

Minutes: WFH Steering Committee

April 29th, 2021 4:00pm

Meeting Purpose: Monthly workforce housing steering committee meeting to discuss and take action toward furthering Committee mission and goals.

Attendees: Austin Wallis, Kristen Hobson, Jo Ann Eder, Myrna Lastusky, Hope Rubyhawk, Chris Lorash, Jenn Nelson, Hermina Harold, Steve Simonson, Robin Adams

Minutes:

Status of Owner-Built Housing Program

- Concrete poured for porches, siding begun, big group was out volunteering on Saturday, Beartooth house is making significant progress
- Starting to take volunteers on Thursdays and Saturdays on a case-by-case basis. Interested volunteers can contact Julia Pharmer from Habitat for Humanity at juliap@helenahabitat.org 406-204-7311.
- 2 households have been selected for next cycle, third spot is a little more uncertain but we have some potential picks. Still accepting applications.
 - One of the two is going through MBOH instead of USDA Rural Development, Chris says that Vicky Bauer with MBOH is very interested in learning from our program model with Habitat/CLT/Foundation partnerships.

Americorps Housing VISTA

- Status update: We have been approved as a host site and are recruiting a member. If we firm up a candidate by the first week of June, they will start in July. The job posting can be accessed on our website here: <https://www.rlacf.org/job/amicorps-vista-2/>
- Final VAD approval: Robin will send over email, it is the same that was approved with a minor change clarifying the VISTA will serve on some Saturdays
- Funding proposal - the first year costs \$5,000, second year would be \$7k, third year would be \$9k. We will revisit this once a member is confirmed, but there are other options aside

from Workforce Housing funds such as individual donors, Big Sky Trust Fund, and perhaps the EDA Cares Act funding.

HOME Fund Committee update (*Sandy Conlee, Chris Lorash, Marcella Manuel*)

- Trust Montana Missoula County Program Model (*Hermina Harold, Austin Wallis*)
 - Presentation Slides:
 - https://rlacf.sharepoint.com/:b:/s/WFHsteering/EeB_QuMN_k1Iih9e-wOirrABXkB-GzA-U55N_oOODd0vDA?e=pQb7sR
- Trust Montana just started a program in Missoula using HOME funds to provide down payment assistance and transfer properties in land trusts
 - In Missoula, it's \$80k grants to households below 80% AMI that gets locked in to the home instead of recaptured. Trust Montana follows HOME regulations on compliance monitoring and program administration.
 - Can stack multiple down payment assistance programs, but does depend on HUD limit (around \$140k per home, so wouldn't be getting too close).
 - Trust Montana follows HOME regulations on compliance monitoring and program administration.
 - Similar to Red Lodge, the purchase price limits in Missoula are very low. Hermina is working with the State to change the purchase price by doing market analysis. There may be an opportunity to change the limit for the whole state, not just Missoula.
- Trust Montana is also sending out postcards to people who may be interested in donating their land – there is potential that people could be interested in it by emphasizing the write off for donations and community benefit.
 - Proud Ground CLT in Portland has a mature Buyer-Initiated Program
- The City of Red Lodge needs to spend HOME in order to qualify for additional HOME funds. Application due in September.
- Next step is to meet with the City again to advocate for this new model. Robin will call James and set up a meeting time.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

- Both City and County could have a housing grant open for up to \$450,000.
- Comment period open until July 30, contacting County commissioners would be the best method to submit comments on specific projects.
- The CDBG Planning Grant will likely be due in June but has not officially been announced.
- ARPA program – grants will soon be available online based on leverage available.
- Steve Simonson says that the City is in line for funding in the amount of \$193/person.
- Chris would be willing to help with campaign to get businesses and other stakeholders together to put our weight behind a project. The BFCF Housing Webinar on May 13th would serve as a nice catalyst for this meeting. Robin will call Chris and discuss this plan.

City of Red Lodge Planning Board 2021 Zoning Regulation Updates

- Robin has drafted a letter to the Planning Board and Zoning Commission recommending the City apply for the CDBG Planning Grant to fund a planning consultant with expertise on affordable housing policy that can assist with the 2021 Zoning Regulation Updates.
- This letter will be sent seeking approval next week.

Workforce Housing Steering Committee membership

- General consensus that at the next meeting, the Committee will approve a procedure for accepting new voting members. Robin will write a position description draft and send to the Committee for review.

Other news/announcements

- BFCF Housing Webinar May 13th at 5:30pm: <https://www.beartoothfront.org/2020-forum>
- Gateway & Natural Amenity Region (GNAR) Initiative (GNAR) Initiative webinar series: <https://www.usu.edu/gnar/gnarlyproblems>
- Beartooth RCD has 2 spots open to attend Montana Housing Partnership Conference
- Next meeting May 27 at 4pm will have both remote and in person options – LET ROBIN KNOW if you want to be in person to get a head count.
- Jenn wants to share the property manager perspective at the next meeting, Robin will write it into the next agenda.