



THE collective

POTTSTOWN AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Letter from the Executive Director



As I reflect on the economic development strides made in 2023, I think about the unknown layers that exist that the public does not see. The work of economic development is often not visible.

Projects may seem to “just happen” to the public. When the projects do not happen there can be frustration among the business community and citizens. Whether a project is successful depends heavily on the collective. Revitalization of an entire borough is complex with many layers that includes adjusting to market conditions, timelines, and budgets. Many of the projects take passion, persistence, and patience.

Without patience and the ability to see the big picture, it would be easy to be swept into the chorus if economic development is not happening the way it should be and personal expectations are not being met.

Often, by the time a singular project is complete, PAED is back in the shadows working on the next project. There is so much work that no one ever sees. It took ten plus years to get 215 South Washington environmentally clean, back on the tax rolls and as a location for a productive employer. It took less than an hour to talk about the project and cut the ribbon in celebration. At the beginning of 2024, there was much excitement for the former Lastick furniture store having its beautiful original façade revealed. However, there are hours, days, and months of work that must be completed before the project’s full potential is realized. Like an orchestra, all the musicians need to play their parts of the symphony, over and over until the final performance. PAED, investors, government entities, and community groups otherwise known as The Collective, must play in-tune with passion, persistence, and patience.

Peggy Lee-Clark

“
No one
can whistle
a symphony.
It takes a
whole
orchestra
to play it.”

— Halford Luccock

MEET PAED'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF



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Superintendent,
Pottstown School District



2023 Vice President
Aliyah Stanger
Executive Director,
Redevelopment Authority
of Montgomery County
(RDA)



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Pottstown Borough



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Eileen Dautrich
President, TriCounty Area
Chamber of Commerce



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Peggy Lee-Clark
Executive Director, PAED



Solicitor
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Partner, Yergey, Daylor,
Allebach, Scheffey, Picardi



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Partner, Industrial
Investments, Inc.



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CEO, Agri-Kind, LLC



Dan Glennon
Attorney, The
Glennon Firm



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John Jones
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Budget Maintenance



David Kraybill
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Health & Wellness
Foundation



Lisa Lightcap
VP Commercial Loan
Portfolio Manager,
QNB



Richard Newell
CEO, Pottstown &
Phoenixville Hospitals,
Tower Health



Louis A. Rieger
CEO, The High Street
Music Company



**Dr. Celeste M.
Schwartz**
VP of Pottstown Campus
Information Technology &
Institutional Effectiveness,
Montgomery County
Community College



Rick Wood
Chief Financial
& Operating Officer,
The Hill School

POTTSTOWN PROGRESS

The Commitment of the Collective

FACT PAED is a 501c3 private non-profit corporation. PAED is not a government entity. PAED is funded by donations from businesses and organizations.

FACT PAED assists with site selection within the Borough of Pottstown's 5.5 sq. miles, educating businesses through the submission of applications, including the inspection process, starting a business, and zoning variances.

FACT PAED engages with county, state, and federal offices for the purpose of exploring funding opportunities for economic development projects and providing business solutions.

FACT PAED works with incoming and existing employers to identify their workforce needs and connect them with appropriate employment resources.

FACT PAED connects investors, businesses, and real estate professionals with commercial and industrial opportunities and properties within the Borough.

FACT PAED serves as the Land Bank Administrator for Pottstown—which purchases blighted, vacant, and tax-delinquent properties to ensure the homes are rehabilitated and then sold to individuals within specific income-guidelines.

FACT PAED has been improving Pottstown's economic development through large projects since 1965. PAED has assisted with over \$7 million in grants in the past six years.

Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow.

We love where we're headed.

There are countless individuals, investors, businesses, and organizations pushing Pottstown forward.

Together we are revitalizing the Borough into its promising future, evolving from its deep history.

PAED is at the center of revitalization, expanding the definition of Economic Development.

“

I have had the absolute pleasure of working with PAED on our commercial and residential investments in the Pottstown Borough. PAED helps to simplify a daunting process, they help us focus our vision to save time and ultimately produce what is best for not only economic development but for the Pottstown community as a whole. PAED turns common sense into action.”

- Greg Lingo, Rockwell Development Group

KEEP KEYSTONE EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC PLAN

The Keystone Employment & Economic Plan (KEEP) project site contains approximately 225 acres along the Schuylkill River in both the Borough of Pottstown and West Pottsgrove Township. Much of the land uses in the KEEP project site are or were industrial ones. This could make the area competitive in the future for aspirational uses including limited industrial, research and development, offices and apartments. Outside organizations have calculated that full redevelopment of the KEEP project would result in approximately 5,400 jobs created: 3,100 in Pottstown and 2,300 in West Pottsgrove.

BEGINNINGS

Grant

PAED acquired funding from PA Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED)

Memorandum of Understanding

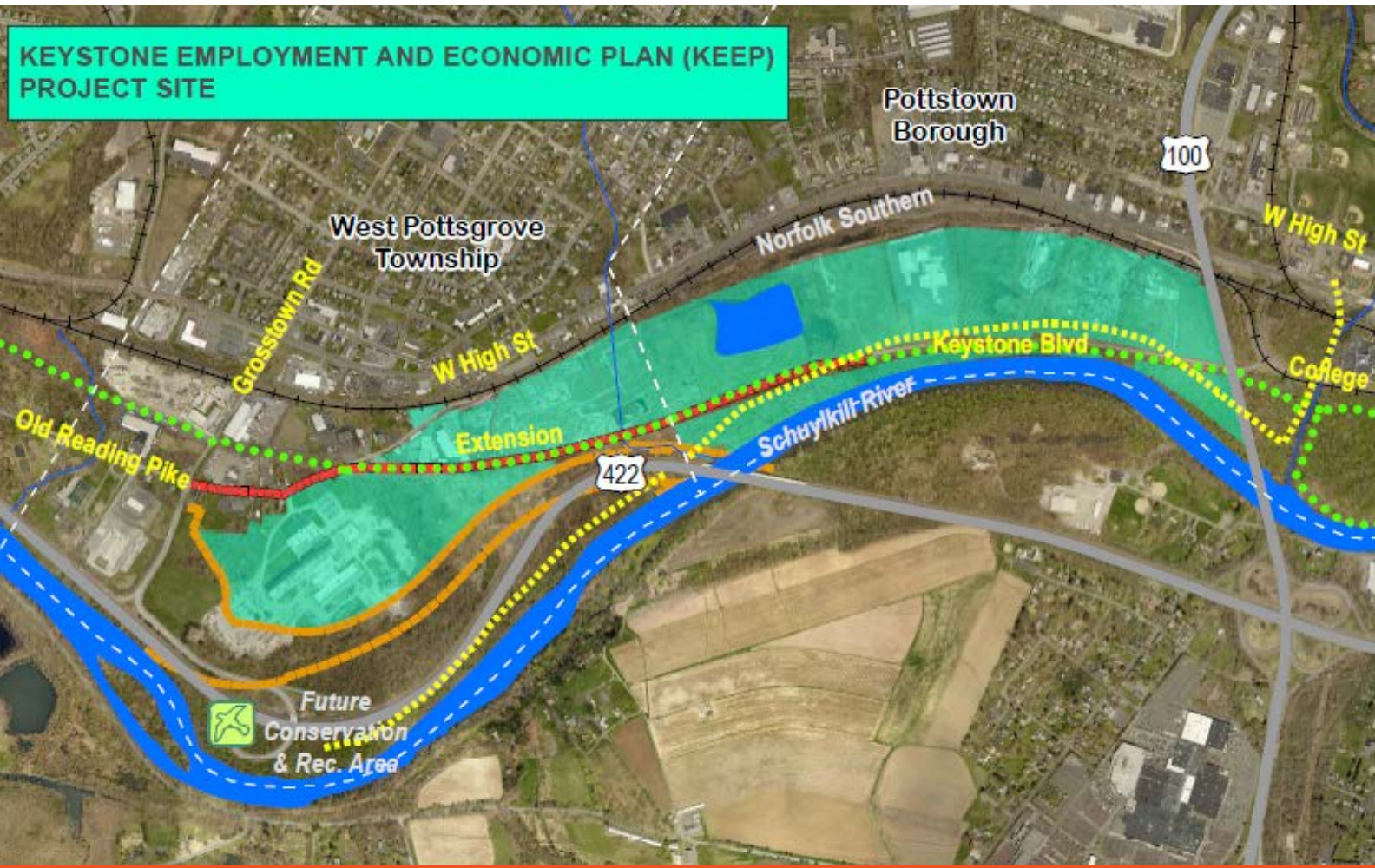
was created between the Borough of Pottstown and West Pottsgrove Township for the redevelopment of sites located within the KEEP area.

TODAY

Thanks to the efforts of Congresswoman Madeleine Dean, \$3 million was received to extend **Keystone Boulevard** to Route 422 creating direct access to a Route 422 interchange.

ReStream Energy is a multi-million-dollar project that will remediate and develop 11 acres of former brownfield to process commercial waste using “green” technologies and divert more than 200,000 tons of waste from landfills with virtually no emissions and produce 110 jobs. PAED has worked with the principals to navigate government regulation and secure funding for the project. Groundbreaking and commencement of the sitework will signal the first visible step in this project.

KEYSTONE EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC PLAN (KEEP) PROJECT SITE



- Municipal Boundaries
- Major Roadways
- Existing Trails
- Future Keystone Boulevard
- Streams
- Water Bodies
- Future 422 ROW
- KEEP Project Site
- Railroad
- Parcels
- Floodway
- Passive Rec.

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 Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
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 www.montcopa.org/plancom

Base map prepared May 2016

This map is based on 2015 ortho photography and official sources. Property lines were compiled from individual block maps from the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals, with no verification from the deed. This map is not meant to be used as a legal definition of properties or for engineering purposes.

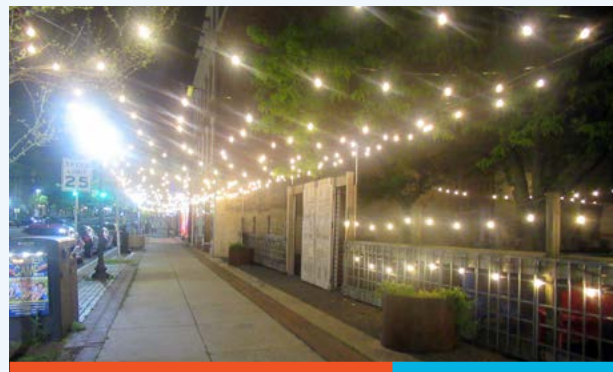
WORKING TOGETHER

Placemaking projects that create an inviting atmosphere are a priority.

Light Up High Street was an idea that grew from a conversation with a business that had a desire to assist businesses after they experienced disruption resulting from the COVID 19 pandemic. Creating this canopy of lights accomplishes many things... it enhances public safety and brings visual appeal to the Downtown for visitors, which both ultimately assist Pottstown's Downtown businesses in their post-pandemic recovery.

PAED launched a fundraising campaign while measurements, sketches, and planning took place. The lighting style and ambiance was intended to compliment those already in place at Smith Family Plaza on High Street, which regularly hosts various organization's events, whose attendees enjoy the overhead lights. Building owners and business owners were presented with the canopy light concept, running from building to sidewalk edge, creating a warm glow of lights overhead for pedestrians to enjoy. PAED is grateful to the businesses who continue to invest in initiatives for the public good. Participation from the various businesses and buildings was paramount to make this project impactful. Consistency in the design and final appearance were key factors, as well as the commercial grade quality of the lights themselves. Installation by a reputable electrician who was willing to adapt within this unique and ever-changing project was critical for the success.

Light Up High Street will continue throughout the Downtown blocks of High Street, as PAED works diligently on additional funding opportunities, and coordinating with Pottstown's Downtown building owners and businesses.



“

We were on board right away with this project because we think it will make the town more beautiful at night and has the added bonus of making the town safer. When the whole downtown is lit up at night it is going to give Pottstown a unique charm that not many places have. We can't wait to see the end-product!

Jim Hoffman, Owner of Laserworx

”

I Pick Pottstown! CLEAN TEAM

The new “Clean Team” service represents a pivotal time for Pottstown. Securing the funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) for this sidewalk cleaning service was a critical next step in the continuation of the revitalization and growth Pottstown has been experiencing over the past several years. The “Clean Team” is part of the broader commitment to assist Downtown businesses in their post-pandemic recovery, as well as attracting new businesses and new investors to the Borough. It is vital to have a safe and continuously well-maintained Downtown.

With clear goals outlined, PAED applied for the ARPA grant funding in 2022 through the Montgomery County Recovery Office, working diligently to ensure a thorough and compelling application was submitted. Once awarded the funding, PAED continued the work of releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP), reviewing proposals, and interviewing potential contractors. Key deciding factors included ensuring the provider had relevant local/regional Downtown experience and was able to offer a reliable, professional, and affordable year-round staff. These new services in designated areas of High Street compliment the cleaning efforts that already are in place, including post-event-specific clean-ups, community clean-up group programs, and regular street sweeping and trash removal that is provided by the Borough of Pottstown’s Public Works department.

This Clean Team will be active as a consistent presence, and is just one of several placemaking and beautification projects, representing PAED’s commitment to the re-imagining of Pottstown as an economic hub in western Montgomery County. PAED is grateful to Montgomery County for its investment in moving Pottstown forward.



10+ Year Blighted Property Brings New Business & Jobs to Pottstown After Extensive Environmental Clean-Up and is contributing to the tax rolls

This 3.89 acre parcel with a 46,500 sq. ft. building operated from 1950-2009 in metal electroplating. The property was abandoned & blighted for 10+ years. After extensive private investment and public funding, environmental cleanup funding support and collaboration between federal, state, and county agencies, renovations are complete.

Several phases of environmental cleanup began in 2017, with collaboration between the Redevelopment Authority of Montgomery County (RDA), the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Before it could be occupied by a new business, the property and building need to be completely rehabilitated, physically and environmentally.

“
**Pottstown
picked us...**
”
Dan Ullman, Owner, DJ Pallets

In addition, there were a variety of past financial obligations left by the former owner. Montgomery County Commissioners, the Borough of Pottstown Council, the Pottstown School District Board, and the Borough's Sewer Authority unanimously approved forgiveness of the former owner's delinquent taxes between August 2018 and May 2022. With nearly \$2 million of private funds, and several years of dedication invested for this project, Property Owner, John Jones was committed to finding the ideal tenant who was an employer, and did so with DJ Pallets, who relocated from Norristown, PA. The expansion into this new building will allow DJ Pallets to continue to grow and employ more individuals. After many years of accumulated tax delinquencies, the three taxing entities (County, Borough, and School District) are now receiving \$50,538 annually.



Pandemic Recovery Funds Timely for Downtown Pottstown Businesses

PAED confirms \$189,940 in Small Business Grants Focused on Minority, Women, and Veteran-Owned Businesses through Pandemic Recovery Funds

Nearly 2 dozen small businesses received \$189,940 in grant funding. These pandemic recovery grant dollars came at just the right time for many of these small businesses. The owner-operators in the Borough of Pottstown have weathered the pandemic storm, keeping the doors open, employees working, and the operation running. For many businesses, these funds were necessary after years of income decline and increased costs. The Montgomery County Recovery Office allocated these funds with a focus on minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses.

“

Thank you so much for nudging me to apply. The grant is timely and will certainly go to good use!

”

Small Business Owner



The grant program for “cash grants up to \$20,000 to qualifying businesses in Montgomery County were made available for businesses a.) located in a qualifying community of Pottstown or Norristown, or b.) showed a financial loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.” Businesses were required to: have fewer than 50 employees, including full time and part time; revenue of \$500K or less; independently owned and operated; and qualify as a Small Business under the Small Business Act. Businesses owned by minorities, women, and veterans were the primary focus, although business owners that fall into other categories were not prohibited from applying or receiving funds. Grant awardees were determined by the Montgomery County Recovery Office based on the business’ demonstrated financial impacts. Grants received were to be used for payroll and benefits, costs to retain employees, mortgage, rent, utility, and other operating costs.

PAED was proud to connect Pottstown businesses with the Recovery Office to ensure this opportunity was not missed by them through a series of informative outreach emails, and writing numerous letters of support.

2023 CONNECTOR AWARD

For decades, Bob Gueli, owner of Tri-County Business Campus, located on Shoemaker Road, Pottstown, has continually invested and reinvested to ensure the complex is productive. Mr. Gueli maintains a diverse portfolio meeting multiple business needs, many of which provide employment opportunities for residents of Pottstown. The diverse portfolio includes industrial, hospitality, offices, restaurants, and retail. Social Security Administration and PennDOT operate their facilities in this Complex, making them highly accessible to the region's residents. In addition, in 2022-2023, the Complex added TriCounty Health Plans and Panera Bread. These additions serve as excellent neighboring businesses to the Fairfield Marriott (renovated and reflagged by Marriott in 2021) and Chipotle (opened 2023). PAED was proud to recognize Bob Gueli with the inaugural Connector Award in February 2023 at the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Pottstown Progress Luncheon.

The Annual Connector Award was introduced by PAED in 2023 to recognize an individual, business, or organization that has proven an unwavering commitment to Economic Development in the Borough of Pottstown, by strengthening the community through investment and innovation. This commitment improves Pottstown's economy by creating jobs, improving infrastructure, enhancing the tax base and strengthening consumer and business spending.



“

PAED—one of the most helpful organizations I have ever had the pleasure of working with—every community should have one. As a developer and landlord, I have found them to be an invaluable resource. If you ever need to know what's happening in Pottstown or how best to get something done they are just a phone call away.”

*Bob Gueli
Owner, Tri-County Business Campus*

TRI-COUNTY BUSINESS CAMPUS



THE BOROUGH OF POTTSTOWN WAS RANKED #9 of 62

Montgomery County municipalities
in # of jobs created in 2023.*

1. Cheltenham Township
2. Upper Gwynedd Township
3. Upper Merion Township
4. Lower Merion Township
5. West Conshohocken
6. Hatfield Township
7. Conshohocken
8. Whitemarsh Township
- 9. Borough of Pottstown**
10. Lower Gwynedd Township



Residential
Real Estate Sales
(Average Price)

2022 \$169,701

2023 \$184,106



Commercial
Real Estate Sales
(Average Price)

2022 \$562,182

2023 \$668,160



7 REMINDERS

ABOUT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Everyone is not going to agree with what is happening.
- Some projects will never come to fruition.
- Beautiful old buildings have a lot of costly warts.
- If you are doing land development or environmental clean up work, you will need DEP & the RDA on speed dial.
- Everything takes longer than anyone has ever planned for.
- Development must improve lives and be inclusive.
- There are more good actors than bad ones.

PAED'S STAFF: Working for You



Brett Treat
Grants Manager



Danette Wilson
Public Relations & Marketing



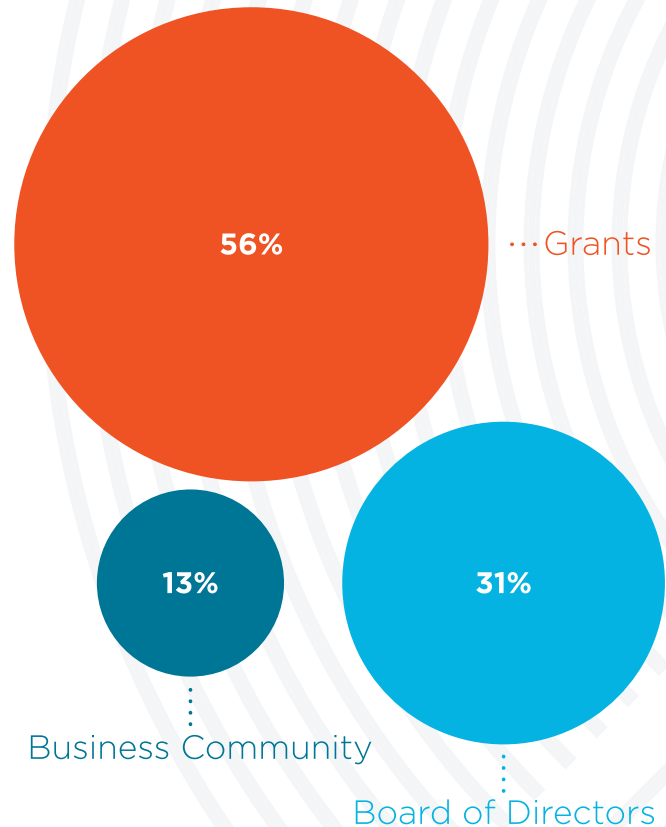
Melissa Shainline
Assistant to Executive Director

CONTRIBUTIONS

It is easy for individuals to forget about investing in PAED. There are so many other organizations doing great work, that it is often difficult for PAED to rise to the top of the list when an individual or business is considering the use of their philanthropy dollars. PAED as a 501c3 must raise funds to continue to do its vital work. With the absence of predictable funding from public entities, year to year, it is difficult to plan for long term economic revitalization projects.

PAED's staff has spent countless hours securing and managing nearly \$7 million in grant funding for the benefit of Pottstown's growing private businesses. In addition, we have connected numerous tenants to building owners, navigated multiple License and Inspection issues with the Borough, wrote letters of support for projects, brought high-profile public officials to Pottstown to assist with employment, regulatory, environmental and licensing issues, all the while telling Pottstown's collective story to a variety of audiences.

Tax deductible donations to PAED affirm your commitment to be part of Pottstown's promising future. Donations can also be made online at IPickPottstown.org (scroll to the bottom of PAED's home page).



2023 CONTRIBUTIONS

Grants	\$272,500
Board of Directors	\$155,000
Business Community (non-Board)	\$66,478
TOTAL	\$493,978

Excluded from the chart: fee for services, sponsored events such as Fete en Blanc, Santa Saturday & Annual Tree Lighting.



PAED launched the inaugural edition of a custom designed Pottstownopoly, generously supported in part by:



2024 2nd Edition... will your business adopt a spot on the board?







POTTSTOWN AREA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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