “outside the box” thinking and discussions about how to change the response to address public safety.
- Dave Armstrong from Alternatives expressed thankfulness for the CDBG-CV funds they are using to help people track themselves and successfully meet program requirements.
- More people are coming through the justice system with mental health and/or substance abuse issues.
- Discussion of ways to “stem the tide” and reduce youth crime, etc.
- Discussion of how to spend the two mils from marijuana legalization.
- Awareness that there are no quick and easy answers.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:30 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on May 2, 2023.