

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Hobart's Run

As part of a five-year, \$175 million fundraising campaign launched in July 2014, The Hill School identified an area surrounding the school campus which it hopes to revitalize by partnering with residents and property owners



Commentary by  
Tom Hylton

Hill School trustees have earmarked \$5 million — about 3 percent of the total funds to be raised in its campaign — to create a fund generating perhaps \$250,000 annually for neighborhood improvements.

The targeted area, called “Hobart’s Run,” consists of about 600 mostly residential parcels, plus Edgewood Cemetery, lining the perimeter of the campus.

Last January, the school hired Twila Fisher as the school’s manager of community and economic development, focused on Hobart’s Run.

Fisher, who has Ivy League degrees in political science and public administration, was a community organizer in Reading before coming to Pottstown.

About 50 residents attended a kick-off meeting last February at the Rickett’s Community Center.

Fisher and Hill School director of security Randy Doaty explained five initiatives:

1. **Safe:** The Hill School plans to install security cameras in the neighborhood and hand out LED dusk-to dawn light bulbs for residents to use on their porches.

2. **Clean:** Community block clean-ups would be organized.

3. **Green:** There would be rain barrel and recycling workshops and community garden training.

4. **Inclusive:** Community block parties and bike rides would be held.

5. **Strong:** The Hill School would foster commercial and retail development on High Street and encourage home ownership and employee incentive programs.

A year later, a handful of activities have gotten underway.

The most visible improvement is the care of Edgewood Cemetery, which had been neglected

for years. Doaty has organized a committee to formally take possession of the cemetery, and several anonymous donors, some affiliated with The Hill School, have covered the cost of lawn mowing for the last two years.

Light bulbs have been given to neighborhood residents for their porches.

Fisher hosted weekly “mid-day cafes” at the High Street entrance to The Hill School during the summer, with a local musician and food vendor for the enjoyment of local residents.

Several volunteer trash clean-ups were held, including a half-day clean-up involving hundreds of Hill School students and other volunteers cleaning up downtown Pottstown as part of Pottstown CARES.

Fisher has been working with a local Realtor to ask local employers to provide incentives to employees to buy a home in Pottstown.

But no cameras have been installed, and no Hill-sponsored renovation projects have been carried out.

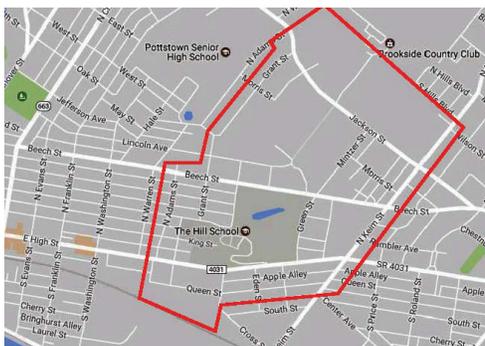
Hobart’s Run is still very much in its formative stages.

Tomorrow:  
Investing in  
Pottstown.



**TWILA FISHER**

*Tom Hylton is a member of the Pottstown School Board. However, the views expressed are his alone and not the board’s.*



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