

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

Committee Members Present

Philip Wert, Dean Murray, Mark Ratcliffe, Aaron Gantz, Robin Horman, Jack Gombach

Staff Present

Cathy Hoffman

Visitors Present

Reporter

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. Gombach and seconded by Ms. Gantz to approve the minutes of February 14, 2022.
Motion carried.

Residential Properties Update

Mr. Wert reported that the townhouses are in various stages of completion with one being inhabited already. There is interest from Drexel University to rent the units for their students however the timing may not be able to be coordinated.

West Reading Commercial Properties Update

- 416 Penn – Nitro Bar is open with the Motor Club aiming for fall opening.
- 428 Penn – Work on the façade continues.
- 433 Penn – Interest continues to center around a convenience store but the property remains for sale. Discussions pertaining to Delaney Circle redevelopment have included this property however the cost would be prohibitive at this point.
- 450 Penn – Nothing has changed for this property.
- 611 Penn – Refillable Goods LLC is purported to be the new tenant.
- 635 Penn – Gem on Penn's ribbon cutting is scheduled for the 19th.
- 20-22 N. Sixth – The opening for Trish's Specialty Cheesecakes remains on the schedule for early April.
- 36 N. 6th – Takkii is open and very busy, so much so that they don't have time for a ribbon cutting.
- 10 S. 5th – Ezekiel 47 Café renovations continue. Opening date is unknown at this time.

Strategic Planning Discussion

- Wyomissing Report – Mr. Woodward was unable to attend the meeting.
- Strategic Planning Next Steps
 1. Shopping Center Update – The Planning Commission invited key individuals to speak regarding the proposed TIF. The group included a representative of the WASD Finance Committee as well as the Business Administrator. Unofficial word has been received that the WASD will not be an impediment to the TIF. Next step is to appoint members to a TIF Committee.
 2. Pocket Park – There is no update at this time.

3. Design Standards – Funding is still being sought for the form-based codes work. Were these codes in place, the Borough would have specific guidelines for new structures such as the proposed shopping center redevelopment.
4. Façade Program – Only one facade grant has been approved to date.
5. BID update – Discussions continue between Julie and Mark R. as she recalculates the numbers.
6. Delaney Circle discussion – Mr. Wert indicated that a robust discussion will need to be held regarding engineering and planning issues, as part of a potential reconstruction of the circle area.

Old/New Business

There was nothing additional to report.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Gombach and seconded by Ms. Horman to adjourn the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman
Zoning Officer