

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

April 13, 2026

Committee Members Present

Mayor Samantha Kaag
Randall Miller, Borough Manager

Robin Horman
Aaron Gantz

Staff Present

Chad Moyer

Visitors' Present

None

Call to Order

Mayor Kaag called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion made by Ms. Gantz and seconded by Mrs. Horman to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2024 meeting.

Nomination of Committee Chair and Secretary

Since there were only four committee persons in attendance, Mayor Kaag tabled the nomination and election of officers.

West Reading Business Retention & Expansion Updates

Mr. Moyer presented a list of all transfers since our last meeting, specifically from January 2025. He then discussed the following, most recently transferred, 2026, properties. He noted that this list is generated through the zoning processes when the business changes hands.

- 703 Penn – Lucky Finds Boutique
- 615 Penn – Soulful Eats LLC
- 614 Reading – 3 Deals LLC
- 529 Reading V-2 – Ziba by Jafre LLC
- 448 Penn – Archie's Taqueria LLC
- 529 Reading V-1 – JEVantage Multitask Solutions
- 500A Penn – Link'd Permanent Jewelry
- 529 Reading Mm – Intellectual Degenerate LLC

Mr. Moyer then noted that there are three vacancies to the best of his knowledge on Penn Avenue: 609 Penn, 725 Penn, 607 Penn. It was also noted that Hess Lettering has left.

Mrs. Horman asked if the landlords should be submitting any changes. Mr. Moyer noted that that was not a requirement. Mayor Kaag noted that it would be great to have this list. She also noted that the Borough is not getting any notifications from Nick Price on any upcoming ribbon cuttings. She would like this information ahead of time. Mr. Moyer will also keep the committee apprised, since he gets occupancy requests. Mayor Kaag noted the lack of communication from Mr. Price.

Business Attraction

Mayor Kaag noted there was not much, at present, under this category. Any ideas should be brought to the next meeting; however, much of this is the responsibility of the West Reading Community Revitalization Foundation (WRCRF). The members are eager for the WRCRF to step up.

Mr. Miller discussed the Redevelopment Authority (RDA), specifically, 433 Penn Ave., the shopping center lot, and Palmer parcels. Mayor Kaag will reach out to Bob at Palmer. Ms. Gantz and Mrs. Horman discussed with the committee the responsibility of the WRCRF to ensure there are names on a list of possible businesses that have expressed interest. This contact list should be a priority for the WRCRF Director.

Ms. Gantz noted that there are resources available for assisting new businesses in transitioning from a business idea to a viable operation.

Workforce Development

Mayor Kaag noted that the agenda for the meeting is rather broad, and some of the agenda items can be developed further.

Ms. Gantz discussed the Workforce Development Center at Kutztown University. They're doing Micro Internships for small businesses to take advantage of. She will share additional information. The WRCRF used to have a section on its website that advertised openings for employees. Mrs. Horman will take this idea to the marketing committee of the WRCRF.

Policy and Regulatory Review

Mayor Kaag noted that she had no updates for this topic. Mr. Moyer noted that one concern could be accessibility. The UCC accessibility updates have been locked to the 2009 version by the courts. If, at some point, however, the newest requirements are implemented, it could be a major concern for all businesses.

New Project Proposals

Mayor Kaag noted she spoke to Mark Dougherty about getting the "Main Street" designation for the WRCRF. This could help with future grant applications. The Gateway and Streetlight grants were examples of grants that have been successful for West Reading and the WRCRF.

Financial and Budget Reports

There are no updates for this topic.

Strategic Planning Discussion

Long-term goals were discussed. The members discussed all possible future developments. The shopping center would be a prime location for redevelopment; however, the parking needed for any development would require more money than any developer has available. Even with possible grants, there is still a significant requirement on either or both the borough and the developer.

Mr. Miller discussed the BID and that the Public Hearing was held. Since there were no substantive changes, it was noted that a second hearing was not needed. Mayor Kaag noted that she felt there was not a lot of information coming from the WRCRF. Committee members thought there would be a second meeting, especially since there was an issue with dates in the cover letter. Mr. Miller noted he would check with the WRCRF at their meeting the next evening.

The members felt strongly that the meeting should occur, and recommended that it be held, to ensure that the correct information is available. The possibility of having a "Town Hall" style open meeting was recommended. In particular, the WRCRF needs to be present to share factual information.

Part of this issue is that there seems to be little information available on the WRCRF website or social media. Mrs. Horman will take this to the marketing committee of the WRCRF. Someone should be controlling the positive narrative.

Mr. Moyer left the meeting at 6:57 p.m.

The remaining members continued discussions on future planning. Keeping the dialogue open for all vested people and agencies to move forward. The Economic Development Committee is vested in this process, along with the Special Event Committee.

Mayor Kaag noted that the Gateway Bridge project was finally moving forward. Mr. Miller gave the details of the work.

Mrs. Horman finalized the discussion on the BID, noting that the fee is \$650 a year. The majority of which is to be used to market West Reading and the West Reading business district.

Mrs. Horman noted that it would be great to have a list of open properties. Ms. Gantz noted it would also be great to have additional information on the space, which can be used by the Executive Director to be proactive about filling the space with the most appropriate business.

Public Comment

There was none.

Adjournment

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m. on a motion by Mrs. Horman, seconded by Ms. Gantz, with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Randall P. Miller
Borough Manager