



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

PO Box 1178, Billings, MT 59101

Phone: 406.657.8281 Relay: 711

www.billingsmt.gov/ComDev

Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

May 6, 2025

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

Board Members Excused: None

Board Members Absent: Hans Abbey

City Council Representative: Kendra Shaw

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

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.

Announcements: Brenda provided an update on the status of the Denver office of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and stated that we should have our funding allocations from HUD in mid-May. Brenda advised that the president's "skinny budget" for 2026 allocates no funding to AmeriCorps, HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs. Councilmember Shaw asked what the lack of funding means for staffing. Brenda advised the staff will not be paid without HUD funding for the programs.

Public Comment: No public comments were heard.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Ali Pistora made a motion to approve the April 1, 2025 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 shared that staff mailed 416 newsletters on April 15th with return service requested; only 10 came back. Staff research identified four (4) that had been previously reconveyed. Staff is working toward resolving the other six (6) that may be out of compliance with the primary residence requirement:
 - One (1) client was moved into a retirement home; staff will work with the family on loan repayment.
 - Three (3) came back showing a forwarding address. Staff mailed letters to them at their new addresses and will pursue loan repayment.
 - Two (2) came back with either "Attempted – Not Known" or "Not at this Address." Staff will try to find the clients' new addresses and will pursue loan repayment.
- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):** Jordan reported that Mitchell Court has requested their final draw of approximately \$531,000. A site visit and labor interviews will be conducted before processing the draw. Jordan reported that the LB Lofts affordable housing development funding application is pending firm funding commitments from HomeFront and legal agreement details from Homeword. The project will be presented at a future City Council meeting when the necessary details are obtained. Tam shared that the required

Environmental Assessment was completed and the Request for Release of Funds and Certification form was sent to HUD to authorize funding for the project.

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

1709 St. Johns Avenue: Staff is still working to get the property sold. A first-time homebuyer application was received today for a household of four (4) that may be interested in the property.

1302 Parkhill Drive: The project scope was reduced to lower costs and the Construction Agreement negotiated with Van Arsdale Construction for the project. Lead-based paint and asbestos testing and asbestos abatement has already occurred. The City Council will take action on the Bid Award / Construction Agreement during their May 12th meeting. If approved by City Council, the Construction Agreement and Notice to Proceed will be sent to the Mayor to sign.

- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Parks Projects:**

Spring Creek Park: CD staff met with Parks last week to review available funding, possible project elements and cost estimates. Parks wants to add a larger bridge and more benches at Spring Creek Park or shift the project to Highland Park to add lighting. Brenda is discussing challenges with the area's homeowners. Parks staff will let CD staff know what they decide. Brenda requested that staff and the CD Board be involved in every step of the project planning process. The project will require the CD Board's approval to proceed.

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly reported that all VISTA programs in Montana have been eliminated, except for BMVP. Carly is advertising new VISTA positions, but staff is unsure about future funding. VISTAs are concerned about the potential for loss of income and education awards. Staff contacted HR and Parks asking them to keep VISTAs in mind for employment positions with the City. Brenda advised there is some remaining non-federal funding that can be used in case of emergency to support VISTAs. Board member Adam Toland advised that Tumbleweed could assist VISTAs with housing needs, if necessary.
- **HOME-ARP Projects Status:** Carly stated that second quarter reports have been completed on time. Alternatives assisted 39 households and expended \$77,000. HRDC assisted 71 households and expended \$63,000. NADC assisted 113 households and expended \$15,000. Following comments from some council members, Carly completed a white paper explaining how duplication of services is reviewed, avoided and audited. Brenda will forward the information along to Board members and asked that any instances of duplication or fraud be reported to staff for further investigation.

Final Consolidated Plan and Allocation Process Review: Brenda reviewed the revised timeline that was used this year to accommodate City Council's request for more involvement in the Consolidated Planning process. She advised that the revised timeline added about 100 hours of staff time to the process. Board members agreed that attendance of the additional City Council meetings was not useful. Councilmember Shaw stated that City Council needed a detailed overview, but councilmembers should be made aware of the additional staff time and cost. Councilmember Shaw reminded staff that additional work sessions may be needed as new councilmembers are elected. Board member Jim Corson voiced concerns over the usefulness of attending Neighborhood Task Force meetings. Brenda agreed that the Task Force Leadership meeting is the most useful for staff to attend in the future. Board member Erica Doornek asked if staff felt the community survey comments were helpful. Jordan advised she analyzed them for potential policy changes. Jordan felt around 20% of the comments were helpful, but most comments related to density bonuses, developer incentives or a local resort tax, which staff has already considered and reviewed.

June and July Meetings: Board member Ali Pistora made a motion to cancel meetings in June and July. Board member Kathleen Candelaria seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: Board member Erica Doornek stated that Board chair Joe Stockburger built a free little library and it has been placed near the front of North Park Head Start. Erica also praised staff's efforts to revitalize North Park. She stated the park has been activated since upgrades occurred and she regularly sees families and children enjoying the park.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Joe Stockburger adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:30 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on August 5, 2025 in the 5th floor Beartooth Conference Room in City Hall, 316 N 26th Street.