

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

**SEPTEMBER 9, 2019**

**Committee Members Present**

Philip Wert, Nicholas Imbesi, Andrew Kearney, Robin Horman, Mark Ratcliffe, Benjamin LaManna and Cathy Hoffman.

**Visitors Present**

None

**Call to Order**

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

**Public Comment**

None

A general discussion took place about posters being placed on the Penn Ave light poles. It was suggested that community boards be placed on the avenue. Mr. Wert noted that the streetscape designs for Reading Avenue and the traffic circle include community boards.

**Approval of the Minutes**

Motion made to approve the Economic Development Committee minutes of August 12, 2019 by Mark Ratcliffe and seconded by Andrew Kearney. **Motion carried.**

**Residential Properties Update**

Mr. Wert provided an update on the sale of new townhomes within the first phase of The Villas at Narrow and noted that five of the six homes have been sold. Mrs. Hoffman noted that the developer plans to break ground on the next five lots this November.

**BID Status Update**

Mr. Ratcliffe noted that the BID has been placed on hold until after the completion of the WRCRF five-year plan.

**Significant/Vacant West Reading Commercial Properties Update**

- 301 Penn Avenue – Lease for Kitchen/Bath supply has fallen through. Now looking for new tenant.
- 416 Penn Avenue – Nitro Bar is now open, and multiple committee members noted that business is doing well.
- 428 Penn Avenue – A rendering of a new building is on display onsite; however, plans have not yet been submitted. Mr. Wert has been in contact with the owner/developer.
- 433 Penn Avenue – Schweitzer's Service Center is currently for sale with nothing new to report.
- 445, 447 and 449 Penn Avenue – The Codes Department issued a letter to the owner and tenant about the residential use on the first floor. An update will be provided from Cathy Hoffman.
- 637 Penn Avenue – The owner of Mixx continues to seek a buyer and is planning to occupy the space until the lease expires. No new update.
- 707 Penn Avenue – Property is expected to be converted into retail space, there was nothing new to report.

- 711 Penn Avenue – The owner of this property indicated that a Jamaican restaurant intends to occupy this space and is slowly progressing towards that goal. Mrs. Horman noted that the outside was recently painted.
- 723 Penn – Mi Casa Su Casa is progressing through the process of operating within this space. Mr. Kearney noted that the owner was outside painting.

Discussion took place concerning three properties on Buttonwood Street. (300,330, and 340). Mr. Wert noted that 300 and 330 were the same owner. Mr. Wert also noted that 340 is a large parcel of land. Discussion followed concerning the economic development of those properties and the Buttonwood Street gateway.

### **Strategic Planning Discussion**

Mr. Imbesi provided the Wyomissing update. Wyomissing Borough is currently focusing on the 4<sup>th</sup> street project on the north side of the Knitting Mills (formerly known as the VF Outlets). A roundabout will be installed at Innovation Way and 4<sup>th</sup> street. 4<sup>th</sup> street will then be completely revamped and another roundabout will be installed at 4<sup>th</sup> and North Wyomissing Blvd.

No update on the five-year plan with Derck and Edson.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Imbesi  
Borough Manager