

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Live near your work

In Thursday's column, we talked about Pottstown's greatest need — to attract productive new homeowners and enterprising business people to our borough.

We discussed Montgomery County's homeownership initiative, later adopted by Pottstown Borough, to provide forgivable loans to people buying homes in Pottstown.

And earlier in the week, we talked about Pottstown's greatest strength — sustainability.

Thanks to its mixture of houses, offices and stores, which can be reached by walking, bicycling, and short car and bus trips, Pottstown is more environmentally friendly than the surrounding suburbs and semi-rural areas.

Now we need to marry these two concepts by encouraging public employees — paid by local taxpayers — to live in Pottstown.

In Maryland, which has done more than any other state to promote this idea, it's called, "Live near your work." The state, cities like Baltimore, and employers like Johns Hopkins University and Morgan State University offer people incentives to buy houses near their work.

Let's turn the clock back 50 years in Pottstown, when the borough was widely considered a healthy and de-

sirable place to live and work. Pottstown had thousands of jobs in industries located along the Schuylkill River and adjacent train tracks.

Stores and offices were located on High Street. Nearby were a dozen distinct residential neighborhoods with housing of all types and sizes.

People — especially public employees — lived close to where they worked. The borough manager and assistant manager lived in Pottstown.

The police chief and the fire chief lived in Pottstown. Today, none of them does.

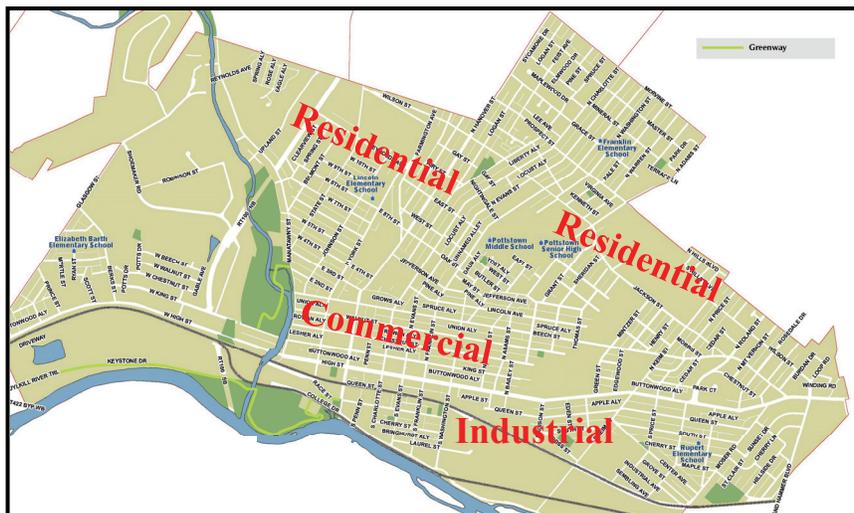
The superintendent of schools and the district business manager lived in Pottstown. (The editor of the newspaper and the director of economic development also lived in Pottstown.) Now, none of them does.

Today, of 46 police officers, only three live in Pottstown. Only 15 percent of our teachers live in Pottstown.

These employees have the best-paying jobs in the borough, and they could help us immensely if they owned homes here. For the health of our town and the planet, they need to "live near your work."



Commentary by  
Tom Hylton



**LIVE NEAR YOUR WORK** — For most of its 250-year history, Pottstown was a self-contained community, with abundant jobs, homes, and stores within walking and bicycling distance. Bus routes connected all sections of the borough. Pottstown residents lived near their work — the most sustainable form of development.