

Borough of West Reading
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
February 14, 2022

Committee Members Present

Philip Wert, Dean Murray, Mark Ratcliffe, Aaron Gantz, Heidi Reuter

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 Ms. Reuter and seconded by Mr. Ratcliffe to approve the minutes of January 10, 2021.
Motion carried.

Residential Properties Update

Mr. Wert reported that the developer intends to have the townhomes finished by the end of February. It was noted that the properties will be rented initially, rather than being sold. Mr. Wert spoke about the housing market in the Borough which continues to be strong. Mr. Ratcliffe indicated that it is currently difficult to find a property under \$150 per square foot.

West Reading Commercial Properties Update

- 416 Penn – The Nitro Bar is opening February 15th.
- 428 Penn – Work on the façade continues.
- 433 Penn – Interest continues to center around a convenience store and gas bar. It was noted that the zoning ordinance has been amended to permit convenience uses only in the GB and LI Districts. Also added was a definition for ‘convenience store’ which didn’t previously exist.
- 450 Penn – The owner remains intent on bringing a bubble tea business to the property. Renovations have begun on the upstairs apartment with the updating of HVAC equipment.
- 635 Penn – Gem on Penn is relocating to this property however the opening has been delayed.
- 20-22 N. Sixth – Trish’s Specialty Cheesecakes is scheduled to open at the end of March.
- 36 N. 6th – A ribbon cutting for “Takkii” will be held on Friday March 11th.
- 10 S. 5th – Ezekiel 47 Café will be opening at this location.

Strategic Planning Discussion

- Wyomissing Report – Mr. Woodward was unable to attend the meeting.
- Strategic Planning Next Steps
 1. Pocket Park – There is no update at this time.
 2. Design Standards – Funding is still being sought for the form-based codes work.
 3. Façade Program – One facade grant has been approved (Let’s Taco Bout It) with others being proposed. Designers recommended by Derck and Edson are scheduled to work with several business owners to assist with design elements.

4. BID update – Work on the BID is gearing back up with the process hopefully being completed by summer.
5. Delaney Circle discussion – Mr. Wert referred to the plan as proposed by Derck & Edson which proposes a design that may not work for the site. He encouraged members to review the plan which presents interesting alternatives for the area by the Circle and along Tulpehocken to Penn Avenue. Discussions are also ongoing concerning the proposed redevelopment of the shopping center.

Old/New Business

There was nothing additional to report.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Zoning Officer