

**Borough of West Reading**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES**  
**May 9, 2022**

**Committee Members Present**

Philip Wert, Chair	Robin Horman
Dean Murray	Ben LaManna
Mark Ratcliffe	Mayor Samantha Kaag
Jack Gombach	

**Staff Present**

Cathy Hoffman

**Visitors Present**

Patrick Kaag

**Call to Order**

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Approval of the Minutes**

Motion made by Ms. Horman and seconded by Mr. LaManna to approve the minutes of April 11, 2022.  
Motion carried.

**Residential Properties Update**

Mr. Wert stated that the townhouses have been completed; grass has been planted and it was reported that they have all been rented. Housing sales in the Borough were discussed and it was noted that the average home price currently in West Reading is \$179,000. Also discussed was the potential for 55+ housing.

**West Reading Commercial Properties Update**

- 416 Penn – Nitro Bar is open but the Motor Club will not be opening until Spring of 2023.
- 428 Penn – Finish work continues on this new construction. Some members voiced their interest in having a tour of the property, particularly the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor apartment.
- 433 Penn – The asking price for the Schweitzer property remains at \$795,000.
- 450 Penn – Possible Bubble Tea shop. There appears to be some work beginning on the first floor.
- 611 Penn – Refillable Goods LLC has leased the property. A ribbon cutting will be held on 5/27.
- 20-22 N. Sixth – There remains work to be completed at Trish's Specialty Cheesecakes before opening.
- 10 S. 5<sup>th</sup> – Ezekiel 47 Café is open and appears to be doing well.
- 550 Franklin – Marina's Meatballs – nothing new at this point.

**Strategic Planning Discussion**

- Wyomissing Report – There was no report.
- Strategic Planning Next Steps
  1. Shopping Center Update – Mr. Wert received information indicating that the County has appointed Pamela Shupp and Bob Patrizio to the TIF Committee.

2. Design Standards – Mr. Ratcliffe noted that the Wyomissing Foundation has indicated they may be able to help with the funding for the project as proposed by Derck & Edson. The funds could be expected by fall.
3. Façade Program – Mr. Ratcliffe will be asking the WRCRF to increase the Façade Program Grants from \$1500 per applicant to \$2500 due to the lack of applicants.
4. BID update – Mr. Ratcliffe indicated that marketing seems to be the item that merchants are most interested in for the BID therefore this will be discussed further at the WRCRF meeting on May 10<sup>th</sup> via Zoom.
5. Delaney Circle discussion – Mr. Murray said he recently met with a representative from LTAP (Local Technical Assistance Program) on site at the Circle and that some recommendations were made that may help with the existing traffic issues. Mr. Lincoln also provided some recommendations from the engineering side and it was planned for discussion at the May Traffic and Infrastructure meeting, however it has been cancelled for lack of a quorum.

Mr. Wert also commented about the pavement markings that were added at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> and Reading and noted that people are no longer illegally parking there, making it much easier for motorists to safely turn from N. 6<sup>th</sup> onto Reading Avenue. He strongly felt that this should be done at several other intersections in the Borough.

Also briefly discussed was the “ghost” alley beside Takkii (36 N. 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue), that runs between Reading Avenue and Court Street and is owned by the Borough. Mr. Wert felt that the alley should be discussed as a potential location for additional parking.

#### **Old/New Business**

Mr. Wert noted that he had met with a S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue property owner concerning the potential development of his properties. He has asked the owner to attend a Planning Commission meeting to discuss it further. Mayor Kaag noted that she has been asked to meet with the property owner as well.

Zoning Officer Cathy Hoffman spoke about the existing regulations for food trucks which require all mobile vendors to pay a \$50 application fee along with a \$300 annual license fee. She suggested that food truck owners, who have a ‘brick and mortar’ location in the Borough, should be allowed to pay a reduced rate when they are invited by a West Reading business to provide food service for a special occasion. The consensus of the Committee was that the existing fee structure is not onerous and that special exceptions could potentially cause other issues.

#### **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mr. Gombach and seconded by Mayor Kaag to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hoffman  
Zoning Officer