

Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board
March 6, 2012

Board Members Present: Kamber Kelly, Emily Shaffer, Patt Leikam, Kathleen Candelaria, Trent Currie, Cindy Sanders, Martha Sanford, Fred Button

Board Members Excused: None

Staff Present: Candi Beaudry, Brenda Beckett, Dina Billington-Harmon, Lynda Woods, Denise Bohlman

Welcome / Introductions / Announcements: The Community Development Board met at its regular monthly meeting located in the 4th Floor Large Conference Room, Parmly Billings Library, 510 N. Broadway, Billings, Montana. Chair Kamber Kelly, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. New Board Members, Cindy Sanders, Martha Sanford and Fred Button were introduced and welcomed! Chair Kelly announced Board Member David Goodridge gave his resignation from the Board after the Board meeting in February.

Lynda Woods presented Lorna Thackeray with a special media honor for stories she has written on homelessness in Billings. Lynda also provided a compilation of all of Lorna's articles published since December 2011 and placed them in a booklet for the Board's review.

Marion Dozier mentioned the **Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program** during an interview in Yellowstone Valley Women Magazine's [February / March issue](#) (article begins on page 30) in the Q & A section:

Who do you think has benefited most from your efforts? The Housing Rehab Program has made the biggest difference on the South Side. That's a city / government program that allows for people to upgrade their housing and get new windows and get a new roof when they couldn't otherwise. I've worked so hard on housing and keeping housing rehab dollars coming into the neighborhood. I think that's made a huge difference in the neighborhood. Hopefully, people will follow in my footsteps and say, 'We need more of that.' I hope.

Chair Kamber Kelly also mentioned that Brenda Beckett is an honoree of the YWCA's Salute to Women and the banquet is April 19th!

Also Chair Kelly mentioned the Billings Metro VISTA Project was chosen as Montana's example of an Exemplary VISTA Project by the Corporation of National Community Service. The projects noted were the Community Gardens and Food Security Initiative. She also mentioned there would be a luncheon on March 14th in the large conference room on the 4th floor beginning at 11:30 a.m. for AmeriCorps Week.

Board Member Kathleen Candelaria provided an article regarding the "Shrinking of Community Grants". The article outlines how the dramatic funding cuts have impacted communities throughout the nation.

Public Comment: None.

Meeting Minutes: *Patt Leikam moved that the minutes of the February 7, 2012 meeting be approved as written. Trent Currie seconded. Motion carried.*

Staff Reports: Lynda Woods began by reporting on the status of the home repair programs.

Housing Rehabilitation Program – Lynda Woods reported the funds are 80% committed. One loan closed in February. Six projects are under construction. Four homeowners are actively seeking bids. There is space for three more projects.

Minor Home Repair Program – Lynda stated the funds are 100% committed. Six homeowners are on a waiting list until new funding is obtained. Six projects are in construction. Lynda Woods provided information she received from the Legal Department regarding filing a mechanic's lien on a mobile home. It is possible to do. It requires the homeowner to sign the lien form and a filing fee to file the lien with the Motor Vehicle Department.

Tree Trimming & Removal – Four homeowners are on the waiting list for funding.

Paint Program – Two homeowners are on the waiting list for funding.

First Time Home Buyer – Dina Billington-Harmon reported that staff has fully committed and expended all available funds for fiscal year 2011-2012. A total of 21 households were served in this program and 67 households are on the waiting list to purchase their first home.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program – Dina stated the sale of the home on Cambridge has closed. The Custer property sale fell through. She is seeking potential buyers for the properties on Lynn and Custer.

HOME / CDBG Monitoring – Dina reported that on-site inspections and desk reviews continue.

Fair Housing Initiative Program (FHIP) Grant – Brenda reported that the third quarter report has been submitted to HUD. The outcomes reported were:

- Four total newsletters containing fair housing education have been distributed, reaching a total of 2,345 people.
- 148 training events have been facilitated, making fair housing education available to 1,511 people!
- 33 fair housing materials have been developed / acquired and these have been distributed to 4,266 people!
- The FHIP grant has reached a total of 8,386 people!

Budget Review: Brenda Beckett reviewed the final revenues and expenditures to date. Dina is investigating with the Engineering Division whether a recommendation will be needed for Special Assessment Grants or whether what is already in the budget will be enough. If it is enough, the staff recommendation will be to not fund it for the upcoming year. The same is true for property management for the removal of snow and weeds on Community Development owned properties. A discussion ensued about current applicants and allocations. Brenda also reviewed historic funding

trends with the Board beginning with the year 2000. Brenda stated the President has released the budget for next year and it is flat-lined at the current levels.

Staff recommendations will be given to the Board on March 20th.

CDBG / HOME Applications – Site Visit Reviews: The Division received 18 applications for CDBG/HOME funding. The Board reviewed all of the applicants and reported their findings from their site visits.

Emily Shaffer visited with Mary Lou Affleck of **Rebuilding Together (Home Repairs)**. They are asking for \$10,000 for their program to assist 3 to 5 families. The repairs include windows, siding, doors, furnaces, water heaters, roofs, etc., depending upon the needs of the project.

Emily Shaffer reported on her visit at **HRDC (Future ForGED Training Center)**. This program began in 2009 and is free to all participants. It is a referral-based program and all participants in the program must complete their GED testing at the Lincoln Center. There are similarities between the GED program at Garfield and HRDC's GED program in that they are GED preparation programs. All of the HRDC participants (100%) have received their GEDs after completing the program. HRDC is asking for \$15,000 to purchase technological equipment.

Kathleen Candelaria reported on her visit with Bea Ann Melichar, Pat Vandell and Sue Bailey of the **Adult Resource Alliance (Minor Home Repairs)**. They are seeking \$5,000. Since July they have served 17 clients and are expecting an increase in the spring. Traditionally, they assist 30 to 40 low-income older homeowners. The repairs include railings, faucets and door locks to address critical safety concerns. Accessibility ramps are not included in their repairs because other programs are available in the community to address those needs.

Kathleen Candelaria visited with Amber Field of the **Housing Authority of Billings (Security Deposit Assistance)**. They are asking for \$10,000. Last year they served 25 clients. The Security Deposit Assistance is a one-time grant program for low-income participants. It is a 50%/50% investment in that the recipient must provide 50% of the security deposit and the assistance program provides the other 50%. It is a partnership between the landlord and Section 8. The Housing Authority makes at least one annual check on the home.

Trent Currie reported on his visit with **Riverstone Health (Medication Assistance)**. They are seeking \$27,000. This is a program for low-income, uninsured individuals and they provide assistance to approximately 260 clients per month. The program assists clients in applying directly to pharmaceutical companies for free or low-cost prescription medication. The demand for their services has increased by 11% in the past 3 years. The funding would be used to off-set the costs of providing the advocacy services.

Trent Currie visited **YWCA Gateway House (Victim Services)**. The Gateway House typically houses 7 families at any given time and during his visit they were at capacity. They are requesting \$30,000. Trent stated the Gateway House representatives felt they would be significantly impacted without a full funding request. Trent inquired about alternative funding sources and the representatives stated the new director has plans for more outreach, but those plans have not been implemented as this time. The Gateway House is the only shelter in the community that provides both services and housing for women and their families affected by domestic violence.

Patt Leikam reported on her visit with Debbie Richert, Executive Director, with **Young Families Early Headstart (Building a Better Tomorrow)**. They are requesting \$30,000. The program assists and supports low-income, primarily teen, parents and prenatal parents in pursuit of their educational goals and the development of their parenting skills, while providing quality child care for their infants and toddlers (up to and including age 3), including those with disabilities. There is a 4:1 ratio, children to adults and they are currently serving 46 families. There is a waiting list. They have space to accommodate many more families, but are limited because of funding. The grant would be used to purchase equipment, child care supplies, furniture and building maintenance, repairs and grounds upkeep assistance. Seventy-four percent (74%) of their funding comes from federal funding sources. The organization is very proactive in its fundraising efforts in the community and actively pursues all grant opportunities.

Kamber Kelly reported on her visit with Denise Armstrong, Executive Director, for **Big Sky Senior Services (Prevention of Elder Abuse)**. They are seeking \$30,000 and this will cover the cost of an additional 20 hr./wk. part-time employee (\$10,000/yr. over the next 3 years). The program receives an average of 350 referrals on elder abuse every year. The program serves approximately 50 to 55 representative payee clients and respond to an average of 30 referrals per month. They have an ongoing waiting list for representative payee and case management services. The program's goal is to help clients remain in their homes by managing their money. All of their clients are 30% AMI or lower. With the additional staffing provided by this grant, Big Sky Senior Services would be able to address 5-10 clients on the waiting list with representative payee and case management services.

Consolidated Plan Review: Brenda reviewed the drafted Consolidated Plan – Annual Action Plan with the Board. The focus is on the affordable housing goals for the upcoming year. More emphasis is being placed on the First Time Home Buyer's Program and would increase the number of households assisted from approximately 20 to 35 or 40 homes. Housing Rehab Loans would be about 10 homes and Minor Home Repair Program would be about 15 homes. Brenda suggested funding for the Paint Program, for ramp construction, and meeting the needs of special needs populations be managed through loan programs. Brenda provided information about new regulatory compliance for recapture and resale. The Annual Action Plan gives an explanation of funding outcomes and meeting the community needs based on the Housing Needs Assessment and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice Study.

Neighborhood Concerns and Happenings: Board Member Kathleen Candelaria announced that a representative from the Catholic church will be at the next South Side Task Force meeting to talk about the new Catholic church being built on the South Side.

No other concerns were discussed.

Tentative Schedule: Next Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 15th, 2012, at 9:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 4:38 p.m.