

Community Development Board
Meeting Minutes
September 1, 2009

Present: Emily Shaffer, Duane Loken, Kathy Walters, Sandy Weiss, Jim Hartung, and Bill Kipp

Member Absent and Excused: Kamber Parker

Members Absent and Not Excused: Uriah Edmunds and David Goodridge

Staff Present: Brenda Beckett, Dina Billington, Doris Cole, Lynda Woods, Jessica Mowry, and Mike Dummeyer

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m by Duane Loken, chairperson. No special introductions were required and no announcements were made.

Loken discussed some housekeeping items. Use of electronic devices, such as cell phones and Blackberries, is highly discouraged during the meeting. There will be a ten minute break every hour so members can return messages. He explained that Beckett's use of her blackberry is permissible due to her entering meeting dates and looking up answers to board questions.

Loken noted that he and Beckett met with Bill Kipp today for new member orientation and reminded members that the CD Board is an advisory board to the City Council and operate under their same rules; therefore, individual members of the board cannot request information or documents from staff without board consent. Loken also noted that the overall tone of the meetings has a sharp edge and they are not cordial or helpful. There seems to be accusatory questioning or stonewalling of procedures to help the homeless and the low-income rather than to help. Questions need to be fact finding and helping the process, not hindering. The board is to set policy to advise City Council and staff and to recommend how these funds are being expended. The board does not make procedures but leaves that up to staff, whether how many copies to make of something or what documents are included. Staff is to handle the nuts and bolts and the board is to look at the big picture which is the overall intent of the project and application. The board's job is to spend money, not to keep tabs on it.

Public Comments: None.

Minutes: *Weiss moved that the minutes of June 2, 2009, and August 4, 2009, be approved as written. Hartung seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

CDBG Funding Transfer from Affordable Housing to First Time Homebuyer Program: The First Time Homebuyer program is out of money in both HOME and CDBG. Staff is recommending a \$135,000 transfer in CDBG funding from the Affordable Housing program to the First Time Homebuyer program. Billington noted that eight people have been approved for

the program, have buy/sells, and are waiting for funds to come available. She also has additional approved applications with no buy/sell agreements. Beckett noted that there is \$150,000 in CDBG affordable housing funds available and that Habitat for Humanity approached staff for \$15,000 for demolition of a structure on a lot that will host two individual houses. She noted that the front page of the affordable housing application requests information on a neighborhood housing meeting for the project, especially if a site has been identified in a task force area. That meeting has not been conducted and there are still some financial details that need to be completed before the application is presented to the board. There have been no other applications for CDBG funds. There has been interest in HOME funds from both the Housing Authority and homeWORD. Staff's priority is to the CHDO reserves that must be spent and homeWORD must replace five units that were lost. They will be bringing a project forward in the next couple of months. The homeWORD project will have to take preference over any others since we have to the CHDO housing units.

Billington noted that Habitat may not resubmit an application since the structure has burned since the first application was submitted. Habitat may be able to receive enough insurance money to complete the demolition. Loken then suggested increasing the funding amount from \$135,000 being transferred to the full \$150,000 in the affordable housing fund. After further discussion, **Weiss moved that the board reallocate the full \$150,000 to the First Time Homebuyers program rather than \$135,000 that was requested in the memo. Walters seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Graffiti Trailer: Beckett gave a brief background of the history of the graffiti trailer. The donation of the trailer to Rebuilding Together will allow them to haul all their tools and supplies in something other than cars. Rebuilding Together helps low-income individuals as well as disabled and elderly do needed home repairs. Last year they assisted 20 households throughout the year. **Hartung moved to support staff recommendation to donate the 1998 Trekker Cargo Trailer and remaining equipment to Rebuilding Together of Yellowstone County. Shaffer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.**

Update on Neighborhood Stabilization Program: Beckett reported that staff has heard nothing from the State. They did receive the city's application and placed it on their website. The city has two properties eligible for purchase through NeighborWorks and they are willing to do that if we can get approval from the State. There has been no movement on the 8th Avenue Apartments and no response on inquiries on the Ovalle house, a housing rehab project.

Update on CDBG-R Application: Beckett reported that the CDBG-R application has been approved for \$190,000. This program will be used for First Time Homebuyer and weatherization. These funds will help six homebuyers with downpayment assistance and weatherization using energy efficiency windows, new Energy Star furnaces, etc. Signage needs to be placed in the front yard noting that CDBG-R funds are being utilized in the purchase and weatherization of this home. Loken recommended that the *Gazette* be notified and an article be written on the projects.

Staff Report: Cole distributed the monthly staff report for August. Beckett noted that the office has been extremely busy and passed around a workload chart for the board to review. She

also noted that the division has no red flags / issues for either CDBG or HOME funds. She also distributed draft copies of the FFY 2008-2009 CAPER for board review. She noted that the board will be working on new goals for the new 5-Year Plan and adding a homeless strategy and those below 30% AMI as target areas. The public comment period for the CAPER will be September 11-28, ending with a public hearing in front of City Council. No action needs to be taken at that time.

There was also brief discussion on the mobile home park in Red Lodge and of reinvestment in the row houses.

Neighborhood Concerns: Yellowstone County Council on Aging is in their new facility at 15th Street West and Avenue D. There was also a discussion of the annual City auction. The auction is advertised on the city website and in the newspaper. The auction is to be held on September 26 at the Billings Operation Center, 4848 Midland Road. The viewing begins at 8:00 in the morning. A list of items is available on the city website and at the Finance counter in City Hall.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2009. Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.