

# POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

## Non-profits would pay also

On Tuesday, we discussed the rising cost of managing stormwater in Pottstown.

Pottstown's storm sewers and arches are aging and will need major repairs. In addition, state and federal agencies can fine the borough for not keeping pollutants out of the Schuylkill River.



Commentary by  
Thomas Hylton

Currently, Pottstown property owners are paying the costs of stormwater management through their real estate taxes.

But innovative municipalities are funding stormwater costs through a special fee charged to property owners based on the amount of impervious surface on their properties.

Runoff is created when rainfall "runs off" impervious surfaces, which prevent it from percolating into the ground.

With an impervious surface fee, the property owners would pay in proportion to the amount of runoff their property creates.

Geographic Information Systems make it easy for the borough to calcu-

late how much impervious surface is located on each property.

An additional feature of a stormwater runoff fee would be its application to tax-exempt properties.

Because a stormwater runoff fee is not a tax, tax-exempt properties like The Hill School, the YMCA — even the school district — would have to pay just as they already do for water and sewer services.

For example, the Pottstown Memorial Medical Center may soon receive tax-exempt status because of its sale to Reading Health Systems, a non-profit organization.

That will cost the school district and borough more than \$1 million annually in lost real estate taxes.

But the hospital has a very big footprint, and one of the largest parking lots in Pottstown. Therefore it would pay a substantial stormwater runoff fee.

Homeowners would pay a modest fee because most homes don't have much of a footprint. Properties with large one-story buildings and parking lots would pay a lot more.

Unlike real estate taxation, where people often pay for services used by others, the people creating the runoff problem would pay to solve it.



**NON-PROFITS would pay for runoff from their impervious surfaces just like taxable properties. Although non-profits are tax-exempt, a stormwater runoff fee is just that — a fee, not a tax. Pottstown Memorial Medical Center, above, has one of the largest parking lots in Pottstown. The Hill School, below, has parking lots and many expansive roof surfaces, such as its gymnasium complex and hockey arena.**

