



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

316 N 26th Street, Billings, MT 59101

Phone: 406.657.8281

Relay: 711

www.CityofBillings.net/ComDev

Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

December 3, 2024

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

Board Members Excused: Hans Abbey, James Allen

Board Members Absent: None

City Council Representative: Denise Joy

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

Guests: None

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:

Brenda Beckett said former CD Board member, Jim Corson, has applied to be re-appointed to the CD Board. The City Council is scheduled to take action during their December 9th meeting.

Public Comment: None

Meeting Minutes: Board member Kathleen Candelaria made a motion to approve the November 12, 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):** Tam noted that there are 11 preliminarily approved applicants. One family has a partially-signed Buy-Sell Agreement and is working through the process.
- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):**

Skyview Residences:

- She continues to work through the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.
- She learned this week that an historic review record for the “island” property must be submitted to Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board (YHPB) and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). There are several other potentially historic properties within the area of potential effect that also must be evaluated, which will add significant time to the EA process.
- After the EA has been approved, CD staff will schedule a presentation before the City Council, at which time they will be asked to approve the CD Board’s recommendation of approval.

LB Lofts:

- Tam reiterated that the application received from HomeFront and Homeword described the proposed project as a “Unique project that includes both a new construction project that recycles bed and bath P.O.D.S. (Premanufactured Overhauled Dwelling Solutions), on Sioux Lane...”
- Staff will review application materials and will bring it forward to the CD Board within the next few months.

Joe Stockburger suggested staff give the City Council a heads up regarding the project, its review status, and estimated timeline.

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

1709 St. Johns Avenue:

- The November 14 Open House went well / 15+ attendees. Neighbors shared several stories about the home, former occupants, neighborhood impacts of the vacant, foreclosed home, etc.
- Staff asked attendees to complete a written survey during the open house. Tam shared the survey results, which will also be shared with the City Council.
- Staff provided the contractor with a punch list of items that must be completed before final payment is released.
- Tam explained the property sale price is the lesser of the acquisition and rehab costs, the post-rehab appraisal, or HUD’s current purchase price limit for existing homes. The post-rehab appraisal came in at \$360,000; HUD’s purchase price limit \$356,000, so the property will be sold for \$356,000.
- The required three (3) “Intent to Sell” public notices have been published in the Yellowstone County News (November 22 & 29 and December 6, 2024).
- As soon as the punch list has been completed, Tam said she would finalize the marketing flyer and email it to the eleven (11) preliminarily approved FTHB applicants. Interested applicants must submit a copy of their lender’s pre-approval letter with a signed Buy-Sell Agreement.

1302 Parkhill Drive:

- The asbestos abatement contract has been signed, electricity turned on in preparation, and the asbestos abatement work will begin December 9.
- The next step will be for staff to prepare the Invitation for Bids, advertise for bids, etc.

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

North Park: Tam said the contractor is still working to complete final punch list items. This work may not be completed until spring.

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

- An RFP for host sites has been published for several weeks. Proposals are due January 10 and the City Council will be asked to approve on January 13. Proposal would be for an August VISTA start date.

- Two VISTA members have accepted positions; one with Montana Health Gives in Helena and the other at Billings Parks, Recreation & Public Lands (PRPL). She will continue recruiting for the remaining open positions through January for a February VISTA start date.
- She shared pictures and explained the results of VISTA Matthew Benowitz's recent efforts with the Adaptive Performance Center (APC). This included two site visits from national AmeriCorps executives, a national blog post, AmeriCorps national Facebook recognition, and article in the first AmeriCorps newsletter, etc. APC is trying to expand their program nationwide and recently opened a new program in another state.
- Matthew Benowitz has accepted the VISTA leader position for the following year.

- **HOME-ARP Projects Status:** Carly stated:
 - Three subrecipients have signed agreements and are implementing their programs (HRDC, NADC, and Alternatives).
 - Alternatives has expended roughly \$12,000 to date.
 - She is gearing up to start monitoring and reviewing subrecipient quarterly reports next month.
 - She will get additional information via quarterly reports. One thing that will be evaluated is if they are spending funds fast enough and if all qualifying populations are being served. Staff will consider re-opening the application process if necessary to meet HUD service and expenditure requirements for the program.

CDBG and HOME Application and Guidebook: Brenda reviewed and explained the guidebook as she projected it on screen. She specifically highlighted the timeline, discussed each waypoint, and answered questions.

Brenda said City Council members have expressed their intention to attend the February, March, and April CD Board meetings to hear and participate in the discussions.

Erica noted some City Council members have “hammered” on there not being enough public outreach. She asked how staff would respond to this concern. Brenda said the Planning & Community Services Department has a Facebook page that CD staff will begin using. The City also have a Public Information Officer that will be asked to provide assistance.

Brenda mentioned the YWCA will likely apply for funding. They have a \$2.5 million plan for the Northern Lights Family Justice Center. She said CDBG funds cannot be used for the conduct of general City business. Since there are some City employees with offices in the building, a pro-rata share must be determined.

Board member Kathleen Candelaria made a motion to approve the CDBG and HOME online application and associated Guidebook for Fiscal year 2025-2026 and authorize City staff to implement and widely distribute. Board member Ali Pistora seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings:

Tam said the North Park Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony is scheduled for tomorrow at 6:30 p.m. and hot chocolate and snacks will be served. She was asked to make a presentation to the North Park Task Force immediately following the ceremony, so she will give a similar presentation to what was given to the City Council in August. The presentation will focus on funding sources, the Consolidated Plan process, etc.

Tam said Carly is spearheading the selection process for the vacant grant coordinator position. Six candidates will be interviewed December 19-20.

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 January 7, 2025, in the 2nd floor large conference room at the Billings Public Library.

[**Post-Meeting Outgoing Member Recognition – Rebecca Noell**](#)