Beginning in January, the borough codes department began systematically inspecting every rental unit in Pottstown. After each unit is inspected once, the borough will begin inspecting each unit biennially.

The borough has nearly 5,500 rental units. Landlords pay for the inspections.

The theory is that methodical inspections will insure each rental unit is code compliant, thus protecting the town from slumlords and increasing everyone’s quality of life.

But what about outside appearances?

Walking or driving down the street, you really can’t tell what a building looks like on the inside.

But if it’s a mess on the outside, with old sofas on the porch, junk in the front yard, and trash all over, it creates a bad impression of Pottstown.

Many property owners show they care — with flowers, trees, and well-maintained exteriors.

But others degrade our town.

Code enforcement needs to be the most rigorous outside, not inside.

Commentary by Tom Hylton

Appearances count!

THESE PROPERTIES are located on Pottstown’s most prominent streets — High Street and Charlotte Street. Which ones are making a contribution to Pottstown’s quality of life? Which ones degrade our town? Does it matter if the building is owner occupied?