

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Unresolved blighted properties

Pottstown has lots of neglected properties that need major renovations. Some are so far gone they ought to be demolished.

Years ago, Borough Council formed a Blighted Property Review Committee to identify and determine blighted properties as permitted by state law.

The committee receives suggestions to review properties from code enforcement officers and from the public.



Commentary by
Thomas Hylton

To be considered blighted, the property has to be vacant and determined to be dilapidated, unsanitary, unsafe, or vermin-infested, and unfit for human habitation.

Many of these properties are tax delinquent.

Once a property is determined to be blighted, a code enforcement officer sends notice of the code violations to the property owner to rectify the blighted conditions. In the event the property owner fails to rectify the blighted conditions, the property can be officially certified as blighted.

Then what?

Usually, nothing happens. Sometimes properties can be listed, untouched, for 10 years or more.

If the borough has the money, it has the authority to demolish the property and place a lien on the property to collect the cost of demolition when the property is sold.

Before the pandemic, three such properties were actually demolished.

But a vacant property with a lot of money owed in liens and unpaid back taxes isn't very attractive to a potential developer.

Four years ago, Pottstown Council created a Land Bank board with the power to acquire blighted properties, wipe out any back taxes and unpaid fees owed, and then

sell them — with free and clear titles — to new owners who will rehabilitate them.

The Land Bank board has been organizing at a glacial pace, but it finally has a solicitor, an administrator (Peggy Lee-Clark, who is also director of the Pottstown Area Economic Development Corp.) and \$100,000 in grant money to spend.

It is currently acquiring its first blighted property at 707 Hamilton Street.

The board conducts public meetings at borough hall. Its agendas and minutes are archived and posted on the borough website.



603 LINCOLN AVE.
Demolished for \$18,000



421 HALE ST.
Demolished for \$21,000



423 LINCOLN AVE.
Demolished for \$15,000

Blighted properties as of 9-2021	
257 Beech St.	56 King St.
520 Beech St.	58 King St.
635 Beech St.	435 King St.
366 N. Charlotte St.	361 New St.
473 N. Charlotte St.	207 Potts Drive
36 W. Eighth St.	1257 Queen St.
784 Farmington Ave.	365 Union Alley
104 S. Franklin St.	350 Walnut St.
920 Glasgow St.	645 Walnut St.
553 Grant St.	173 N. York St.
549 High St.	310 N. York St.