

Borough of West Reading
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 9, 2024

Committee Members Present

Philip Wert, Chair

Randall Miller, Borough Manager

Samantha Kaag

Nick Price, WRCRF Manager

Staff Present

Stephanie Burkholder, Chad Moyer

Visitors Present

None

Call to Order

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:19 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of the Minutes

Due to a lack of quorum, the minutes will be approved at the next meeting.

Residential Properties Update

Mr. Wert didn't have anything to report. Mr. Moyer advised that there have been properties sold recently which are owner occupied.

West Reading Commercial Properties Update

The following properties were discussed:

- 428 Penn – Los Arrieros is open, ribbon cutting is scheduled for Friday, 9/13/2024 at 5:00 pm.
- 430 Penn – Origin's Salon is open.
- 433 Penn – The contract with Hafer Equipment has been signed to transfer the PA DEP permit to the borough, and for the closure and removal of the underground tanks.
- 609 Penn – Sugar Shack has closed; space is currently available for rent.
- 10 S. 5th – Space is still available.
- 333 Buttonwood Street – Mr. Moyer shared an interest expressed in the former Fortna building, however the type of use had not been specified.

Strategic Planning Discussion

- Wyomissing Report – Mr. Wert didn't have anything to report. Mr. Moyer referenced FastBridge Fiber stating that they could be coming into our borough. Mr. Moyer had been in contact with Dean Murray of the Township of Spring to inquire as to their dealings FastBridge Fiber. Mr. Moyer indicated that he would contact the company to see what their plans are and stated that they could potentially attend one of our meetings in the future. Mr. Miller was concerned with

how they had planned to do the work and if anything was going to be installed above ground or underground. It had been noted that some residents in the borough received letters from FastBridge Fiber advising them that they would be coming to the borough which prompted the residents to call the Codes Department.

- Shopping Center Update – Mr. Wert didn't have anything to report.

Strategic Planning Next Steps

1. Shopping Center Update – Mr. Wert didn't have anything to report.
2. Design Standards – Mr. Wert stated that the zoning portion of the design is complete, and the Planning Commission is currently reviewing the sign ordinance. He stated that the Planning Commission anticipates having this completed within the next couple of months, and then advertising of the adoption of the ordinances during late winter.
3. Business Improvement District (BID) Update – Mr. Wert advised he had met with Nancy Campbell and Mark Dougherty recently to discuss some ideas for the BID. Mr. Wert advised that he was going to have Joan London review the draft of the BID and she is looking at scheduling a hearing which would be open to the public.

Old/New Business

Railroad Bridge – Mr. Wert inquired as to receipt of any information from Norfolk Southern. Mr. Miller stated that Norfolk Southern was waiting for the borough to provide a letter agreeing to fund the engineering costs. He also stated that bid specifications would need to be put together, in addition to advertising the bid then decide who would be performing the work, including the base repairs and the prepping of the structure and painting. Norfolk Southern will need to be informed of who the contractor will be.

Mr. Miller also advised that Rite Aid has come out of bankruptcy and will be operating as a private company.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Burkholder
Administrative Clerk