

The Impact of SteelTown Village on the Community

On Tuesday, March 21, 2017, the [Pottstown Mercury](#) published an article titled 'Council Oks affordable housing.' While the article gave an accurate, balanced portrayal of what took place during the Phoenixville Borough Council Meeting of March 14th, incorrect information shared by residents who opposed the project was printed.

Receiving Land Development Approval is a huge step forward for SteelTown Village but it is important that the public have accurate information regarding the 48 unit housing development. Of major concern to the community is the reported loss of DeSanno Field should SteelTown be developed. DeSanno Field is located catty-corner to the new project and is home to the Phoenixville Babe Ruth League. In 2015, the League brought to Petra's attention the League's anticipated loss of parking since parking was purportedly taking place on the property of the proposed housing. Concerned about the impact on the community due to the potential loss of parking for games, Petra changed its original plans which called for a multi-services building on site, and is now proposing a parking lot consisting of 53 parking spaces to be made available for the Babe Ruth League during the baseball season. Additionally, 40 on-street parking spaces will be created by Petra where none exist today.

Based on testimony accepted at Planning Commission meetings, potentially 104 parking spaces will be made available for Babe Ruth games. These spaces come from 30 on-street created by Petra, 53 off-street created by Petra, and 21 existing today used by Babe Ruth. Based on testimony from Babe Ruth officials, 50-100 spaces are needed for baseball games. Thus, far from seeking to shut down Babe Ruth's ability to play baseball, Petra is working to develop affordable housing while preserving parking space for Babe Ruth and the community.

Petra is a non-profit developer committed to strengthening communities by celebrating diversity and helping individuals struggling to find quality, affordable housing. Those who will be helped by SteelTown Village will be disabled veterans and individuals, seniors and workforce families.

Another talking point of those speaking against this project is the impact of traffic in the area. The facts do not support those arguing that the 48 units of SteelTown Village will have a negative impact on traffic congestion the area. In fact the traffic study recently authorized by the Borough indicated that the traffic generated from SteelTown Village would account for 1% of the traffic in the area. The projects that WILL or have impacted the traffic to a great extent are the high end luxury apartment developments that were recently completed in the borough and those that are currently in the approval process and will add approximately 1000 additional units to the immediate area.

The impact this project will have on the property values in the neighborhood has been questioned. One individual stated that he had been trying to sell his house for 8 months and blamed SteelTown Village for his inability to sell it. The facts, however, show a house on the same street sold just four months ago on November 2, 2016, for \$243,500. Study after study indicates that affordable housing developments have a positive impact or no impact at all on property values in the immediate area. The actual impact upon the community will be one of positive change, replacing a vacant lot with workforce housing.