



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

April 2, 2024

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Joe Stockburger, Kathleen Candelaria, Erica Doornek, James Allen, Hans Abbey, Ali Pistora

Board Members Excused: Valerie Courtney

Board Members Absent: Jenna Martin

City Council Representative: Denise Joy

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

Guests: Holly Bowman and Joe Anderson (Alternatives); Abi Scherer (AmeriCorps VISTA); one additional guest (name unknown).

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 shared that the Community Development Division offices will be moving to the Stillwater Building in August. The new offices will be on the 4th floor (blue) with the Police Department. CD Board meetings will be held in that building after the move. Brenda said CD staff has been working to implement Records Retention Schedules. So far, records eligible for destruction date back to the 1980s.

Brenda shared copies of the **Yellowstone County News** and **Yellowstone Valley Woman Magazine** within which VISTA Ellie Stanton's efforts to bring a Family Justice Center to Billings is highlighted.

Public Comment: None

Meeting Minutes: Board member James Allen made a motion to approve the March 5, 2024, minutes as written and distributed. Board member Kathleen Candelaria 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 reported she has one family scheduled to close on the purchase of their home this week.

Brenda added that Dina has closed the sale of four homes this year and she has twenty-six approved applicants waiting to find an affordable home.

- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):** Dina stated the Michell Court Apartments project is on the April 22 City Council agenda. However, legal documents have not yet been approved, so this may be pushed back. Municipal legal staff from around the state are questioning the need for Deed Restrictions going forward.

- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam Rodier shared the following:

Steffanich Property

- The contractor finished installing the xeriscaping and trees today (she distributed pictures). While there is a small punch list, it should not hold up the post-rehab appraisal. She ordered the appraisal, and it will be completed within the next week or two. As soon as we have established the sales price, Dina will market the home to approved First Time Home Buyer applicants.

1709 St. Johns Avenue

- The City Council rejected all bids at their March 11 meeting. Staff revised the Invitation for Bids (IFB) to reduce potential project costs and re-advertised. The pre-bid meeting was held earlier today; three contractors participated. Bids are due by 2:00 p.m. on April 16.

Staff is considering a revision to the Resolution that would remove the rehabilitation limit of 50% of the current HUD purchase price limit.

- The City's application for an AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) team was approved! A team of seven (7) members will arrive in Billings April 26. Bethlehem Lutheran Church is providing lodging for the team. This is a joint effort with the Parks, Recreation & Public Lands Department. The team will be prepping for, and installing, xeriscaping at the Saint Johns property and also doing several park improvement projects. CD and Parks staff will conduct an orientation session on April 29. The team will complete their work for the City on June 14.

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

North Park: The restroom, shade shelter, and adult exercise projects are wrapping up and should be open to the public this spring.

Parks Accessibility Projects: The accessibility improvements at the Pioneer Park restroom, North Park Center, and the Zimmerman Center are also wrapping up.

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly Collins reported:

- VISTAs attended the ServeMontana Symposium in Helena during March. There were many sessions and lots of networking opportunities.
- The 2024-2025 AmeriCorps Grant Application was submitted and is currently under review.
- VISTA positions were all approved today; she distributed copies.

HOME-ARP Discussion, Next Steps: Carly said:

- Staff is finalizing the subrecipient guidebook.
- She attended a recent webinar providing additional guidance—unfortunately much of the guidance provided is NOT in the regulation. Staff is trying to sort through what is actually required.
- Written agreements need to be finalized before going to the City Council.
- Staff recommends up to \$100,000 to each of the six applicant organizations with a renewable feature if the organization has been compliant with regulations. This would be \$600,000 of the roughly \$1 million available. The remainder will be allocated with contract renewals.
- She gave a brief verbal reminder of each organization and the services they plan to provide.

Board member Joe Stockburger made a motion to allocate up to \$100,000 to each of the six applicants each resulting in a Subrecipient Agreement including a “contract renewable” feature. Board member Erica Doornek seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

The Board consensus was to ask subrecipients to come back to the CD Board a few months after services begin to share anecdotal stories of the impacts of their projects.

Recusals & Budget Recommendations: Board members each submitted their signed forms. There was only one recusal, related to the FTHB Program. Votes for FTHB will be separated going forward.

FY2024-2025 Annual Action Plan and Funding Recommendation: Brenda Beckett distributed copies of the Annual Action Plan and estimated revenues and recommended budget for FY2024/2025. She said HUD has not yet released allocation amounts, so these figures may change. Brenda provided explanations for each program and answered Board questions. She said recommendations are for primary programs first; anything else that comes in would go to Affordable Housing.

Board member Kathleen Candelaria made a motion to recommend the City Council approve the FY2024-2025 Annual Action Plan and funding allocations and direct staff to finalize and submit to HUD by May 15, 2024. Board member James Allen seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings:

Erica gave updates on North Park: a 6-hole disc golf course is planned, they should be breaking ground on the dog park soon, there will be some additional improvements to the North Park Center, and resurfacing the courts is being discussed. A June “Re-Opening Dedication” is being planned.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:10 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on May 7, 2024.