

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

**March 8, 2021**

**Committee Members Present**

Philip Wert, Robin Horman, Nicholas Imbesi, Aaron Gantz, Mark Ratcliffe, Cathy Hoffman, Andrew Kearney, Melinda O'Neil, and John Woodward.

**Visitors Present**

Officer Nicholas Karetas

**Call to Order**

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

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Approval of the Minutes**

Motion made to approve the Economic Development Committee minutes of February 8, 2021 moved by John Woodward and seconded by Mark Ratcliffe. **Motion carried**

**Residential Properties Update**

A discussion took place about property values in the Borough that continue to increase, are stable and healthy.

The Villas at Narrow have submitted plans that are currently under review.

**West Reading Commercial Properties Update**

- 301 Penn – Office suite for lease – Mendez Flooring has submitted a zoning application to move into this space. It would be their new showroom.
- 416 Penn – Motor Club opening in early 2021 – No new update on when it will be opening.
- 428 Penn – Updated plans have been received and shouldn't take long for conditional conditions to be approved. Construction likely to begin soon and by the end of the year a new building will be there.
- 433 Penn – Schweitzer's Service Center property – Mark Ratcliffe has reached out to their attorney for more information about this property. Nothing new to report at this time.
- 438 Penn – Building sold for \$316,000 to a homemade furniture group.
- 450 Penn – Building sold on 1/7 for \$250,000.
- 611 Penn – Vacant and looking for a tenant.
- 633 Penn – The Art Room is now open by Brian Adams.
- 635 Penn – Looking for a tenant – has something in the works.
- 703 Penn – Cell phone store closed – owners are looking for new tenant.
- 713 Penn – Still looking for a new tenant. Someone is interested.
- 720 Penn – Vacant
- 723 Penn – Vacant and looking for a new tenant.
- 726 Penn – Personal trainer studio.
- 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 eight people are running for council and/or mayor in the Borough of Wyomissing. He also shared that Wyomissing Borough is still working on a zoning overlay district to boost economic development. The overlay map has been sent to Berks County Planning Commission for review. Mr. Woodward also shared that the Crown Plaza Hotel is looking to add 55 year and older residential apartments to the hotel. The hotel would save about 100 rooms. They are also passing a cell phone tower ordinance on how they have to look.

Strategic plan was discussed by Mr. Ratcliffe:

- Mr. Ratcliffe shared that the CRF board hired Partner Designs to do a rebranding for the Borough of West Reading.
- He noted that a traffic study has been completed for a pocket park at the corner of Sixth and Penn Avenues and the results were favorable. He noted that this will be something to bring civic space to the avenue. They will start with some planters and see how it goes. Council has to approve yet this month.

Mr. Wert added that the Planning Commission is beginning to look at design standards for Penn Avenue. The Planning Commission is trying to get ideas together on how to best approach design standards. He noted that outside help will most likely be needed and that there is a meeting between Borough Officials and Derck and Edson on March 12<sup>th</sup> at noon.

A conversation about Tower Health's financial troubles took place.

Officer Karetas provided an update as to his duties as the Main Street Police Officer.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas Imbesi  
Borough Manager