

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

April 12, 2021

Committee Members Present

Philip Wert, Aaron Gantz, Mark Ratcliffe, Cathy Hoffman, Andrew Kearney, Melinda O'Neill, and John Woodward.

Visitors Present

Officer Nicholas Karetas

Call to Order

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion to approve the Economic Development Committee minutes of March 8, 2021 made by Mark Ratcliffe and seconded by Andrew Kearney. **Motion carried**

Residential Properties Update

A brief update for The Villas at Narrow indicated that the Planning Commission has recommended approval to Council, subject to successful review by the Engineer and Solicitor. Mr. Wert indicated that there is some interest from Drexel University for possible housing for students or staff.

West Reading Commercial Properties Update

- 301 Penn – No update for Mendez Flooring's new showroom.
- 416 Penn – Motor Club should be opening soon now that seating at the bar is allowed.
- 428 Penn – Developer Kevin Kozo has to reapply for financing because of the length of time since the last approval.
- 433 Penn – Schweitzer's Service Center property – The asking price for the business and property is \$600,000. Given that it could provide parking for 30 – 40 vehicles, it was suggested that the Borough purchase the property.
- 438 Penn – Swerl Designs will be opening April 17th.
- 450 Penn – Building sold for \$250,000. The new owners will be contacted for more information.
- 611 Penn – The space has not been formally leased but a gallery has been proposed.
- 635 Penn – Looking for a tenant – no new information at this point.
- 703 Penn – Owners continue to look for new tenant.
- 713 Penn – The Bar Cart will sell and sample PA spirits and wines through a satellite license.
- 720 Penn – Serenity Gift Shop is now open.
- 723 Penn – The space will most likely be leased as a salon.
- 726 Penn – A personal training space on the first floor will also house a small salon at the rear and the trainer will live on the upper floors – the owner's family will operate the businesses.
- 22-24 N. Sixth – The property remains vacant.

Strategic Planning Discussion/Wyomissing Update

Mr. Woodward reported the following:

- Third and Spruce Café has been sold to the owner of the Ugly Oyster. The new owner will be making some changes to the space before it opens in May.

- The new medical school looks great, and the 4th Street roundabout project is going well.
- Wyomissing's election race now has 9 candidates.
- There is renewed interest in the historical Amish 'Nicholas Stoltzfus' Homestead on Tulpehocken Road.

Strategic plan was discussed by Mr. Ratcliffe:

- Partner Designs has presented four logo designs to the CRF Board. Hopefully a decision will be made at the April 13th meeting. Partners has also been working on tag lines.
- The proposed pocket park was presented to Council and received their endorsement however some issues need to be resolved before moving ahead. The owner of the shopping center plans to move the dumpsters that are behind Chef Alan's to an indoor location as part of the proposed remodel of the Shopping Center, however this is being postponed for a year or so. The loss of three parking spaces adjacent to Diller Jewelers is also an issue.

Mr. Wert also spoke about the next project which is working through design standards for the Borough. In speaking with Derck and Edson, it was determined that assistance will be needed to fund the project which could cost from \$35k to \$60k.

Old and New Business

John Woodward mentioned that the Wyomissing Area School District is planning to construct six new additions at the Wyomissing Hills Elementary School as well as expand the cafeteria at the High School. There was some discussion as to whether this was population driven or curriculum driven.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Codes Manager