

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

May 14, 2018

Committee Members Present

Phil Wert, Nick Imbesi, Andrew Kearney, Christin Kelley, Dean Rohrbach, Mark Ratcliffe, Cathy Hoffman

Committee Members Absent

Brett Bagenstose, Robin Horman, Aaron Gantz

Visitors Present

Eric Weaver

Call to Order

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.

Public Comment

None

Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Mr. Imbesi and seconded by Mayor Kearney to approve the minutes of April 9, 2018.
Motion carried.

BID Status Update

Mr. Wert reported that the initial stages of the process continue to be ongoing and Mr. Ratcliffe noted that the PDC has been in contact regarding the next steps.

Foreclosed & Blighted Residential Properties Update:

- 520 Franklin – The property remains vacant, however Codes has investigated that status of the furnace which was proven to be just a repair situation. This property will be removed from the list.
- 411 Franklin –The property was condemned because of standing water, trash/debris in the yard, as well as an odor emanating from the building. The property has since been sold and is currently being repaired. It can now be removed from the list.
- 311 Spruce – The house was signed over to Eldercare Solutions Inc. in 2015. The administrator has indicated that they will make the necessary repairs to the exterior of the property.

The committee again discussed how best to deal with blighted properties and it was noted that the City has created a review board that will be preparing strategies. There were no blighted properties to add to the list at this time.

Significant/Vacant West Reading Commercial Properties Update:

- King's Auto Repair (732 Penn Avenue) has sold for \$450,000.
- Candlewood Suites has sold for \$4,250,000. There was some question as to whether the 20 year TIFF would remain in place.
- Narrow Fabrics Building – Construction is ongoing with 20 residential units being ready to rent.
- VF Building – VF has moved in and opened the new store; construction continues with the remainder of the building.
- 301 Penn – Still available for lease.
- 707 Penn – Nothing new to report at this time.
- 501 Penn – Plans have been submitted for the addition; Mr. Unger will be providing a review letter at the June Planning Commission meeting.
- 166 Franklin – The property is again vacant.

Strategic Planning Discussion and Committee Member Expansion

Expansion of the Committee was again discussed and several names were presented as possible members. No decision was made.

Old & New Business

- Button Street/Circle Enhancements – The plans for the street and circle, as presented to Council by architect Michael Kautter in 2016, were shown to the newer members of the committee. The cost and potential funding of the project were briefly discussed.
- Joint Comp Plan – The process continues.
- New Penn Avenue businesses– Hawaii Kitchen, H2O Store and a Barbershop.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Hoffman