Street work: tangible progress

Pottstown owns 60 miles of streets. (PennDOT owns another 10 miles of streets like High, Manatawny, and Charlotte streets.) Ideally, streets should be repaved every 12 years — about five miles a year.

But until recently, we were only resurfacing an average of 1.5 miles per year. When our streets are full of ruts and potholes, it affects everyone and presents a negative image of our town.

This year, the borough is in the process of repaving eight miles of streets. Some streets are being repaved after water and sewer lines are replaced. Others are being paved simply because they are in bad shape.

As the map below shows, streets are being repaved in all areas of the borough.

Spending money on streets is more beneficial than borough services that only benefit a select few — especially out-of-towners.

For example, Pottstown’s Memorial Park contains ballfields, open space, a BMX trilogy park, a bark park, spray park, pavilion, walking trail, and plenty of free parking.

The park is heavily used by people who live throughout the region. But it is maintained solely with Pottstown taxpayer dollars.

With a declining tax base — which has reached lows not seen in the last 20 years — Pottstown needs to concentrate its efforts on things that affect the most Pottstown residents and do the most to improve the town’s appearance.

Perhaps more of our park areas should be allowed to revert to nature, with woods, meadows, and wetlands that are beautiful, provide passive enjoyment, and cost less to maintain than mowing huge expanses of grass.

More nature in our parks and fewer potholed streets — with five miles repaved annually — would be a good combination.

Commentary by Thomas Hylton

EIGHT MILES of streets will be repaired and repaved in Pottstown this year, a solid investment in Pottstown’s livability and quality of life.