



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board January 6, 2026

Board Members Present: Jim Corson, Kathleen Candelaria, Rebecca Noell, Erica Doornek, Ali Pistora, Hans Abbey

Board Members Excused: Donny White

Board Members Absent: None

City Council Representative: None

Staff Present: Brenda Beckett, Carly Collins, Wyeth Friday

Guests: Gavin Woltjer (Director, Billings Parks, Recreation & Public Lands), Jack Hanson (Community Member), Jonah Casale (AmeriCorps VISTA)

Welcome / Introductions: The Community Development (CD) Board met in Beartooth Meeting Room on the 5th floor of City Hall, 316 N. 26th Street. Board Vice Chair, Ali Pistora, called the meeting to order at 3 p.m.

Announcements: None.

Public Comment: No public comments were heard.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Jim Corson made a motion to approve December 2, 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):** Beckett reported that four (4) households have closed on the purchase of a home, and two (2) are pending. Several additional households have been preliminarily approved. Others are pending information from applicants or have been declined due to program income limits.
- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):** Beckett reported the following:
 - **LB Lofts:** No updates since the last meeting. They are hoping to close this summer and move forward with development.
 - **Mitchell Court:** Construction is nearing completion and renting is expected to begin soon. A tour of the property will be scheduled following the February board meeting.
 - **802 Yellowstone:** As a result of City Council's proposal, the CD Division will not be moving forward with funding recommendations for development at this time. Staff expressed some concerns about the division's timeliness deadlines per the Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), as there will not be expenditures related to this property; however, staff met with Homeword last month to discuss their interest in applying to fund a housing rehabilitation project in Billings.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Beckett reported that staff are working on educational materials for the public that explain the liens, including City subsidies, that are often in place for these properties.

- **1709 St. Johns Avenue:** A family of five (5) purchased the home for \$340,000 and moved into the property last month. The sale resulted in program income for the division, which will be reinvested into future projects.
- **1302 Parkhill Drive:** Post-rehab inspections, appraisals and clearance testing were completed. Some follow-up items are being addressed by the contractor. Beckett inquired about the proposed sale price of \$330, 000. The Board were in full support of this price. An Intent to Sell public notice was published and marketing will begin soon.
- **Program Income:** Staff reviewed available CDBG and HOME program income and also related several programs that have been stalled, including Lead Water Line Replacement, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design for low-income neighborhood parks, and available new foreclosure properties to purchase for rehab and sale to low-income households.
- **Lead Water Line Replacement Assistance Program:** Since the annual notification letter and informational postcard about the loan program were sent to impacted homeowners, staff has received two (2) survey responses and some additional inquiries by phone. There has been no further development on this program.
- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly reported that she completed host site monitoring with all August 2025 VISTA placements. The VISTAs are adjusting to service and to the Billings community well. The Request for Host Site Proposals for 2026 VISTAs was advertised in Yellowstone County News for the last several weeks. She has received a few inquiries from interested nonprofits, but no complete proposals to date. The priority deadline is Friday, January 9. She is working on the mid-year VISTA report which covers six (6) months of VISTA service accomplishments. Carly shared that her proposed VISTA orientation dates for 2026 are awaiting final approval from AmeriCorps due to the pending federal budget. She has reached out to AmeriCorps for guidance on how to advertise for positions in the meantime. Board Member Jim Corson recommended that staff reach out to additional sponsors to find out how they are addressing this.
- **HOME-ARP Projects Status:** Quarterly reports are due January 10. Carly will review the reports for accuracy and process reimbursements for subrecipients starting next week.

City Property Disposition Policy Recommendations: Gavin Woltjer presented the land use committee's proposed procedures for presenting properties to City Council, in addition to their recommendations for disposition. It included discussions with various community partners regarding the value and developability of each parcel. Affordable housing development has not been identified as a priority on the reviewed properties, though the committee has not fully reviewed the entire catalog. At this time, Council does not have a policy in place regarding how to determine if properties should be sold, developed, maintained, etc. The CD Board determined that they would review the information presented as well as decide how they would like to move forward with developing a policy recommendation for Council at their next meeting.

Jack Hanson, community member, added a couple of public comments. He believes the Board should make clear recommendations for a set of policies to be considered by the City Council. He also mentioned he would like to develop two housing units at 802 Yellowstone Avenue, two stories, stand alone, and built to match the character of the neighborhood. The public should be able to go to the City Council when parcels are up for sale and let them know they have ideas for the use and further development of the properties.

Tentative 2026 Schedule: Beckett reviewed the schedule. She noted online *Community Development Funding Request* applications are due January 16. Beckett shared that she may ask for volunteers to attend the orientation with new City Council members on February 23. Staff will also be attending Council Meetings later in the Spring and noted that CD Board support at those meetings is encouraged and appreciated. There were no concerns about the schedule from the Board.

Officer Elections: Vice Chair Ali Pistoria requested nominations for Board Chair. Board member Jim Corson nominated Ali Pistoria. Ali Pistoria accepted the nomination. There were no additional nominations or discussion. A vote was taken and Ali Pistoria was unanimously elected Board Chair. Board Chair Ali Pistoria requested nominations for Board Vice

Chair. Board member Rebecca Noell nominated Erica Doornek. Erica Doornek accepted the nomination. There were no additional nominations or discussion. A vote was taken and Erica Doornek was unanimously elected Board Vice Chair.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: Wyeth Friday reported that the Local Government Center out of Bozeman is coordinating a Board and Commissions training on Monday, February 2. Wyeth reported that he will be sharing an invitation once the details are finalized.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Ali Pistoria adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:30 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on February 3, 2026, in the 5th floor Beartooth Meeting Room in City Hall, 316 N 26th Street.