

Borough of West Reading
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
July 13, 2020

Call to Order

Mr. Wert called the meeting order at 6:10 with Philip Wert, Robin Horman, Aaron Gantz, Andrew Kearney, Cathy Hoffman, and Nicholas Imbesi in attendance via Zoom.

Public Comments – None

Approval of June Minutes

Motion made by Mrs. Horman, seconded by Ms. Gantz. **Motion carried 4-0.**

General Discussion

Council President Jack Gombach joined the meeting to discuss the role of the Economic Development Committee and what the main function of the committee should be. After a lengthy discussion about the differences between EDC and the WRCRF, the role each group plays, and where Borough staff comes into the mix; it was decided that the Economic Development Committee will set the table and map out how the Borough should move forward with an economic plan. Next meeting the Committee will begin working on a road map and will put the residential/commercial properties list on the back burner as a plan and road map are developed.

The list of significant/vacant properties was reviewed and there were no questions or comments.

Residential Properties Update

Villas at Narrow property report – Next six homes are nearing completion – Some have moved in.

Significant/Vacant West Reading Commercial Properties Update

- 301 Penn Avenue – Office suite for lease.
- 408 Penn Avenue – Vacant, formerly Sharp Dressed Man.
- 416 Penn Avenue – Motor Club opening in early 2020 – New date for opening?
- 428 Penn Avenue – Updated plans have been received. The project is likely to be delayed until 2021.
- 433 Penn Avenue – Schweitzer's Service Center property – Wyomissing engineer is drawing parking plan.
- 438 Penn Avenue – The former New World Jewelers building is for sale.
- 444 Penn Avenue – Residential property added to watch list.
- 445, 447, 449 Penn Avenue – Continued discussion from a code's perspective. Update: Discussed talking to the solicitor about these during the last meeting.
- 450 Penn Avenue – Subway franchise is for sale.
- 501 Penn Avenue – Sunoco – Court case is still pending. State enforcement pulled.
- 544 Penn Avenue – Coral Reef Connections is opening very soon.
- 530 Penn Avenue – Rebel Hive Meadery has expanded their hours.
- 550 Penn Avenue – Park Road Café has already opened. Quick turnaround.

- 605 Penn Avenue – Curious Consignments building and business are for sale. Listed for \$395,000.
- 614 Penn Avenue – Mazi Restaurant will be opening in a “few weeks”, as of 7/7/20.
- 615 Penn Avenue – Rice Modern Thai – Reopening date has not yet been disclosed.
- 633 Penn Avenue – Vacant, formerly Unique Finds.
- 635 Penn Avenue – East Ridge Outfitters is closing and looking for a new tenant.
- 639 Penn Avenue – Dressed in Love Bridal just opened.
- 643 Penn Avenue – Willow Creek Brewing recently announced an anticipated fall opening.
- 707 Penn Avenue – Residential property added to watch list.
- 715 Penn Avenue – Recently sold for \$300,000.
- 720 Penn Avenue – Sale pending for \$299,900.
- 22 N. Sixth Avenue – CK Tours has closed, this space is available.

Priority Properties List

- 433 Penn Avenue – Schweitzer Service Center
- Buttonwood Street properties near the bridge – 300, 330 (one owner), 340 (Mailroom Systems)

Strategic Planning Discussion

- The Wyomissing report was given by Mr. Wert. He recently attended their EDC meeting and had no new items to report at this time.
- Five-year plan – Derck and Edson – still waiting for a final draft.

Old & New Business

None was reported at the meeting.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas F. Imbesi
Borough Manager