



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

2825 3rd Avenue North, Billings, MT 59101 Phone: 406.657.8281 Fax: 406.294.7595 Relay: 711 www.CityofBillings.net/ComDev

Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

October 3, 2023

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

Board Members Excused: Kathleen Candelaria

Absent: James Allen

City Council Representative: Denise Joy

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

Guests: VISTA Member Ellie Stanton, VISTA Member Inanna Hencke, 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. Board members and guests were invited to introduce themselves.

Announcements: Brenda Beckett said Wyeth Friday was traveling and he would not be joining today.

Public Comment: None.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Jim Corson made a motion to approve the September 5, 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.

Family Justice Center: VISTA Ellie Stanton introduced herself, her background, her VISTA Assignment Description, and said she is serving with the Billings Police Department's Domestic Violence Investigations Program. The overall goal of her project is to assist with the organization of existing community resources and to co-locate many of them into one facility—a Family Justice Center. The center would include nonprofits, prosecution, community-based advocacy, housing assistance, physical and mental health services, civil legal help, and culturally-specific services for underserved populations. Each has been trained to work with victims.

She has received unanimous support from everyone she has contacted about creating a Family Justice Center and momentum is growing. The City Council recently allocated \$200,000 to prevent family violence. She is also creating work groups to keep the ball rolling.

A Strategic Planning event was held September 19-20, 2023; which drew 90 attendees. Most were from Billings, but there were also a few from as far away as Missoula. The sessions were interactive. She expects to have the findings report ready for distribution sometime in November.

Staff Reports:

- Affordable Housing Development Program:** Dina said she has not received any complete applications. Brenda commented that the City expects to receive an application for Mitchell Court from the same development group that created Jackson Court. Tam said she toured Jackson Court and it is absolutely beautiful. She added that the developer's Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) application with the State of Montana will be reviewed

later in October. She said it was her understanding the developer would submit their Affordable Housing Development application after the State makes a determination on their LIHTC application.

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Dina Harmon reported she has two closings scheduled this month.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam Rodier shared the following:

Steffanich Property

- Final inspection has been conducted and punch list submitted to the contractor.
- Xeriscaping design is in progress; installation details yet to be worked out.

New Property – 1709 St. Johns Ave.

- Submitted a bid for this HUD-Foreclosed property and the City's bid was accepted. Working through the contract / purchase details now.

- **CDBG / CDBG-CV Projects:** Tam also gave the following project updates:

Washington Elementary HVAC: No change from last month, but she believes the project is complete. Their quarterly performance report and reimbursement request is due October 5th.

Comanche Park

- The mural is nearly completed; shared pictures.
- New basketball system will be installed with the CPTED improvements; construction to begin this week or next.
- Street paving construction contract signed; completion by October 30, 2023.

North Park

- Old restroom has been demolished. Site work and prep for the new restroom is underway.
- The existing shelter demo, site preparation, and installation of the adult exercise equipment and new shelter will be completed after the restroom has been installed (same contractor).

Parks Accessibility Projects:

- Pioneer Park Restroom painting has been completed and it looks great!
- Currently negotiating a contract for the remaining accessibility improvements at Pioneer Park, North Park Center, and the Zimmerman Center. Hoping the work will be completed this fall.

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly Collins distributed copies of the new VISTA positions and descriptions that are now posted online for January / February 2024 service starts.

She is excited that three of the current VISTAs are in attendance today.

She has scheduled an in-service training event for Monday, October 9th, in Livingston. Current BMVP VISTA members will attend. She attempted to invite other project's VISTA members to join in, but it did not work out this time. She will try again with the next in-service training in December.

- **HOME-ARP Allocation Plan:** Carly reported the online Request for Qualifications will be released on Monday, October 9th. Responses are due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, November 17th. Advertising in the Yellowstone County News starts this Friday, October 6th. She will also directly email the notice to area nonprofits and government agencies. She may also send a media release.

She has scheduled a group technical assistance session for Wednesday, October 18th.

There is just over \$1M available to approved respondent agencies. Money is for services only; no construction. Money will be distributed as reimbursements. Reimbursements could be first-come, first-served.

Carly asked how CD Board members wanted to receive applications; as they come in or as a packet after the November 17th closing date. The Board decided they would prefer to get a packet. Following CD Board review, the CD Board will make award recommendation(s) to the City Council. The City Council will take action on the recommendation(s).

Substantial Amendment: Brenda presented a brief PowerPoint presentation explaining the Substantial Amendment recently submitted to HUD.

Comprehensive Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER): Brenda presented a brief PowerPoint presentation approved by the City Council and recently submitted to HUD.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: Council member Denise Joy said the City Council is setting up a new process for selling, donating, or otherwise disposing of City-owned land. She said most of the City-owned land that would be available is park land.

Board member Jim Corson passed out flyers showing the dates of Billings Municipal Candidate Forums. The session will be professionally moderated by a Hot 101.9 radio personality.

Board member Erica Doornek said a Renaissance Fair would be held in North Park this Saturday, October 7th. She said she understood the proceeds would be used for North Park improvements projects like a new dog park, to resurface the tennis courts, etc.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:05 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on November 7, 2023.