Bickelmans show how it’s done

On Tuesday we published a chart showing that home prices in Pottstown have increased dramatically — about 18 percent from 2018 to 2019. Pottstown has great housing stock, but much of it needs a lot of upgrades. Our finest, most historic homes are particularly beautiful but often need substantial renovations.

Many people who have the money to renovate housing buy new instead. They don’t want the hassles and uncertainties of renovations. They may not have the imagination to see how older homes can be attractively modernized.

Enter Robert and Paula Bickelman, who started renovating Pottstown homes about three years ago. Since then, they have done top-to-bottom restorations of a dozen homes which now command top prices. They have earned an excellent reputation with the codes department and people in the local real estate industry.

At the February meeting of Pottstown Council, they gained Council’s support for a warehouse conversion at York and Walnut streets they propose as four apartments.

Several council members said they had toured a long vacant house at 900 N. Franklin Street the Bickelmans transformed and were highly impressed with their work.

Councilman Michael Paules complemented a recent renovation on his block, the home of a former mayor.

The Bickelmans have demonstrated you can make money doing first class work in Pottstown. Let’s hope others will profit from their example.

Commentary by Thomas Hylton

707 N. HANOVER STREET was purchased by the Bickelmans from a bank for $73,600, fully renovated in just three months, and resold in September for $179,900.

HOME OF FORMER MAYOR ANNE CHOMNUK was purchased last June by the Bickelmans for $68,275. Now fully renovated, sale is pending for $194,900.

900 N. FRANKLIN STREET HOUSE, on one of the largest lots in Pottstown, had been vacant and derelict for years. It was renovated by the Bickelmans and sold last spring for $340,000.