

Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board
May 3, 2011

Board Members Present: Jim Hartung, Patt Leikam, Tom Mahlen, Kathleen Candelaria, and Emily Shaffer

Board Members Excused: David Goodridge, Tom Grimm, and Kamber Kelly

Staff Present: Brenda Beckett, Dina Billington, Casey Brown, Lynda Woods, and Doris Cole

Welcome / Introduction / Announcements: The Community Development Board met in its regular monthly meeting located in the 4th Floor Large Conference Room, Parmlly Billings Library, 510 N. Broadway, Billings, Montana. Chairperson Jim Hartung called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and served as the meeting's presiding officer. Brenda Beckett announced that Doris Cole will be retiring at the end of May after more than 16 years employment with the City of Billings.

Public Comment: None.

Meeting Minutes: *Patt Leikam moved that the minutes of the April 5th meeting be approved as written. Emily Shaffer seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

Staff Reports: Beckett gave kudos to staff and the VISTAs for the great job they do. Lynda Woods reported that she closed one loan in April and has one spot to fill. All funds were committed within the first ten months. Minor Home Repair is 45% committed. Paint is 69%. Because of loan modifications, the CDBG-R program is able to assist another homeowner with assistance. Casey Brown has completed an Excel class and passed around two flowcharts for the First Time Homebuyer program she developed and posted to the website. She has been analyzing the housing program surveys she mailed out for Housing Rehab and Minor Home Repair. To access the First Time Homebuyer program, go to the city website at <http://ci.billings.mt.us/homebuyer>. Dina Billington reported that, since she is out of money, she is doing project monitoring. In response to a question, Woods noted that the VOA garden project has been scaled back due to water rights issues with the ditch company and the need to use city water for the gardens. Beckett then reported that there are no Neighborhood Stabilization Program properties to review and that the current properties are still in the construction phase. She noted that the State conducted an audit of the program and had no concerns. She also noted that documents are in good order and she expects results soon. A committee will be formed soon to select homebuyers that are interested in the properties. There are approximately 20 applicants interested in the property at this time.

Annual Action Plan Review and Approval: Beckett showed a PowerPoint presentation as presented to City Council. She noted that there was a 16% decrease in CDBG funding and a 12% decrease in HOME funding. She noted that staff looked at the priorities set by the Community Development Board and adjusted the proposed budget accordingly. Internal programs were decreased to accommodate this funding deficit. She recommended that, if funding goes below \$700,000, only internal programs are funded. Only 10%-11% of funds are used for public services nationwide and many communities do not fund public services. Beckett will schedule research this summer on what other communities are doing about public service funding.

In a motion made by Emily Shaffer and seconded by Kathleen Candelaria that the Community Development Board unanimously voted to approve the Annual Action Plan and forward it to City Council for a public hearing and approval. Motion passed unanimously.

Allocation Process Review: Emily Shaffer noted that the allocation process went much smoother this year and that much less time was spent on the process. Jim Hartung agreed. Beckett noted that, as the years go by, staff has refined the application by making changes to the previous year's confusion / questions and has streamlined the effectiveness of the application. She noted that Councilman Ruegamer is very pleased with the process and the success in changes implemented in recent years, particularly less projects funded. Patt Leikam suggested that board training be completed prior to the allocation process so new members of the board have an idea of what is going on. She would like to see additional training in method, process, flow charts, site visits, requirements of site visits, and how and was information is generated. She thought it may be easier to have a standard set of questions to ask applicants. She would also like suggestions to help new board members identify questions to ask. Patt will write her questions / suggestions and submit them to Beckett for incorporation in next year's process.

Neighborhood Concerns: Patt Leikam noted that on May 5th the City of Billings Human Relations Commission will be dedicating a sign at 5th Avenue South and South 27th Street that states "Billings embraces diversity." It will take place at noon and is the first of four signs to be placed. At 6:00 the same day will be a Cinco de Mayo celebration at Our Lady of Guadalupe church and everyone is invited. This event is sponsored by the City of Billings Human Relations Commission, the Montana Migrant Council, and Not in Our Town Organization. There will be roast pig and a potluck dinner. Beckett noted that AmeriCorps Week is coming up with a luncheon on May 20th at 11:30.

Meeting adjourned at 4:02 pm.