

Borough of West Reading
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
December 13, 2021

Committee Members Present

Philip Wert, Andrew Kearney, Aaron Gantz, Dean Murray, John Woodward, Heidi Reuter, Ben LaManna, Mark Ratcliffe

Staff Present

Cathy Hoffman

Visitors Present

None

Call to Order

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Kearney and seconded by Ms. Reuter to approve the minutes of November 8, 2021. Motion carried.

Residential Properties Update

The construction of the nine remaining townhomes continues. In discussions with Drexel University personnel, they have indicated that the cost of the new townhomes may be prohibitive for the average student. It was noted that these particular homes are completely different from any of the others that have been built as part of the Villas at Narrow subdivision, including the ability to park three vehicles on each property.

West Reading Commercial Properties Update

- 301 Penn – Mendez Flooring appears to be open to the public in their new space.
- 416 Penn – Owners of the Motor Club have indicated an opening date of February 10, 2022.
- 428 Penn – Construction continues at a rapid pace. The first floor of the building has been proposed to house a restaurant called “Noodl”.
- 433 Penn – The potential future of the Schweitzer’s Service Center property was briefly discussed as it pertains to the “Master Plan”.
- 450 Penn – The property remains vacant which no renovations being done.
- 635 Penn – An existing Penn Avenue business may be moving to this location.
- 20-22 N. Sixth – A potential tenant will be proposed to the CRF Board at their December 14th meeting.
- 36 N. 6th – “Takkii” will be opening in the near future.

Strategic Planning Discussion

Wyomissing Report

Mr. Woodward spoke about potential changes as well as ongoing redevelopment to various properties in the Borough of Wyomissing.

Strategic Planning Next Steps

- **Pocket Park on N. 6th** – Mr. Ratcliffe indicated that the pocket park will be on hold for the foreseeable future until some changes occur.
- Mr. Wert also noted that discussions regarding redevelopment of the shopping center have been renewed, however there are some obstacles to clear such as tax incentives being available.
- Ms. Gantz suggested that the Borough adopt an ordinance that would require dumpsters to be shielded from public view. She referred to Cherry Street with its abundance of murals which also has trash cans and dumpsters on full display.
- **Design standards update** – Mr. Wert noted that nothing has changed regarding the lack of funding for the design standards update. All that can be done is to wait until the potential redistricting is completed.

Old/New Business

- Kevin Kozo has delayed plans for the proposed railroad bridge project until the building at 428 Penn is complete.
- Aaron Gantz spoke about the Keystone Innovation Zone (which West Reading and Wyomissing are part of) which is undergoing some map changes to allow certain areas to take advantage of tax credits.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Code Enforcement Department