



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIVISION Community Development Board - Meeting Minutes

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### Regular Meeting of the Community Development Board December 3, 2019

**Board Members Present:** Rebecca Noell, Joe Stockburger, Katrina Kruger, Jessica Schmidt, Jim Corson, Council Member Denise Joy

**Board Members Excused:** Laura Gittings-Carlson, Bret Rutherford

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

**Welcome / Introductions / Announcements:** The Community Development (CD) Board met in the 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, Miller Building, 2825 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, Billings, Montana. Board chair Rebecca Noell, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00pm. There are still two CD Board positions available. It was discussed that current Board Members can outreach to assist with filling these positions.

All present members shared introductions, as several AmeriCorps VISTA members were present at this meeting.

**Public Comment:** No additional public comment.

**Meeting Minutes:** Board member, Katrina Kruger moved to approve the November meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Board member Joe Stockburger. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously.

#### Staff Reports:

- **Billings-Metro VISTA Project:** Staff is actively recruiting Host Sites and members for 2020.
  - **VISTA Member, Samantha Pearce:** Samantha's Host Site is Chinook Horses, which provides equine assisted therapy opportunities. Samantha is working on increasing funding streams as well as creating partnerships with local programs to increase beneficiaries. She is forming partnerships with substance use disorder programs that exist within the community. Katrina Kruger asked if Samantha has connected with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) of Yellowstone County. Samantha has done so, and added that she is also working with Child and Family Services. Samantha shared that the program is client driven and that she has witnessed successful referrals from new partnerships already.
  - **VISTA Member, Cortlynn Cartonia:** Cortlynn's Host Site is Family Tree Center, Prevent Child Abuse Montana (PCAMT). Cortlynn is focused on board recruitment, increasing parent education opportunities, project development, and expanding services into rural areas. She has been focusing on networking and forming new partnerships, training for individuals within the foster-care system, and the possibility of integrating tele-health opportunities for rural areas. The CD Board shared some effective ways to engage and motivate board members such as refining goals and direction for the board, using alternative meeting methods such as Skype/Zoom, and having one consistent meeting time. Jim encouraged Cortlynn to reach out to Council Member, Penny Ronning for additional support and resources.
  - **VISTA Member, Siesa Shuman:** Siesa's Host Site is Dress for Success, which is a referral based program that focuses on the economic empowerment of women in the community. A Career Center and a boutique supply clothing and accessories to women who are looking for work or who are employed. Siesa is currently working on diversifying fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and increasing benefactors. Siesa expressed that volunteer recruitment has been slow. The CD Board

recommended that Siesa reach out to local colleges and universities for potential volunteers and was given contact information. It was also suggested that Siesa contact local agencies for cultural competency training opportunities. She is working on creating more concrete ways to serve more women. Siesa is currently piloting a fundraising plan to supply winter coats for women.

- **First Time Home Buyer Program:** The program is steady and operating well. Funds have been committed to several current applicants who should close in December and January. Funding is still available for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- **Affordable Housing Development:** No offers at Riverfront Pointe yet. CD Staff has sent marketing materials to various agencies in Billings. Brenda will send to the CD Board. Property must be sold within nine months following the issuance of the certificate of occupancy.
- **Housing Rehabilitation:** No new applications have been received. Staff placed an ad in Tidbits to hopefully increase awareness and encourage new applicants to apply. Staff delivered applications to Adult Resource Alliance, Senior Center, and The Home Center.
- **Foreclosure Acquisition / Housing Rehabilitation Program:** Two bidders for the demolition of 930 Steffanich were submitted and one was chosen via review committee. The asbestos testing and report has been completed. Quotes for asbestos abatement are due by Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>. Staff has released and advertised the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Affordable Housing development for this property. Proposals are due by Friday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. Staff shared pamphlets that were created to inform the neighborhood of the process in which the property will be redeveloped.

**CDBG & HOME Application & Allocation Process Review:** Brenda shared that it has been difficult to establish reasonable goals to satisfy HUD requirements and measurements in Billings, as they are not clearly outlined for the Consolidated Plan. In order to meet outcomes and make the goals operational, Brenda must ensure the goals make sense for Billings. Brenda has communicated with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) about recommendations, but concrete goals have not been established. The Analysis of Impediments (AI) to Fair Housing Choice must also be completed to implement fair housing activities within the Consolidated Plan. CDBG and HOME applications are due in January; City Council will review and approve in April.

Board member Jim Corson moved to approve the Housing and Community Development Funding Guidelines and Application for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. The motion was seconded by Board member Joe Stockburger. A vote was taken and the guidelines and application were approved unanimously.

#### **Neighborhood Concerns and Happenings:**

- Wyeth shared that Code Enforcement has been working with the Attorney General's office to determine the process of acquiring properties with no owners or heirs. There is the potential for 3-4 of these properties to be redeveloped and sold to private owners. Wyeth expressed that Code Enforcement will be working on a streamlined and refined process to do so. One property in particular may be able to be purchased through the CD Foreclosure Acquisition and Rehabilitation Program, so staff will work together to further this project as needed.

**Next Meeting:** Rebecca Noell adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:05pm. The next meeting will be held on January 7, 2020.