Hill School update

Work continues on a $15.1 million renovation of The Hill School’s Dining Hall, to be finished sometime this year.

Meanwhile, The Hill School has submitted plans to the borough for a $16 million “transformational” STEM center called the Quadrivium, which will connect two existing classroom buildings.

Money for the improvements will come from a $175 million fundraising campaign, started in 2014, called The Strength of All.

Originally, all the funds were to be raised by June 30, 2019, but that timeline has been revised, with no set end date.

The Hill School needs to upgrade its facilities to stay competitive with its prep school peers.

As part of its campaign, The Hill School has earmarked $5 million — less than 3 percent of its fundraising goal — to endow and underwrite an initiative to revitalize the neighborhood surrounding the school property.

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

So far, the school has purchased security cameras, organized trash pick-ups, sponsored neighborhood meetings, and bought a fixer-upper on Edge-wood Street. The school is donating $100,000 in 2018 and in 2019 to the borough to purchase police cars.

But Pottstown has a decimated tax base, the sixth highest school taxes in Pennsylvania, and a student body that is two-thirds low income.

Given its non-profit status, which allows it to avoid $2.2 million in real estate taxes annually, its wealthy constituency, and its $168 million endowment, The Hill School could do more to strengthen the community.

Commentary by Tom Hylton

Hill School Fast Facts:
- 100+ acre campus (tax exempt)
- 525 students, co-ed
- 28 states
- 28 foreign countries
- Day tuition: $40,740
- Boarding tuition: $59,040
- Endowment: $168 million

PLANS have been submitted to the borough for a $16 million STEM center called the Quadrivium to connect two existing classroom buildings.

WORK_continues on a $15.1 million renovation and expansion of The Hill School’s historic dining room, which can be seen from High Street.