



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

May 3, 2022

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Jim Corson, Bret Rutherford, Shane Noble, Joe Stockburger, Hannah Olson, Kathleen Candelaria

Board Members Excused: Katrina Kruger, Jessica Schmidt

Staff Present: Brenda Beckett, Dina Harmon, Tam Rodier, Carly Collins, Wyeth Friday

Welcome / Introductions / Announcements: The Community Development (CD) Board met in the 6th Floor Conference Room of the Miller Building. Board Chair, Rebecca Noell, called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. Community Members, Kirsten Johanson and Madison Yolden, were also present.

Public Comment: None.

Meeting Minutes: Board member, Shane Noble, moved to approve the minutes from April. Board member, Hannah Olson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Staff Reports:

- **First Time Home Buyer Program (FTHB):** Staff has funding available to continue assisting additional households and has several approved applicants, however applicants are struggling to secure housing.
- **Affordable Housing Development:** Staff discussed that City Council has included an affordable housing initiative in their strategic planning. Council's funding decision made in April reflects an increased allocation for this program. Organizations are able to submit applications for affordable housing projects at any time.
- **Housing Rehabilitation:** The program remains on hold. No new applications were received in April.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** No proposals were received for the Steffanich property; it is being readvertised on the City website and will remain open until a contract can be executed.
- **CDBG-CV:** The Salvation Army has submitted two reimbursement requests and two quarterly reports for their meal program. 96% of beneficiaries served have been households earning less than 30% of AMI. The DBA-BID is hopeful that the handwashing / bathroom facility will arrive by June.

Board Member, Jim Corson, inquired about the environmental review process and whether staff is required to complete reviews on their own or if they are contracting with other professionals. Staff reported that there are increased regulations and requirements from HUD. Reviews are taking considerably more time than in the past. In the future, CD Staff may look into contracting out this process.

All other parks improvement projects including at Pioneer Park are moving forward. Equipment for Comanche Park has been ordered. Board Member, Jim Corson, inquired about the City's interest in other road improvements. There has been no response from other City departments at this time, but they are aware of potential funding options and improvement needs.

CDBG-CV Fast-Track Public Services projects including Chinook Horses, Education Foundation (Billings Public Schools), Explorers Academy – Head Start, Family Promise, and Alternatives, Inc., are progressing. Chinook Horses submitted their first reimbursement request and quarterly report. Twelve households were assisted, and 83% of them had income levels below 30% AMI. Three more applications are pending.

CDBG-CV projects at Alternatives, Inc., Boys and Girls Club, and School District 2 have been approved and are moving forward.

- **HOME-ARP:** An in-depth introduction report of the project occurred later in the meeting.
- **Billings-Metro VISTA Project (B-MVP):** Staff shared that recruitment has been steady. There is one VISTA placement finalized and two pending candidate recommendations so far.

FY 2022-2023 Annual Action Plan & Allocation Process Review:

Staff reported that the division did not meet CDBG timeliness expenditure deadlines. CD has a written expenditure agreement in place with the Parks Department for project implementation which should help bring the division back into timeliness compliance with HUD. Staff informed the Board that additional projects should also continue to be considered, as FTHB repayments are still being made to the division regularly.

Staff reviewed funding history, goals, and the allocation process with the Board, as written in the Annual Action Plan (AAP). Funding sources and final HUD allocations will be released soon. Staff will submit the AAP to HUD by May 15th. HUD has 45 days to review, so projects must wait to expend funds prior to this date.

The final allocation decision by City Council increased the amount of funding in the Affordable Housing Development program. The CD Division plans to continue moving forward with any “close and shovel ready” opportunities including Foreclosure Acquisition and Rehabilitation projects.

Staff proposed that CD’s program application deadline be moved up a week earlier in January in order for staff to prepare for the February CD Board Meeting. Staff asked for any final feedback on the AAP prior to the submission date.

American Rescue Plan: HOME-ARP Funding – Introduction: Beckett presented information on regulations, eligibility, and funding uses for the HOME-ARP program including rental units, non-congregate shelter, utility deposits, and supportive services. This included information on qualifying populations and how local data must guide project funding and implementation. In addition to several additional regulations, staff reported that any rental units developed must be proven financially viable for at least 15 years following construction and certificate of occupancy. Staff would be responsible for subsidizing operations, capital reserves, and vacancy prior to expending funds.

Staff discussed with the Board that there will be further work on program development in the coming months. Staff will be looking to the Board to assist with local agency survey development and community assessment review, identifying priority funding needs, and more. Staff provided copies of HOME-ARP regulations and sample allocation plan templates.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: N/A

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:30pm. The next regular meeting will be held on June 7, 2022.