



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board February 6, 2024

Board Members Present: Rebecca Noell, Joe Stockburger, Kathleen Candelaria, Erica Doornek, James Allen

Board Members Excused: None

Board Members Absent: Jenna Martin

City Council Representative: Denise Joy

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

Guests: Patti Webster (HomeFront), Kari Boiter, Jaime Bennett (Alternatives), Hollie Bowman (Alternatives), Terri Todd (Gratitude in Action), Steve Simonson (Billings Assoc. of Realtors), Tess Besaw (via Zoom), Kody Christensen (Downtown Billings Alliance)

Welcome / Introductions: 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 3:00 p.m. Board members and guests were invited to introduce themselves.

Announcements: None

Public Comment: Kari Boiter said she is a concerned community member interested in housing the homeless. She shared a story about one man's homeless experience, which perhaps provided a different perspective.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Kathleen Candelaria made a motion to approve the January 2, 2024, minutes as written and distributed. Board member James Allen 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):** Dina reported she has two active Buy-Sell Agreements that will close soon.
- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):** Dina stated that:
 - Homeward's annual Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) certification is underway.
 - Mitchell Court Affordable Housing Project:
 - Legal documents have been drafted for review by the City Attorney's office.
 - Environmental Review Record is basically done.
 - Will schedule City Council action during March.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam Rodier shared the following:
Steffanich Property
 - Contractor has been engaged to install Xeriscaping; hopefully to be completed soon.

1709 St. Johns Avenue

- Asbestos abatement work is complete.
 - The Notice to Proceed was issued to the contractor for the tree work and work is underway.
 - The Invitation for Bids was publicly advertised for three weeks in the Yellowstone County News; it was also posted to the City website and direct mailed to nine general contractors. Sealed bids will be accepted until 2:00 p.m. on February 20, at which time they will be publicly opened. A bid review committee will review bids prior to making a recommendation to the City Council, who must approve of the bid award.
 - Staff continues to work on an application for an AmeriCorps NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) team to implement Xeriscaping on the property this spring.
- **CDBG / CDBG-CV Projects:** Tam also gave the following project updates:

North Park

- The pre-fabricated restroom is in place and being finished. It will be opened to the public in the spring.
- The contractor is in the process of installing the adult exercise equipment and new shelter.

Parks Accessibility Projects:

- The contractor is currently installing the accessibility improvements at the Pioneer Park restroom, North Park Center, and the Zimmerman Center. Work should be completed within the next couple of weeks.
- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly Collins reported:
 - Three new VISTAs:
 - Matt Benowitz started serving with the Adaptive Performance Center in January.
 - Ren Elias will begin serving with the Yellowstone Art Museum this month.
 - Gillian Amend will start serving with Mountain Health Gives this month.
 - Four new host site proposals received:
 - St. Johns United
 - State of Montana Developmental Health
 - Billings Public Schools Education Foundation
 - Tumbleweed / Food Security Project
 - Three carry-over host site proposals that did not fill positions in January 2024:
 - Dog Tag Buddies
 - Family Service
 - Wise Wonders

HOME-ARP Site Visit Reports, Discussion, Funding Recommendation: Carly said staff continues to work on policies, procedures, a grantee / subrecipient guidebook, and forms. The goal is to make things as simple as possible for grantees / subrecipients to ensure compliance, prepare and submit quarterly reports, and request reimbursements.

Brenda noted HUD requires quarterly reports for the first time. Staff is working out how to blend this with the CAPER (Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report).

Carly said she sent each applicant the questions CD Board members asked last month. Printed copies of their responses were distributed for review, but she gave a verbal summary of responses. She also noted that Family Promise had withdrawn their application.

Staff recommends awarding each organization \$100,000 initially with a renewable agreement provided the organization has been compliant with regulations.

Carly presented a proposed timeline for HOME-ARP allocations. After brief discussion, the Board consensus was approval of the timeline. Brenda clarified written agreements must be completed before asking the City Council to take action on the recommended awards.

Tess Besaw noted grantees / subrecipients new to using HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) would require additional time to enter new services and staff training to ensure staff collects the right data. Brenda clarified staff is not yet saying HMIS is required; however, HMIS could help ensure there are no service duplications among agencies. The onus will be on the grantee / subrecipient to develop a method for ensuring no duplication, which Carly will need to approve.

Review CDBG / HOME Applications Received and Annual Action Plan: Brenda Beckett reviewed the FY 2024-2025 Community Development proposed activities list and gave a brief overview of each activity. She asked Board members for suggested edits or additions. No edits were suggested.

Brenda said one application for CDBG funding was received from Intermountain Professionals Foundation. Copies of the following documents were provided to Board members:

- Intermountain Professional's Foundation Application
- City Staff Questions for Applicant
- Applicant Responses
- Applicant Conflict of Interest Policies and Procedures
- Staff Application Analysis

Brenda asked if Board Member(s) wanted to conduct a site visit prior to making a funding recommendation at an upcoming meeting. Board members expressed concern that there was little to no public-facing information about the organization; unable to confirm they served 350 clients and what they did for those clients; the application was substantially incomplete; etc. Brenda clarified this will be an "action item" on an upcoming agenda.

2024 Meeting Schedule: Tam distributed copies of the 2024 meeting schedule and asked if any changes or additions were needed. No edits were suggested.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: Erica Doornek said the North Park dog park is under construction. They recently met their funding goal.

James Allen asked how many CD Board vacancies there were. Brenda responded three vacancies, which must be filled by residents of low-income areas. James shared a couple of ideas for recruiting new members. Brenda said those were great ideas, but recruiting must be through the Mayor. She suggested he reach out to the Mayor to share those ideas.

Wyeth Friday said the Planning & Community Services Department annual report has been completed and published. It will soon be available on the City website.

Rebecca Noell said the two new grizzly bear cubs are out at the Zoo today.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:35 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on March 5, 2024.