



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

February 4, 2025

Board Members Present: Joe Stockburger, Kathleen Candelaria, Erica Doornek, Ali Pistora, James Allen, Donny White, Jim Corson

Board Members Excused: None

Board Members Absent: Hans Abbey

City Council Representative: Kendra Shaw

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

Guests: None

Welcome / Introductions:

The Community Development (CD) Board met in the 5th floor Beartooth Conference Room of City Hall, 316 N. 26th Street. Board Chair Joe Stockburger called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Joe Stockburger welcomed Jordan to the Community Development team and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Announcements:

Tam said the 2024 Planning & Community Service Department Annual Report was released last week and it includes a QR code to the online Consolidated Plan Survey. Tam added that the first survey response was received last night. Board member Jim Corson asked if participants need a computer or Internet to complete the survey. Tam responded paper surveys are also available and they will be taken to Task Force meetings.

Public Comment:

No public comments were heard.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Erica Doornek moved to accept the January 7, 2025 meeting 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:

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly reported the following:
 - Three VISTA members will end service terms next week. Four new VISTA members, including a VISTA Leader, will begin service terms on Monday. VISTAs will introduce themselves to City Council, and the Mayor is slated to make an AmeriCorps proclamation on March 10th. Carly reported two new host sites for the next round of VISTA recruitment this summer.
 - Semi-annual reporting has been completed and \$290,000 has been raised by VISTA members over the past six months. VISTA members recruited and managed 17 volunteers who completed 52 hours of service. VISTA members participated in MLK Day of Service by writing letters to seniors via the Letters Against Isolation program.

- Board member Jim Corson questioned how many VISTA positions are available. Carly shared program costs per VISTA. Brenda shared that VISTA positions remain available in Billings due to our good reputation and service history. Brenda explained how VISTAs impacted the Adaptive Performance Center, a gym servicing veterans and military service members.
- Brenda reminded board members to let CD staff know if you would like to schedule a visit to VISTA host sites.

- **HOME-ARP Projects Status:** Carly shared the following:
 - Q1 reports are complete. Alternatives assisted 8 people, HRDC assisted 15 people and NADC assisted 27 people. Wyeth requested CD staff to send a summary of the report to board members. Carly confirmed she will send a summary to board members.
 - Funding needs to be spent by September 2030. To ensure funding is spent in the most impactful way, Carly will be reviewing the program's subrecipients and advertising another Request for Qualifications (RFQ) if necessary.

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Tam shared the following:
 - One family closed on the purchase of their home last Friday. Another family is scheduled to close this Friday. Funds have been exhausted for this fiscal year.

- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam reported the following:
 - **1709 St. Johns Avenue:** One preliminarily approved FTHB applicant requested a showing of the property. The showing is scheduled for this Friday.
 - **1302 Parkhill Drive:** The Invitation for Bids (IFB) was completed, is currently being advertised as required and has been posted on the City website. Tam said she also direct mailed IFB packets to 12 contractors who previously indicated an interest in working on the City's housing rehab projects. The IFB closes March 4th at 2:00 p.m. Tam advised the project presents challenges due to the historic preservation requirements. The property's stucco, historic wooden windows, lead abatement and asbestos abatement will require additional care. Tam encouraged board members to contact her if they are interested in learning more about the Historic Preservation Board.

- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Parks Projects:** Tam shared the following:
 - **Spring Creek Park:** Parks staff recently completed the CPTED assessment. CD staff will review and begin discussions with Parks staff about possible project elements. Tam encouraged CD board members to share any ideas they might have for the park. Tam clarified that Spring Creek Park was chosen due to the low-income area and lack of existing park amenities. Additionally, the nearby schools lack playground equipment. Ideas discussed include playground space, solar lighting and barriers between park land and neighboring homes.

- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):** Jordan and Brenda shared the following:
 - **LB Lofts:** The review of the project application submitted by the Housing Authority is underway. Jordan sent clarifying questions to Patti Webster and Heather McMilin. Jordan stated that the project requests CDBG and HOME funds. Jordan confirmed that a neighborhood meeting occurred, and two public notices have been published in the Yellowstone County News. Tam added that she recently began working on the Environmental Assessment, which may take another month to six weeks to complete. CD staff hopes to make a recommendation and send the CD Board memo ahead of March's meeting. Action will be taken at the April meeting.

Board member Ali Pistora said she visited the project site and indicated that the pods being utilized for the project look frail. Board chair Joe Stockburger requested a presentation on the project by

HomeFront, Homewood, and the project architects to address concerns about engineering costs and longevity.

- **Skyview Residences:** Brenda reported that the project is on pause due to infrastructure concerns. Streets near King Ave and Jackson would need to be widened, which has increased the project's estimated costs significantly. The project is pending until the developer makes a decision. Wyeth indicated that no TIF funding was involved in the project. Board chair Joe Stockburger asked if CDBG funding could be used for infrastructure needs. Brenda confirmed the use of CDBG funding is contingent on CD staff's recommendation regarding the LB Lofts project.

- **Miscellaneous:**

- Brenda said she is working on the 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan, which requires about 400 hours to complete. Report progress has been delayed due to the move into the new City Hall building. Brenda clarified her goal is to have a draft completed by March 15th.
- Brenda reported all coronavirus funding has been exhausted.
- Brenda shared that timeliness goals for CDBG funding have been met for this year.

Public Hearing / External Applicant Presentations: Tam said no applications were received by the 5:00 p.m. deadline on January 17, 2025. Brenda shared updates about the following community projects:

- **YWCA's Family Justice Center:** The project is on pause and the applicant may ask to reopen applications in the future. CDBG funding cannot be used for City functions or City office space. The project architects have to determine costs associated with City functions completed in the building in comparison to costs unrelated to City functions completed in the building.

Councilmember Shaw asked how public safety mill levy funding is being used. Brenda confirmed that public safety mill levy funding is being used for staffing costs. Board members discussed City Council's focus on public safety over housing due to rising housing costs. Board Chair Joe Stockburger asked if a site visit should be scheduled. Brenda confirmed a site visit should be scheduled after an application for funding has been received.

- **802 Yellowstone:** Brenda reported that the City now owns the property. Funding for asbestos abatement has been secured through a Brownfields Grant and the property will be demolished. The property is zoned for residential housing, but could be rezoned, if necessary. The project could use CDBG or HOME funding depending on the project. A public meeting will need to be scheduled to garner feedback from neighbors that must be considered before deciding on a project for the property. Ideas discussed include a grocery store, coffee shop, or residential duplex. The property is located in the Central Terry area and can be discussed when CD Board member Jim Corson attends the task force meeting.

Board Member Site Visit Assignments: Not required because no applications were received.

Scheduling Task Force Presentations: Brenda asked that CD Board members contact task forces to schedule meetings. Rimrock is out of scope. Southwest corridor is not currently meeting. Board members agreed to the following task force assignments:

- Midtown: Ali Pistora
- Southside: Kathleen Candelaria
- Heights: Erica Doornek
- Pioneer Park: James Allen
- North Park: Joe Stockburger
- Central Terry: Jim Corson

Brenda said task force presentations should include information about what it is like to be on the CD Board, what CD Board members focus on, available positions on the Board, CD functions, and what the community would like to see funded. CD staff will accompany CD board members at task force meetings to help deliver presentations.

Wyeth said he organizes the Combined Task Force Leadership meeting. Board members asked if interest could be gauged at the Combined Task Force Leadership meeting instead of at each task force. Brenda reiterated that City Council encouraged CD staff to present to task forces directly.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings:

Councilmember Shaw stated the City Council is again looking at unused City-owned land and/or unmaintained park land that could be sold or disposed of. She asked about two lots owned by CD on South 27th Street. Brenda confirmed the lots are vacant with no CDBG interests and they could be sold or repurposed. Board member Ali Pistora expressed concern about getting rid of City parks. Councilmember Shaw clarified that the council is selling or repurposing land maintained by Parks in each ward. Councilmember Shaw reiterated that the City Council's priorities are public safety and encouraged CD Board members to pitch public safety ideas to the council.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Joe Stockburger adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:00 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on March 4, 2025, in the 5th floor Beartooth Conference Room in City Hall, 316 N 26th Street. Board member Ali Pistora said she will be unavailable to attend the next meeting.

Wyeth invited board members to join him on an optional tour of the new City Hall building following the meeting.