



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

September 3, 2024

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Joe Stockburger, Kathleen Candelaria, Erica Doornek, Ali Pistora

Board Members Excused: James Allen

Board Members Absent: Hans Abbey

City Council Representative: None

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

Guests: Gene Leuwer, GL Development, LLC; Andrew Chanania, North Fork Development (via Zoom)

Welcome / Introductions: The Community Development (CD) Board met in the Large Conference Room of the Billings Public Library, 510 N Broadway. Board Chair Rebecca Noell called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Announcements:

City staff thanked Rebecca Noell, Erica Doornek, and Ali Pistora for attending, and speaking, during the August 19 City Council Work Session. Staff and Board members also expressed appreciation to Erica for her recap email; it effectively captured City Council members comments, questions, concerns, and suggestions. Rebecca noted that Council Member Tidswell caught up with her as she was leaving the meeting to express his thanks and appreciation for her comments and her presentation.

Brenda Beckett said this is Dina Harmon's last week working for the City and she is going to be greatly missed. Dina said she recently purchased a printing company and is looking forward to being more "creative."

Brenda stated Community Development staff has completely moved out of the Miller Building and is working remotely for the next several months until the new City Hall renovations have been completed.

Brenda shared that an AmeriCorps VISTA VIP, John Lira, Senior Advisor for Veteran and Military Families, visited Billings last week. The Mayor and Senator Jon Tester's staff attended the gathering at the Adaptive Performance Center (APC), a Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP) host site. The Mayor gave Mr. Lira a USS Billings challenge coin and Brenda gave him a BMVP challenge coin. Brenda said this was the "nicest gym she's ever been in." She also shared a bit about APC's story and their current efforts to expand and open another veterans-only gym in another market.

Public Comment: None

Skyview Apartments Project / Jackson Street & King Avenue East:

City staff apologized for the room technology not working so the PowerPoint presentation could not be shown on screen. Staff was able to allow Andrew Chanania to join the Zoom session via phone. Gene Leuwer, GL Development, gave the following overview of their project proposal and passed around printed copies of slides as he explained them.

- 26-unit Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Project. At present, plans are for single-level duplexes; eight 1-bedroom, twelve 2-bedroom, and six 3-bedroom units. However, if site constraints are identified, there may be some two-level buildings. All ground floor units will be ADA-accessible.

They have Buy-Sell Agreements on the properties on either side of the existing house. If they can also get the house, it will make things easier and could result in additional units. However, the project can still be accomplished even if they are unsuccessful in getting the house.

- This project has similarities to Jackson Court that was recently completed and fully rented, and the Mitchell Court project for which the City Council recently approved \$1.2 million in HOME funding.
- \$9.8 million project with multiple funding sources (they plan to apply for State and City HOME funds, South Billings Urban Renewal Association (SBURA) Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Montana Board of Housing (MBOH), NeighborWorks Montana, etc.). Asking the City for \$1 million in HOME funding.
- The MBOH received six applications for this round of LIHTC projects; they have enough funding for five projects. Two of the proposals are for Billings. Gene said there is a good chance they will fund both Billings projects. MBOH will meet in October to select the winning proposals.

Rebecca asked if comments from the CD Board would be helpful. Gene responded there would be a public comment period at the beginning of the MBOH meeting and, he believes, after each project is introduced. He would very much welcome CD Board members making public comments in favor of the project. Comments may be offered via Zoom.

- A project “open house” was held recently. The only concern was from the irrigation ditch people, but he is confident they can revise the plans to make it work.
- This project will target low-income households under 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) and rents will be based on income. For example, 1-bedroom unit rents will range from \$657 (40% AMI) to \$1,150 (80% AMI).

Meeting Minutes: Board member Kathleen Candelaria made a motion to approve the August 6, 2024, minutes as written and distributed. Board member Erica Doornek 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 said two families closed on their homes since the last CD Board meeting. She has no other families in the pipeline right now.
- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):** Dina noted the Mitchell Court Agreements have been sent to the Mayor to sign. Gene added that they received the contractor’s bid and have the financing plan and area ready to “close.” As soon as everything is signed, construction will start.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam shared the following updates:

1709 St. Johns Avenue: Construction is well underway. The roof and siding have been installed on both the house and detached garage and the property is looking GREAT! Tam said she is not sure when it will be completed, but it may be as soon as this fall. An open house will be scheduled and we hope CD Board members will attend.

1302 Parkhill Drive: The City closed on the purchase of the property on August 26. Several inspections have already been completed and the first draft of the preliminary work list has been prepared. While she has not received the written report yet, she was told there were only a few areas with lead-based paint. She said there is mostly likely asbestos that must also be abated.

Tam said she would be happy to give any interested CD Board members a tour of the property so they can see it in its current state; let her know if you are interested.

- **CDBG / CDBG-CV Projects:**

North Park: Tam said the contractor is still working to complete final punch list items. Rebecca said she noticed what may be an installation issue with one of the pieces of adult exercise that was installed. Tam said she would look into it.

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

- The two newest members completed their orientation recently and have started serving with their host sites:
 - Louisa Spector / Montana Department of Health and Human Services
 - Cole Reisdorf / Tumbleweed
- She has received one new host site proposal so far.
- She is setting up the application process for January / February VISTA start dates.
- VISTA Matt Benowitz, serving with APC, received his first grant (\$5,000).

- **HOME-ARP Projects Status:** Carly stated all the applicants have received their written Grant Agreements for signatures. The City Council will take action on the Grant Agreements at their September 23 meeting. Carly said she will hold subrecipient training sessions September 12 and 13 to go over monitoring and reporting requirements, policies and procedures, etc.

Board & Commission Annual Report to City Council:

Board members reviewed and discussed the latest draft and suggested one edit. Tam will finalize and forward to Rebecca to sign, then it will be sent to the City Administrator who will include it in his weekly report. Brenda will also attach the report to the Comprehensive Annual Performance Report (CAPER).

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: None

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:25 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on October 1, 2024.