

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

April 8, 2019

Committee Members Present

Philip Wert, Nicholas Imbesi, Andrew Kearney, Robin Horman, Cathy Hoffman, Christin Kelley, Aaron Gantz, John Woodward

Visitors Present

Christopher Lincoln (for the Kautter presentation)
Michael Kautter – Kautter and Kelley Architects
Bob Libutti – Kautter and Kelley Architects

Call to Order

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

Public Comment

None

Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Nick Imbesi and seconded by Robin Horman to approve the minutes of March 11, 2019. **Motion carried.**

Update – Buttonwood Gateway Conceptual Design

Mr. Kautter was in attendance to provide an update for the Delaney Circle redesign which was originally presented at a public meeting in March of 2016. He noted that they took the previously presented design and plugged it into new software which created the new look for the conceptual drawings. The following components were noted:

- Attractive for a meeting space
- Safe and habitable in an otherwise awkward circumstance
- Garden walls provide protection
- Tiered seating
- Lawn and ground cover
- Plantings that are more drought resistant
- Designed to be a gathering space with enough interest to keep people there.

Ensuring safety for vehicular traffic was a concern, therefore discussion ensued. Mr. Kautter was asked if the space would be used if it is constructed and he responded that if the surrounding areas are appropriately developed, then the circle will be popular.

The lighting from Buttonwood Bridge to the circle was also discussed and it was suggested that the lighting be carried further west on Reading Avenue, past the circle to 8th Avenue. Funding for this project would have to come from multimodal grants which are currently available.

BID Status Update

Mr. Ratcliffe continues to work with Julie Fitzgerald of the PDC regarding the BID. Due to Mr. Ratcliffe being on vacation, an update was not presented. Discussion ensued regarding the slow progress being made due to the lack of staffing at the PDC, among other things.

Foreclosed & Blighted Residential Properties Update:

There were no properties to discuss.

Significant/Vacant West Reading Commercial Properties Update:

- 301 Penn – No specific use for the building has been identified although there have been many interested businesses.
- 401 Penn – The property had been listed for sale but may have been taken off the market.
- 433 Penn – Although the business is for sale, the property is not.
- 445, 447 and 449 Penn – The Codes Department will make contact with the owner of 445 Penn regarding the current residential use.
- 550 Penn – Café Flourish has not opened as yet.
- 611 Penn – Third Eye New Age has opened at this location.
- 633 Penn – Unique Finds has opened at this location.
- 643 Penn – The property is currently for sale.
- 637 Penn – Mixx is not closing however the owner is selling the business.
- 707 Penn – Property is being converted into retail space. Satellite dishes are a concern.
- 711 Penn – The property is still for rent.
- 619 Penn – Beer Wall on Penn is opening in a week.
- 416 Penn – Nitro Bar will be opening soon.

Strategic Planning Discussion

- The Borough of Wyomissing had requested responses to their RFP for a Master Plan Study and did receive fourteen responses. Candidates were interviewed and '4ward Planning Inc.' was chosen for the study. Mr. Ratcliffe was involved with the interview process which will be an asset to the CRF as a candidate is chosen to complete the planning study for the borough.
- HARB/Design Strategy Discussion – More discussion is needed with representatives from the Pennsylvania Museum and Historical Commission.

Old & New Business

- None

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Hoffman