

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Year of sustainability?

After three years of meetings and reviewing drafts written by staff of the Montgomery County Planning Commission, it looks like Pottstown Council and the Pottstown School Board will adopt a Sustainability Plan at their joint meeting Jan. 22.

The plan is designed to increase our quality of life by conserving and protecting Pottstown's buildings, infrastructure, and natural resources.



Commentary by
Thomas Hylton

The latest iteration of the plan was distributed electronically to Pottstown officials and other interested residents in October for final comment.

The 128-page document contains 39 specific actions grouped in seven categories:

1. Energy —Sustainable Building
2. Mobility
3. Green Infrastructure
4. Health and Nutrition
5. Education and Outreach
6. Local Economy
7. Environmental Stewardship

Some recommendations are straightforward, such as "Reduce the energy demands of Borough and School District buildings."

The school district in fact embarked on an initiative to upgrade its heating and cooling equipment in 2013 which has so far saved taxpayers more than \$1 million in reduced energy costs.

On the other hand, in 2015, borough council turned down a \$651,000 state grant to convert 1,821 street lights into energy-saving LED lights because it didn't want to provide a 30 percent match.

The draft Sustainability Plan will help Pottstown with stormwater management, helping to keep pollutants out of our waterways.

Removing excess impervious surfaces is the least costly and most effective way to reduce runoff. Replacing asphalt with trees and water-absorbing plants captures stormwater and beautifies the borough.

Overall, the Sustainability Plan builds on Pottstown's strengths. Because of its closely connected 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.

The draft plan can be found at www.pottstowncitizens.org. Click on **Sustainability** and look for the link in the first paragraph.


Pottstown
Sustainability Plan

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN — Pottstown Council and the Pottstown School Board will consider the Sustainability Plan at their joint meeting Jan. 22.