

BOROUGH OF WEST READING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019

The Borough of West Reading Economic Development Committee met on Monday, May 13, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at Borough Hall, with the following persons present: Chairman Philip Wert; Council Member Nicholas Imbesi, Mayor Andrew Kearney; Benjamin LaManna; Christin Kelley; John Woodward; Members absent: Borough Manager Cathy Hoffman; Erin Gantz and Brett Bagenstose.

Visitors: Robin Horman, Dan Horman residents; Mark Ratcliffe, Main Street Manager

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Approval of Minutes

Motion made to approve the Economic Development Committee minutes of Monday, April 8, 2019 by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mr. Ratcliffe. **Motion carried.**

Old Business

BID Report– Mark Ratcliffe said he is meeting with Julie on May 29th at 4 pm to go over the BID progress. The steering committee will be present.

New Construction – The Belovich development, The Villas at Narrow has sold three homes at the asking price of \$224,900 each, and all properties will settle in June. The developer has received inquiries from renters interested in renting a home within The Villas at Narrow.

Commercial Properties

301 Penn - Still available for rent.

401 Penn – Aladdin – The exact nature of the sale of the property/business was discussed.

433 Penn – Possible uses for this commercial space was discussed.

445,447,449 Penn – Discussions continued regarding the zoning perspective for these three properties. Cathy Hoffman is researching the exact zoning.

450 Penn – Subway sandwich shop and real estate are listed for sale at \$150,000. The property was assessed at \$129,000.

637 Penn – MIXX – The business owner's lease will be terminating in the near future and it is unlikely that she will renew her lease.

707 Penn – Nothing new to report.

711 Penn – The former Dolce de Zabala commercial space may be occupied by a Jamaican style restaurant, sources indicated that the property is listed for sale at \$235,000.

30 N.6th Ave – This currently residential property is listed for sale at \$109,000 with a pending sale. It was hopeful that the property would be occupied by a business.

Strategic Planning

The Wyomissing Borough report was delivered by John Woodward who noted that Wyomissing Borough has major building and business development projects in the works. The Borough has hired a lobbying to procure funds to complete the 4th Avenue project before the medical school is up and running. The following is an update on major projects within Wyomissing:

- **Wawa** – Equus will turn the pad site over to Wawa in two weeks. The store is scheduled to open in October or November.

- **VF/Knitting Mills** – The UGI building is scheduled to be occupied by mid-June. Sly Fox is scheduled to open sometime next month.
- **Arrow Building/The Met** – The front Building, Building #28 has been issued a Certificate of Occupancy and tenants have moved in, the remaining two buildings are expected to be completed by September of 2019.
- **VF North Lot/North Park Road** – The Teleflex is on schedule to be completed by September of 2019. Construction on the medical school should begin by the end of 2019 or early 2020 and is scheduled to be completed by the first quarter of 2021.
- **Fox Theaters** – Land development and zoning approvals have been granted for a four-theater addition to the rear of the exiting building. Construction is anticipated to begin this summer.
- **Berkshire Court Hotel** – Conditional Final Land Development approval has been granted by the borough. A`n anticipated start date of construction has not been provided.
- **Wyomissing Master Plan Study** – The Borough has hired 4Ward Planning and Design to prepare a master plan study for the 800-1600 blocks of Penn Avenue, the North Park Road corridor, and Berkshire Heights. The study will examine the potential for redevelopment and revitalization opportunities within these areas. The study should be completed by October of 2019.
- **Fourth Street** – The Borough will be applying for a multi-modal transportation grant from DCED and PennDOT to connect the VF North lot to North Wyomissing Boulevard via North Fourth Street. Pedestrian and bicycle amenities will also be provided as part of this project.

Zoning Concern

Christin Kelley noted a construction sign that has been adhered to a home along Tulpehocken Avenue and it unclear what the scope of work may be, an exact address was not provided.

Penn Avenue Parking – Mark Ratcliffe provided an update as to the status of implementing paid parking in the Shopping Center parking lot: Signage and cement bases have been ordered, the Flowbird App has been integrated with the handheld enforcement system and the kiosk is scheduled to be installed by the end of May. Public education avenues have been engaged such as press releases and notes placed on vehicles parked within the Shopping Center parking lot to alert drivers to the upcoming implementation of paid parking. A meeting was scheduled to further discuss the logistics of launching the paid parking program. A second kiosk will is scheduled to arrive on May 23rd. Mr. Ratcliffe met with the owner of the property to discuss placement of the two kiosks, it has been decided that kiosks would do well closer to the curb area and near the light posts for signage purposes. The Public Works Department will install the bases on May 22nd or 23rd.

The potential for redevelopment of the West Reading Center shopping complex, Palmer Candy buildings and Reading Avenue/Buttonwood Street corridor were discussed as well as the County Commissioner race.

RFP - The RFP is currently listed on PennBid, the hope is to obtain assistance in writing a five-year strategic plan.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 p.m. by Mayor Kearney and seconded by Mr. Imbesi.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Andrew Kearney