

POTTSTOWN CITIZENS FOR Enlightened LEADERSHIP

Reinforcing the existing system

Last week, we discussed the new “American dream” that arose after the Second World War. Two chief tenets of the dream have been:

1. Ownership of a detached, single family home on a spacious lot.
2. Ownership and use of a car.

Note that the “American dream” doesn’t provide any place for low income people to live.

By default, these people mostly end up in former industrial towns like Pottstown and Norristown.

Older, higher density housing, plenty of rentals, public transportation, and an abundance of government and private social service agencies has made cities and towns like Pottstown a magnet for the poor.

Most of these agencies are subsidized by Pottstown taxpayers, because their non-profit properties are exempt from real estate taxes. Pottstown’s tax base is shrinking, and the number of tax exempt properties is growing.

Earlier this month, the Montgomery County Commissioners adopted a plan to distribute more than \$161.4 million in federal pandemic stimulus

money to municipalities and non-profits throughout the county.

It’s a huge amount of money. As one commissioner said, “We will never have the opportunity again, I don’t think in any of our lifetimes, to invest \$161 million in our community.”

About \$19 million has been earmarked specifically for Pottstown.

Last year, Pottstown Borough identified \$39 million in critical infrastructure needs like roads, stormwater arch repairs, and bridge replacements that must be addressed in the next ten years.

But as the chart below shows, almost all the county money for Pottstown goes to social service agencies.

It’s wonderful to help those in need. But social service agencies attract an unending flow of low income residents. Pottstown desperately needs funds to fix up the town and make it attractive to families who will keep us economically viable.



Commentary by
Tom Hylton

\$161.4 million Montgomery County Recovery Plan 2022		
Funds allocated mostly to Pottstown: \$19,283,207		
Pottstown Hospital - Tower	Street medicine	\$1,757,107
Lincoln Center Family/Youth	In-school creative arts therapy	\$620,000
Creative Health Services	Agency-wide improvement	\$1,500,000
Play and Learn	Support victims of domestic violence	\$1,000,000
Boy Scouts of America	Education and mentoring for youth	\$630,000
TriCounty Active Adult Center	Improving seniors' mental health	\$50,000
YWCA Tri-County Area	Expand facilities in Pottstown	\$5,500,000
Colebrookdale Railroad	Railbike initiative	\$252,600
Strive Initiative	Greatness Sustainability Plan	\$130,000
Trellis for Tomorrow	Our Food, Our Future in Pottstown	\$1,000,000
Pottstown Beacon of Hope	Emergency Shelter for homeless	\$1,300,000
Genesis Housing Corp.	Affordable housing	\$300,000
Church of the Apostolic Faith	Glorious Garden/ Affordable Housing	\$500,000
Eternal Life Christian Center	Affordable Housing and Free Clothing	\$318,500
TriCounty Community Network	Training and support for non-profits	\$340,000
Centro Cultural Latinos Unidos	Proceed-Succeed/COVID 19	\$85,000
Greater Philadelphia YMCA	Gun Violence Prevention Program	\$300,000
Pottstown Borough Authority	Lead Service Replacement Project	\$2,750,000
County Recovery Office	Business support, split with Norristown	\$500,000