

Community Development Board
Meeting Minutes
October 6, 2009

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

Member Absent and Excused: Sandy Weiss

Members Absent and Not Excused: Kamber Parker, 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. Roll was taken and there was a quorum.

Public Comments: None.

Minutes: *Hartung moved that the minutes of September 1, 2009, be approved as corrected. Walters seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

homeWORD – Five Single-Family Homes – *An opportunity to review a grant application from homeWORD to construct, acquire / rehabilitate five single-family units. This project would extend the City's CHDO reserve for several years to meet federal regulations.*

Billington reported that homeWORD has submitted a proposal for five single-family units to replace the units lost in the High Sierra project. She then gave a brief history of High Sierra, noting that a legal suit was brought against homeWORD by five property owners. Beckett referred questions back to the staff memo that was mailed to all board members. homeWORD settled with the five homeowners and we lost years of affordability on the homes once the homes were sold. A workout plan was discussed with homeWORD, HUD Technical Assistance and the City. The plan included using HOME funds to acquire five additional housing units and extend the affordability period to include the period lost with the High Sierra properties. After further discussion, ***Hartung made a motion to delay action on the item and tabled it until the next meeting and that homeWORD be present to answer questions. Shaffer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*** Beckett reminded that this CHDO project would extend the City's CHDO reserve for several years to meet federal regulations. CHDO reserves must be committed before June 30, 2010, or HUD will recapture funding.

Welcome Home Billings: *An opportunity to hear a presentation regarding the City's ten year plan to impact homelessness, Welcome Home Billings. Public comment on the plan is being sought from September 18 through October 19. The plan can be reviewed online: www.ci.billings.mt.us/homelessplan.*

Beckett gave an overview of the homeless plan and discussed the strategic framework. Data collected was through homeless individuals and service providers. This data was collected in 2006 and the average costs are estimated at \$15,000 per individual. The Crisis Center conducted its own cost analysis of "frequent fliers" or chronically homeless individuals and discovered the average cost per person is \$115,000. Using this data, it is estimated that it costs \$54 million to serve the homeless and chronically homeless per year. Families with children among are the fastest growing homeless sub-populations in the state of Montana with 413 homeless children identified in the Billings School District. Half the people surveyed are actively seeking permanent housing and an estimated one-third of the homeless are employed.

Beckett recognized the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness, the Billings Area Resource Network (BARN), the VISTA members (especially Julia Guarino), staff and everyone else that worked on the homeless plan. She then told the story about John, a homeless individual who was homeless for over 11 years. John applied for Social Security benefits and discovered he was eligible for benefits. He now has a place of his own and is doing well.

Beckett noted that Billings was chosen as the pilot project for Montana by Governor Martz in 2005. She also noted that nearly 60 percent of the homeless have lived in Billings for more than two years and 20 percent have been here for their whole lives.

She then recognized the VISTA members for their projects regarding the homeless: Social Enterprise; BARN and Project Homeless Connect; and Illuminate Poverty. She noted that Project Homeless Connect is scheduled for January 29, 2010 and the annual point-in-time housing survey will also be conducted.

Beckett noted that the Mayor's Committee on Homelessness is supporting over 140 new housing units in the FY2009-2011 action plan. The other item they are supporting is Spare Change for Real Change as an answer to panhandling citywide. Approximately \$700 has been collected so far and the BARN will decide how the money collected will be distributed to service providers.

Final adoption of the plan is scheduled before City Council on October 26, 2009.

Update on Neighborhood Stabilization Program: Beckett reported that the State has not approved the City's application. She emailed the State regarding it and was told that a letter was sent to her in September, which she did not receive, stating that they need additional clarification on a few points.

Update on CDBG-R Program – Billington reported that two applicants will close in the next couple of weeks and will then go to Woods for rehab. Woods noted that collaboration between the two programs is working well.

Staff Reports: Beckett reported that staff went to City Council on the board's priorities and to discuss a couple of concerns. The City Council only wants to combine the public hearing and action for the FY2010-2011 allocation cycle. The Council's only concern is in the public service

area. Council believes that the housing allocations can be funded every years and that the public services should continue three-year funding cycles. FY2008-2009 represents the City's 4th year of the Consolidated Plan and we have done an excellent job. Beckett then discussed the accomplishments in the plan. She noted that the total fund leveraging for 2005-2009 outside of CDBG and HOME is \$1.2 million.

Cole distributed staff reports. Woods reported that a procedural change has taken place in the Minor Home Repair Program (MHR). Because of the increased valuation on property, the eligible taxable market value in the MHR program increased from \$70,000 to \$75,000.

Beckett noted that Well Fargo funds will be returned within the next month. This program was for a low-interest loan and has not been utilized since the revolving loan fund was established in 2005.

Neighborhood Concerns: Shaffer noted that Conoco-Phillips is celebrating the 20th Anniversary of its Advisory Board at the Rex at 5:00 tonight.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 3, 2009. Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.