Pottstown Borough Land Bank: Open for Business

Blight to Bright Breakfast
December 5, 2019
About Pottstown

Area: 5.5 square miles


Ranked 11 in population among municipalities in Montgomery County
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pottstown</th>
<th>Montgomery County</th>
<th>Pennsylvania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Home Value</td>
<td>$127,000</td>
<td>$299,300</td>
<td>$170,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner Occupied Units</td>
<td>50.4%</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renter Occupied Units</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Housing Units</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Units Built in 1939 or earlier</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$45,634</td>
<td>$84,791</td>
<td>$56,951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage Earning &lt; $35,000/year</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Individuals Below Poverty</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017 estimates
# Other Vacant = Likely Abandoned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pottstown borough, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>1,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For rent</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented, not occupied</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For sale only</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold, not occupied</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For migrant workers</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other vacant</td>
<td>542</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017 estimates
Pottstown’s Commitment to Revitalization

- Blighted Property Review Committee
- Pottstown Area Industrial Development, Inc. (PAID)
- Land Bank
What is a Land Bank?

- A public agency created to efficiently acquire, hold, manage, develop and return blighted, abandoned, and tax foreclosed properties to productive use.
- Locally-driven strategy to address long-term vacant properties that are stuck in the market.
Milestones for the Pottstown Borough Land Bank

2015 – 2017 Community Education, Investigation and Outreach on Land Banks

Land Bank Ordinance adopted by Borough Council
Borough commits $20,000 in seed money November 2017

Board members appointed April 2018

First Land Bank Board meeting held; Board By Laws adopted June 2018

Land Bank Policies and Procedures adopted by Board January 2019
Approved by Council February 2019

Conflicts of Interest Policy adopted by the Board March 2019

Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement between Land Bank, Borough and Pottstown School District executed May 2019

Application submitted to the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) for PHARE/RTT grant November 2019
Land Bank Approach

**Mission:**
Using available resources, to facilitate the return of vacant, blighted, abandoned and tax-delinquent property to productive use thereby combating community deterioration, stabilizing the housing and job markets, and strengthening the Borough’s tax base.

- Act primarily as a facilitator of property acquisition and land assembly to support development pursuant to local goals and policies
- Facilitate the demolition or rehabilitation of vacant properties that have been determined to be “blighted” by the Blighted Property Review Committee (BPRC)
- Working with Montgomery County, acquire and convey vacant and tax-foreclosed properties to qualified buyers for owner occupied housing
- Assist nonprofit and for-profit developers acquire vacant properties for redevelopment for affordably priced and market rate housing units for home ownership
Land Bank Approach

Goal:
5 property acquisitions and dispositions within the targeted area over the next one to two years
Borough Investment 2017-2019

Council support has been critical to the Land Bank’s start-up.

Pottstown Borough invested approximately $6,000 on legal and consulting services to study land banking and develop an ordinance.

For Land Bank startup, the Borough has covered approximately $21,000 in Land Bank expenses for legal services, consulting/administration, and board D&O insurance.

In addition, the Borough has allocated $20,000 in seed money for initial property acquisitions.
Next Steps

- Work with the Montgomery County Treasurer and Tax Claim Bureau on tax sale acquisitions
- Pre-qualify developers and individuals interested in acquiring properties through the Land Bank
- Community engagement and education on the Land Bank
- Seek one-time and recurring funding from public and private sources
- Acquire our first property and transfer it to a new owner for rehabilitation
Land Bank Board
Deb Penrod, Chair
Cheryl Chiarello, Vice Chair
Michael Mauger, Secretary
Twila Fisher, Treasurer
Carol Kulp, Member

Land Bank Right to Know Officer
Viriginia Takach

Pottstown Borough
Justin Keller, Borough Manager

PAID, Inc.
Peggy Lee Clark, Executive Director

Land Bank Administrator
Winnie Branton
Branton Strategies LLC
wbranton@brantonstrategies.com

For more information, visit the Land Bank Webpage:
https://www.pottstown.org/432/Land-Bank-Board