

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

**December 14, 2020**

**Committee Members Present**

Philip Wert, Nicholas Imbesi, Aaron Gantz, Mark Ratcliffe, Cathy Hoffman, and John Woodward.

**Visitors Present**

None

**Call to Order**

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Approval of the Minutes**

Motion made to approve the Economic Development Committee minutes of November 9, 2020 moved by John Woodward and seconded by Mark Ratcliffe. **Motion carried 5-0.**

**Residential Properties Update**

A discussion took place about property values in the borough continuing to increase. Right now, values are hovering around 100 to 150 dollars per square foot. The residential housing market is stable and healthy.

**West Reading Commercial Properties Update**

- 301 Penn – Office suite for lease – vanilla envelope ready for a tenant. A possible gym tenant is looking at the building.
- 408 Penn – Snazzy Beauty Supply is now open.
- 416 Penn – Motor Club opening in early 2021 – No new update on when it will be opening.
- 428 Penn – Updated plans have been received. Likely delayed into 2021.
- 433 Penn – Schweitzer's Service Center property – Wyomissing engineer drawing parking plans
- 438 Penn – Building is for sale. Former New World Jewelers.
- 444 Penn – Residential property added to watch.
- 450 Penn – No longer for sale. Subway sign is gone and building is vacant.
- 501 Penn – Sunoco – Application for a liquor license submitted. Hearing took place in November.
- 633 Penn – Building is vacant. Looking for a new tenant.
- 635 Penn – East Ridge Outfitters is closing and looking for a new tenant.
- 643 Penn – Willow Creek Brewing. Waiting on state license.
- 707 Penn – Residential property added to watch.
- 713 Penn – Will be available soon.
- 720 Penn – Vacant
- 728 Penn – Finch + Fern is now open.
- 22 N. Sixth – CK Tours closed. CRF is hiring an agent to assist in finding a new tenant.

**Strategic Planning Discussion/Wyomissing Update**

Mr. Woodward shared that Wyomissing Borough is still working on a zoning overlay district to boost economic development. He had nothing further to report.

Strategic plan was discussed by Mr. Ratcliffe:

- The rebranding survey results have come back. Mr. Ratcliffe has sent an RFP to five different firms, these bids are expected back shortly.
- Mr. Ratcliffe shared his desire to move ahead with a pocket park at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Penn Avenues. He is currently waiting to hear back from a firm for a cost to perform a traffic study to determine the impact on traffic patterns by closing North 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue at Penn Avenue.
- After the pocket park, he then wants to focus on the gateway to the Borough.

A general discussion took place about how the Borough is weathering the pandemic. An article is expected in the Reading Eagle on December 15<sup>th</sup> talking about how well the Borough's Business District has done during the pandemic.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Imbesi  
Borough Manager