

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

**December 9, 2024**

**Committee Members Present**

Philip Wert, Chair  
Randall Miller, Borough Manager

Robin Horman  
Aaron Gantz  
Justin Choate

**Staff Present**

Stephanie Burkholder, Chad Moyer

**Visitors' Present**

None

**Call to Order**

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

Mr. Wert introduced Justin Choate as the newest member of the committee.

**Approval of the Minutes**

**Motion** made by Mrs. Horman and seconded by Ms. Gantz to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2024 meeting. Mr. Miller advised that there was a lack of a quorum for the September meeting, therefore, those minutes weren't approved. Mr. Wert stated that Mrs. Horman could amend her motion as there wasn't an enabling ordinance in place. Mrs. Horman and Ms. Gantz both amended their motion to include the minutes from the August 12, 2024 meeting and the September 9, 2024 meeting.

**Residential Properties Update**

Mr. Wert didn't have anything to report. Mr. Moyer advised that the borough is averaging about seven property transfers a month.

**West Reading Commercial Properties Update**

The following properties were discussed:

- 416 Penn – West Reading Motor Club has re-opened. There was no change with regard to building owners, just a change in the LLC transfer. The Certificate of Occupancy (CO) has been obtained to open the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors, and bathrooms are being planned for the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.
- 424 Penn – Taiki Ramen recently moved to this location from 36 N. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- 433 Penn – The tanks and pumps are expected to be removed when the borough receives the notification after the close of the 30-day window. Council would need to approve the Phase 2 study that will be handled by the Engineer. Soil samples from underneath the tanks need to be obtained. Three samples will be taken from different portions of the tanks, including from each line and pump. The samples will then go to a lab to confirm that there is no contamination in the soil, after which the site should be released.
- 609 Penn – Still available for rent.

- 619 Penn – Former location of The Beer Wall is still available for rent.
- 720 Penn – New location of Grace and Grit which just opened recently.
- 330 Buttonwood – The owner of the garage had submitted a zoning application to add a sale portion to the automotive shop. This is not permitted; however, the owner could appeal through a Conditional Use Hearing.
- 333 Buttonwood – Mr. Moyer indicated that an agent for a potential buyer of the former Forta building visited the office recently and asked to see the building files. The agent didn't provide much information as to what the plan was for the building.
- 10 S. 5<sup>th</sup> – Jewelry store will be going here.

### **Strategic Planning Discussion**

- Wyomissing Report – Mr. Wert didn't receive a report from Wyomissing Borough.

### **Strategic Planning Next Steps**

1. Shopping Center Update – Mr. Wert didn't have anything to report. It was stated that the shelves at Rite Aid are still empty.
2. Design Standards – The design is currently at the solicitor's office for review. Once the county reviews the design, then this will begin the adoption process.
3. Business Improvement District (BID) Update – Mr. Wert advised that himself, Nancy Campbell and Mark Dougherty were reviewing everything one parcel at a time. Nancy is currently cleaning up the database and an update should be available at the next WRCRF meeting.

### **Old/New Business**

Railroad Bridge – Mr. Wert advised that the borough is waiting for feedback from Norfolk Southern.

Mr. Wert stated that he has a limited amount of time available to continue as chair of the committee. He asked if anyone would be interested in taking over as chairperson as the new year approaches. Mr. Wert advised that a good amount of time goes into researching information on old and new businesses. Mr. Wert stated that there could be as many members on the committee as it would like and asked for members to check to see who would be interested in being on the committee. The committee could ask for Borough Council's recommendation as to whether the committee could be inactive for a while.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Burkholder  
Administrative Clerk