



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board
August 1, 2023

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Jim Corson, Erica Doornek, Jenna Martin

Board Members Excused: Joe Stockburger, James Allen

Absent: Kathleen Candelaria

City Council Representative: Denise Joy

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

Guests: Elyse Monat, Terri Porta

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

Public Comment: None

Meeting Minutes: Board member Jim Corson made a motion to approve the June 6, 2023, minutes as written and distributed. Board member Rebecca Noell seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Placemaking Hub / Heritage Trail / Pioneer Park: Tam introduced Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner, and Terri Porta, "Artist in Residence," who shared the following:

- Elyse Monat went through a PowerPoint presentation to explain the Mobilize the MAGIC City Project, which has the goal of developing a formal process to involve art in everyday life. Terri Porta is the City's new "Artist in Residence" who will be working for a year to implement two creative placemaking hubs along Billings' first neighborhood bikeway (from North Park to Rose Park), document the process in a Placemaking Playbook, and conduct a public arts committee feasibility study. Terri has done significant outreach through various venues to engage the public in the process already. She developed many designs, reviewed them with the Mobilize the MAGIC City Advisory Committee, and is moving forward with designs selected for two locations along the neighborhood bikeway. She and Terri are here because they recently learned from Tam that there might be funding available for a third placemaking hub along the Heritage Trail in Pioneer Park.
- Terri Porta shared a visual illustration of the 20' high, steel, hot pink I-beam structure she is proposing to be placed over the Heritage Trail in Pioneer Park. The top would be colored design panels, which the sun would shine through. If feasible, she would like to add solar lights as well. She proposed to locate the structure on the basically straight and flat section north of the chain link fence, which borders Senior High / Wendy's Field. She said she understands some events start or conclude in the area and the structure could possibly be utilized during those events. She then fielded questions from Board members.
- Tam Rodier said the Heritage Trail reconstruction project came in about \$30,000 under budget, so \$30,000 is available for the placemaking hub.

Board member Jim Corson said after reviewing the remaining Heritage Trail project budget and learning about the proposed placemaking hub design for Pioneer Park, I move to direct staff to process an Agreement of Modification to the Grant Agreement with the Parks, Recreation & Public Lands Department to allow spending up to \$50,000 for the creation and installation of the Pink I Beam design and to increase the time of performance to December 31, 2023. Board member Rebecca Noell seconded the motion. There was some additional discussion about the idea of including solar lights, bench(s), etc. to draw people into the area to enjoy the installation. A vote was taken, and the motion was approved with three (3) votes for approval and one (1) vote against approval.

Staff Reports:

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Dina Harmon reported there are no active closings scheduled. There are many active applications.
- **Affordable Housing Development Program:** Dina said an application was received from HomeFront for their “Recycle & Reuse Project” in the Heights. The application was missing materials. As soon as a complete application is received, it will be presented to the CD Board for review.

Another developer has also contacted staff to discuss a potential “Mitchell Court” project on the southside. The developer is currently applying to the Montana Board of Housing for low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC). If an application is received, it will also be brought to the CD Board for review.

- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam Rodier said the Steffanich project is nearly complete, and she is looking forward to providing a tour of the property after today’s meeting. She said there has been a NorthWestern Energy delay in getting the new pole and underground piping installed, so there is no electricity yet. She is currently working to hire a landscape architect to design xeriscaping for the areas immediately around the home. She has been in contact with Montana Conservation Corps about assisting with xeriscaping installation. CD Board members suggested other options for getting volunteers for the installation (United Way Day of Caring, 9/11 Day of Service, NCCC). As soon as the landscaping is in, the sale price will be set through an appraisal.
- **CDBG / CDBG-CV Projects:** Tam gave the following project updates.
 - Comanche Park:
 - Project has been delayed due to fall protection manufacturer issues. The first shipment of engineered wood fiber fall protection chips was delivered to the site last week. Once all the chips have been installed, the contractor will clean up the site, remove the fence, and it will be open to the public.
 - The street paving construction contract has been signed; it includes an October 30, 2023 completion date.
 - The CPTED improvements construction agreement has been signed; it includes a December 29, 2023 completion date.
 - North Park:
 - The prefabricated concrete restroom is in production with an estimated shipping date of early September.
 - Contract for existing restroom demo and site prep for prefabricated restroom placement signed; completion by October 30, 2023.
 - Adult exercise equipment has been received.
 - The new shade shelter is in production and will ship soon.

- Contract for the site improvements for adult exercise pod, existing shelter demo, and installation of the adult exercise equipment and shelter has been signed; completion by September 15, 2023.
- Parks Accessibility Projects – Staff has been in contact with a potential bidder and is hoping to receive a bid soon for:
 - North Park Center HVAC and accessibility improvements.
 - Restroom water intrusion mitigation and accessibility improvements
 - Received a separate estimate for the painting portion of the project. Staff is reviewing before routing it for signatures.
 - Zimmerman Center accessibility improvements.
- Downtown Public Handwashing Station / Restroom: Rough-in plumbing and electrical have been installed and the pad has been poured. Next step is to finish excavating to connect the underground utilities, pour the concrete sidewalk / drive approach, and lay asphalt in the alley. The Downtown Business Improvement District plans a ribbon cutting celebration when it is functional. CD Board members requested they be notified so they can attend.
- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly Collins said three new members have been recruited; two new members and a VISTA leader. She distributed copies of the member bios and pictures. Dan Sidle is a current BMVP VISTA serving in Helena; he will be moving to Billings and serve as the VISTA Leader.

Abi Sherer started her service mid-July. Inanna Hencke will start her service on August 14th. Carly is taking all three new VISTAs to Helena for a swearing-in ceremony with the Lieutenant Governor August 14-15.

She is working on the Request for Proposals for new VISTA host sites for January; proposals received by September 8, 2023 will be prioritized. She has been attending a lot of outreach events and ramping up recruitment.

- **HOME-ARP Allocation Plan:** Carly said she continues to work on the application and the policies and procedures. She held a community forum in June. The top three issues identified during the session included:
 - There is a need for an “outreach coordinator,”
 - \$10,000 per family cap,
 - Ability for agencies to collaborate and/or apply as partners.

The State released their HOME-ARP application. They are basically on the same timeline as the City, but they started a couple of months ahead of the City.

CD Board members asked for clarification of the process following application submittal. Carly said staff would review applications for completeness and then forward to CD Board members for review. Board members may wish to do site visits prior to making award recommendation(s) to the City Council.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings:

Wyeth Friday said the City’s Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Committee has been meeting. They are coordinating efforts and discussing available funding sources. Council member Denise Joy added that the City Council received a CPTED presentation recently. The committee is looking at other City-owned properties, not just parks. Some recent results have been the removal of large bushes, etc. that were blocking entrances and site lines, etc.

Brenda Beckett suggested CD Board members let staff know if they have CPTED ideas.

Brenda also said she understood lighting was installed in North Park recently and it is already making a difference in the night-time feel.

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 September 5, 2023.