



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

September 5, 2023

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Jim Corson, Joe Stockburger, James Allen

Board Members Excused: Kathleen Candelaria, Jenna Martin

Absent: Erica Doornek

City Council Representative: Denise Joy

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

Guests: AmeriCorps VISTA Leader Daniel Sidle

Welcome / Introductions: 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. Staff and CD Board members shared introductions with the VISTA Leader, Daniel.

Announcements: Wyeth Friday shared that there are some public art project recommendations to City Council through an old resolution which includes involvement of an Ad Hoc Committee. There will be a new public arts policy proposed soon, but there are some details and procedures to work out first.

Brenda Beckett shared that she submitted a substantial amendment to the Annual Action Plan and Consolidated Plan to provide potential funding for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) projects in low-income area parks. Beckett also reported that she has posted the drafted Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) and the public hearing will be during the City Council meeting on September 11th.

Public Comment: None.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Jim Corson made a motion to approve the August 1, 2023, minutes as written and distributed. Board member Joe Stockburger seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Staff Reports:

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Dina Harmon reported that applications are still being submitted, however there are no buy / sell agreements in process at this time.
- **Affordable Housing Development Program:** Dina said that HomeFront recently rescinded their application for funding on their “recycle and reuse” project. Staff are unsure of the reasoning.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam Rodier is on vacation, so Carly Collins shared the following:
 - NorthWestern Energy finally hooked up power. Final inspection is pending.
 - A landscape architect has been engaged to design xeriscaping for the areas immediately around the home.

- The Montana Conservation Corps is interested in assisting with xeriscaping installation, but the details need to be worked out.
 - As soon as the landscaping is in, the sale price will be set through an appraisal.
- **CDBG / CDBG-CV Projects:** Carly also gave the following project updates in Tam's absence:
 - Downtown Public Restroom / Handwashing station is now open! Ribbon cutting ceremony was held August 17.
 - Washington Elementary HVAC: All classroom unit ventilators were removed and replaced with new units. The controls for the units were connected to the system and are all up and running. The only piece remaining is the replacement of the hallway units, which is ongoing on evenings and weekends.
 - Comanche Park:
 - The playground is OPEN!
 - Terri Porta will be painting a mural on the basketball court soon. Design was selected by residents in the area.
 - New basketball system has been delivered and is ready to install as soon as a contractor can be engaged.
 - New VISTA Inanna Hencke designed a sensory pathway sign that has been ordered.
 - Street paving construction contract signed; completion by October 30, 2023.
 - CPTED construction agreement signed; completion by December 29, 2023.
 - North Park:
 - Existing shelter demo, site preparation, and installation of the adult exercise equipment and new shelter should be completed by the end of September.
 - Existing restroom demo, site prep work, and placement of the pre-fabricated restroom is expected to be completed by October 30, 2023.
 - Parks Accessibility Projects:
 - Pioneer Park Restroom painting begins this week.
 - We received a quote for the remaining accessibility improvements at Pioneer Park, North Park Center, and the Zimmerman Center. Staff is currently negotiating with the contractor to complete some or all of the accessibility improvements.

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly Collins reported that a new VISTA and VISTA Leader started service in August. Along with the July VISTA, the new members attended a swearing-in ceremony at the Montana State Capitol with the Lieutenant Governor. The national Director of AmeriCorps VISTA was also present via Zoom.

VISTA Leader, Daniel, introduced himself and discussed that he is currently working on refining resources to help new VISTAs moving to the community including mental health resources.

VISTA Host Site Proposals are due on Friday, September 8th. Staff has received two submissions so far. VISTA member recruitment will begin in October for year-long service terms beginning in January / February. AmeriCorps has hired national recruiters that may be assisting the BMVP with recruitment challenges in the future.

- **HOME-ARP Allocation Plan:** Carly reported on a proposed timeline for HOME-ARP funding applications. Board members reviewed the timeline and provided insight on the application review process and potential challenges with City Council meeting dates. Staff will review and adjust the timeline as needed. The Request for Qualifications process, policies and procedures, and monitoring tools are being refined.

Board & Commission Annual Report to City Council: Brenda Beckett gathered information from the Board regarding what to include with the Annual Report to City Council. This included major accomplishments such as the installation of the public handwashing station / bathroom and the housing developed at Steffanich; challenges which included a lack of / rescinding of affordable housing development applications, and lower than normal CD Board membership; and goals such as releasing HOME-ARP funding, CPTED projects, and funding more Resident Owned Communities (ROC) improvements.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: Wyeth Friday shared that in House Bill 819 there are new components for Housing Authorities and other entities to apply for low-interest loans through the State Board of Investments in order to fund various projects. There are no known plans to apply from any organizations at this point, but they are trying to get the word out.

Save the dates for the Volunteer Boards and Commissions appreciation dinner in October was shared with the CD Board members.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:25p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on October 3, 2023.