



Borough of Chambersburg

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHAMBERSBURG APPROVES NEW ELM STREET PROGRAM AGREEMENT

Chambersburg – In Chambersburg Borough, arguably the most successful neighborhood redevelopment project ever has been the Elm Street Program, not named for a local thoroughfare, but named after a Pennsylvania State Program begun in the Rendell Administration and championed by community volunteers in Chambersburg Borough.

At the regular Council meeting on Monday June 12, 2017, Town Council approved an agreement to renew the Elm Street Program for another five year run.

Phil Wolgemuth, Assistant to the Borough Manager, described the Elm Street Program as the economic revitalization program to support the residential neighborhood adjacent to Chambersburg's downtown.

In 2005 the Borough's long-standing partnership with Downtown Chambersburg, Inc. (DCI) was bolstered when the non-profit organization Building Our Pride In Chambersburg (BOPIC) joined together to create an Elm Street Neighborhood Plan with the support of a \$25,000 grant from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). The plan outlines goals and objectives to enhance the neighborhood areas located to the east and south of downtown that are predominantly older residential uses interspersed with commercial neighborhood uses. Southgate Shopping Center, a tired 1970's era shopping center, is a key component of the redevelopment strategy. Beyond redevelopment, the plan outlines other community development initiatives such as opportunities for resident participation in the decision-making process, improved property maintenance code enforcement, affordable housing opportunities and neighborhood safety patrols.

The Elm Street Neighborhood Plan was adopted by the Mayor and Town Council in May 2007 and the Borough was designated by DCED as an Elm Street Community in December 2007. The Elm Street Neighborhood Program formally started in January 2008 as a partnership between the Borough, DCI and BOPIC.

According to Borough Manager Jeffrey Stonehill, "the key to our program success is the partnership between these entities as well as an active Elm Street Advisory Council, engaged residents and business owners and technical assistance and grant funding support from the PA Downtown Center and DCED."

Council President Allen Coffman pointed out "that the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) designated Chambersburg as an Elm Street Community in December 2007 a partnership between the Borough, BOPIC and DCI was in existence for many years afterward and successfully administered \$1,425,000 of state grant funding for this important redevelopment program."

Projects include funding for low and moderate income home improvements, community programs, renovations to Mike Waters Park, curb and sidewalk improvements throughout the Third Ward, and code enforcement and public safety activities throughout the neighborhood.

Many of the plan objectives have been implemented as a result of DCED Elm Street grant funds totaling \$1,425,000 and guidance regarding self-sufficiency concepts that have allowed the program to leverage other local, state and federal funding sources. The 324 acres that encompass the Elm Street Neighborhood Program area includes 168 properties that were assisted with grant funds.

\$25,000 DCED grant was used to complete the Elm Street Neighborhood Plan. The plan was prepared by the Borough, DCI and BOPIC in consultation with Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, York, PA.

\$150,000 DCED grant was used to fund the Elm Street Manager position for 3 years. Jack Jones was hired as Elm Street Manager in December 2008 and has been the lead advocate for the program including more than 100 housing façade rehabilitation projects, sidewalk and/or sewer lateral replacement projects and to plant shade trees along street corridors.

In November 2015 Town Council authorized the Elm Street Program to seek re-designation from DCED. While DCED has yet to grant re-designation they did last month provide to the Borough a Keystone Communities Program grant in the amount of \$10,000 to be used to secure the services of a consultant to assist in the development of a new Elm Street Program Five-Year Strategic Plan. The Borough's FY 2017 budget includes \$10,000 to match the grant. A professional services proposal for consultant services will soon be provided to Council for approval consideration.

If you have more questions about the Elm Street Program, contact Phil Wolgemuth at pwolgemuth@chambersburgpa.gov

Chambersburg is a unique community. Chambersburg supplies more services than any other municipality in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In addition to typical town functions, Chambersburg is Pennsylvania's only municipality supplying electric and gas. Chambersburg is 1 of 35 Boroughs to operate a municipal non-profit electric utility. Chambersburg is the largest municipal electric utility in the State, twice as large as the second largest, Ephrata, Lancaster County; and, the only one to operate generation stations. Chambersburg is 1 of 2 municipalities in PA to operate a natural gas utility. The other is Philadelphia, which does not operate an electric utility. Nationally, Chambersburg is 1 of 2,000 communities to have its own electric system and 1 of 800 communities to have a natural gas system but 1 of only about 50 to operate both. Chambersburg manages a regional water system, a regional sanitary sewer system (not through an independent Authority), and a new storm sewer utility; one of the first storm sewer utilities to form under the new Federal mandate to regulate stormwater.

Chambersburg currently has 20,508 residents (2013). www.chambersburgpa.gov