

**Borough of West Reading
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

March 11, 2019

Committee Members Present

Philip Wert, Nicholas Imbesi, Andrew Kearney, Robin Horman, Cathy Hoffman, Mark Ratcliffe

Absent

Christin Kelley, Aaron Gantz, John Woodward

Visitors Present

Dan Horman

Call to Order

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Public Comment

None

Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Robin Horman and seconded by Nick Imbesi to approve the minutes of February 11, 2019.

Motion carried.

BID Status Update

Mr. Ratcliffe noted that the list of benefits of the BID is being updated. It was noted that Julie Fitzpatrick has been given the role of Executive Director therefore her list of responsibilities has grown and she can no longer devote as much time to the BID process.

Foreclosed & Blighted Residential Properties Update:

Mayor Kearney reported that the property at 102 Yarnell has become vacant due to the passing of the resident. The family's intent is to clean up the property and offer it for sale.

Significant/Vacant West Reading Commercial Properties Update:

- 301 Penn – No specific use for the building has been identified although there have been many interested businesses.
- 401 Penn – The property has been listed for sale at a reported amount of \$750,000.
- 433 Penn – Mr. Ratcliffe has determined that although the business is for sale, the property is not.
- 445, 447 and 449 Penn – The Codes Department has not yet been asked to contact the owner of 445 Penn regarding the current residential use.
- 550 Penn – Codes has investigated and determined that the counseling office will only occupy 185 sq. ft. of the 1600 square footage total of the first floor.

- 611 Penn – The second floor apartment has no egress except through the business. This will be investigated by the Codes Department.
- 633 Penn – The space is still available for rent.
- 643 Penn – The property is currently for sale.
- 637 Penn – Mixx is not closing however the owner is selling the business.
- 707 Penn – Property has been sold and is being converted into retail space.
- 711 Penn – A restaurant is slated to be opened.

Strategic Planning Discussion

- More discussions have evolved regarding the future of the shopping center with funding of proposed projects being the focus.
- The Borough of Wyomissing is working toward identifying a consultant for their master plan study. Mr. Ratcliffe has been asked to be part of the interview process.
- HARB/Design Strategy Discussion – The most recent meeting was postponed due to a snowstorm.

Old & New Business

- The topic of online home sharing (Airbnb, HomeAway etc.) was briefly discussed because of some recent questions from residents. Mr. Ratcliffe provided an information pamphlet from the Pennsylvania Downtown Center for consideration. It was noted that the Borough does not currently regulate this type of use.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Hoffman