



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board

April 1, 2025

Board Members Present: Joe Stockburger, Erica Doornek, Ali Pistora, Hans Abbey, Donny White, Jim Corson, Adam Toland

Board Members Excused: Kathleen Candelaria

Board Members Absent: None

City Council Representative: Kendra Shaw

Staff Present: Brenda Beckett, Carly Collins, Tam Rodier, Jordan Langton, Wyeth Friday

Guests: Patti Webster – HomeFront

Welcome / Introductions: The Community Development (CD) Board met in the 5th floor Beartooth Conference Room of City Hall, 316 N 26th Street. Board Chair Joe Stockburger called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and invited everyone to introduce themselves.

Announcements: Beckett confirmed that James Allen resigned from the CD Board and there is one vacancy.

Public Comment: No public comments were heard.

Meeting Minutes: Board member Erica Doornek made a motion to approve the March 4, 2025 minutes as written and distributed. Board member Donny White 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):** Tam shared that we have over 400 assisted households and staff is currently working on the annual mailing to FTHB clients. The annual mailing will be used to monitor compliance with primary residence requirements.
- **Affordable Housing Development (AHD):** Jordan reported that Mitchell Court has requested their second draw of approximately \$254,000. A site visit and labor interviews will be conducted before processing the draw.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Tam shared the following updates:

1709 St. Johns Avenue: No viable buy sell agreements have been received. Conversations with realtors are ongoing. Board member Jim Corson asked for feedback about the property to better understand why the home is not selling. Tam shared that the house is in a great location with convenient amenities nearby and the home is priced at \$356,000 with a maximum of \$70,000 in City assistance.

1302 Parkhill Drive: The bid received for the project was significantly higher than staff's estimate. The home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and requires historical preservation. Staff is eliminating some line items and reducing the scope of other line items to lower costs. Staff hopes to have the negotiated Construction Agreement ready for City Council action on April 28th.

- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) Parks Projects:**

Spring Creek Park: Tam reported that the Parks Department is in a period of transition. Staff hopes to have an opportunity to meet with the new leadership soon to discuss this project. Staff has reiterated to the Parks Department that CDBG funding cannot be used for maintenance. Board member Ali Pistora suggested discussing a structural climbing wall with the Parks Department.

- **Billings Metro VISTA Project (BMVP):** Carly reported that VISTA members were presented to City Council on March 10, 2025. VISTA members attended the ServeMontana Symposium in Helena and had some great networking conversations. Carly highlighted VISTA funding changes involving the cost share requirement. Cost share funding will be allocated towards training, recruitment and retention. Carly does not have an available positions listing, as the list is pending compliance with changes related to the current administration.
- **HOME-ARP Projects Status:** Carly stated that reports are due on April 10, 2025. Carly is helping two subrecipients with reporting compliance. No funds are disbursed until reporting is compliant. Carly has completed monitoring with HRDC and extension agreements for more funding are in process.

Affordable Housing Development – LB Lofts: Staff recommended allocating \$1.4 million in HOME funding and \$145,000 in CDBG funding to the new construction of LB Lofts. Tam confirmed that the Environmental Assessment was sent for the City Administrator's signature to finalize the process. Brenda explained staff's subsidy layering review, which analyzes the project's financials during the 20-year period of affordability. Board member Jim Corson asked Patti Webster for an update on pending funding sources. Patti explained that the funding is pending because the federal government has not released funding yet. Brenda asked how remaining project funding would be provided if the federal government does not release funding allocations. Patti confirmed that HomeFront could use other funding sources for the project, but the other sources have more compliance requirements. Brenda confirmed that the recommended funding has been included in the budget and is distributed via cashflow reimbursements. Board member Jim Corson motioned to recommend the City Council approve the application and allocation of \$1.4 million in HOME funds and \$145,000 in CDBG funds. Board member Erica Doornek seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Draft Consolidated Plan – Annual Action Plan and Staff Recommendations: Brenda reported that she attended the City Council work session on March 17, 2025 to discuss the Division's goals and priorities. She shared staff challenges including outdated data provided by The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Consolidated Plan survey closed on March 31, 2025 and Brenda shared the survey results, division priorities and proposed programs. Discussion occurred related to how the Family Justice Center project fits into the survey priorities. Brenda confirmed that we have not received an application for funding from YWCA yet. Public Works and Community Development will collaborate on a program for homeowner assistance with lead pipe abatement. Councilmember Shaw asked for details of the project and Brenda explained that assistance would be provided to replace pipes from the home to the street in the form of a loan secured by a lien on the property.

Recusals and Budget Recommendations: Staff budget recommendations were reviewed in detail. Brenda clarified that HUD has not released funding allocations, so the budget was created using the average of recent allocation figures. Board chair Joe Stockburger recommended adding a line item to the budget spreadsheet to illustrate a placeholder for the Family Justice Center project to align with City Council priorities. Recusal forms were completed and returned to staff. There were no recusals. Board member Ali Pistora motioned to approve staff budget recommendations. Board member Erica Doornek seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. A vote was taken, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Task Force Outreach Review: Staff provided presentations at the North Park, Heights and Southside Task Force meetings. The Consolidated Plan survey was shared with meeting attendees. At the Heights Task Force meeting, Brenda identified an impediment to fair housing related to a lack of City density bonuses and high utility connection fees and she will include the impediment in the Consolidated Plan. Staff will attend the Combined Task Force Leadership meeting this week and inactive task forces will be discussed.

Neighborhood Concerns & Happenings: Patti Webster discussed HomeFront's Community Reinvestment project that involves building 44 new homes near King Avenue East. HomeFront is interested in reserving a portion of these new homes for the Community Development's First Time Home Buyer program applicants. Board member Hans Abbey shared details of the Bike Rodeo event occurring on May 31, 2025. Bikes can be donated to be refurbished for the event. Wyeth shared transportation project meetings occurring on April 2, 2025 for MDT projects and April 10, 2025 for the downtown two-way street project.

Next Meeting: Board Chair Joe Stockburger adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:53 p.m. The next regular in-person meeting will be held at 3:00 p.m. on May 6, 2025 in the 5th floor Beartooth Conference Room in City Hall, 316 N 26th Street.