

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2023**

SUPERVISORS:

Danielle A. Duckett, Chairman
Michael Twersky, Vice Chair - absent
Janine Martin
Kathleen Hunsicker
Tessie McNeely

STAFF:

Mimi Gleason, Interim Township Manager
Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Michelle Farzetta, Administrative Assistant
Neil Stein, Esq., Solicitor
Fred Zollers, Director Public Works
Paul Kenny, Police Chief – via zoom
Jim Hersh, Township Engineer, Gilmore
Chad Dixon, Traffic Engineer, McMahan a Bowman Company
Melinda Haldeman – Finance Director

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:00 pm at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building and virtually on Zoom and led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

The BOS met in executive session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of personnel and litigation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carmina Taylor, a former resident of Penllyn, came to speak about the village of Penllyn. She has been advocating for Penllyn to be designated as historical for two years. This year marks 100th anniversary of the Penllyn School and the 120th for the original location of the Bethlehem Baptist Church. Ms. Duckett explained that the Historical Advisory Committee (HAC) is working out the process for historic signage with the intention that everyone be treated the same regarding requests for historical designation. The plan is to move this program forward ASAP. Penllyn will go through the same process as any other request for historical designation. This item is on the agenda this evening but since not all Supervisors are present and Mr. Twersky specifically asked to have the opportunity to provide input on the subject, the item will be tabled.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Resolution 2023-11 Preliminary/final land development approval for Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School (GMAHS)

Christin Pionzio spoke on behalf of GMAHS. Last month she was before the BOS and presented the proposed land development plan and discussed the requested waivers. At that time there were concerns regarding walkability and trees among the BOS. To help with these concerns, the BOS suggested adding an easement for a future trail connection along Evans Road and Sumneytown Pike, as well as some trees along the ballfield. Ms. Pionzio stated that they have worked out the details regarding an easement for the property. They will also be adding five trees by the ballfield. All the other waiver requests have remained the same. They are now asking for approval. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker to approve Resolution 2023-11 granting preliminary/final land development approval to GMAHS. Motion passed 4-0. Ms. Hunsicker made a statement that she sits on the board at Gwynedd Mercy High School and there is no financial interest. When the easement goes to the board at Gwynedd Mercy for approval she will abstain from the vote.

Authorization to advertise an amendment to the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance increasing the traffic impact fee

Mr. Dixon gave an overview of the process for assessing a traffic impact fee and the calculation that is used to figure out the appropriate amount to fund traffic infrastructure improvements through development. An advisory committee was formed to assess the fee and have come back with a recommendation to increase the current fee from \$2,285.00 to \$3,865.00 per "new" afternoon peak hour trip for the transportation service area. Mr. Dixon requested authorization to advertise the amended Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to authorize advertisement of the Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance. Motion passed 4-0.

Review of Township Engineer's Report - any questions for the Township Engineer?

Mr. Hersh submitted his report. There were no questions from the BOS.

Review of Traffic Engineer's Report - any questions for the Traffic Engineer?

Mr. Dixon submitted his report. He highlighted a few items in the report, including the pedestrian crossing on McKean Road that is being installed by Beacon. Ms. Hunsicker inquired about Beacon's responsiveness to the project. Mr. Dixon stated there were no issues. Ms. Martin asked about the Spring House Intersection project. She asked if the businesses and residents were aware of the impact the project would have on them. Mr. Dixon replied that a meeting was being held tomorrow morning for all businesses, the school district and emergency personnel to answer any questions. Chastity Bruno, 930 Redstone Lane, questioned the radius used when sending out notifications about the Spring House Intersection project, as she did not receive anything. Ms. Worman stated that the radius used was 1,000 feet, same as for zoning hearing board notifications. Ms. Bruno stated she lives off Cedar Hill Road and that area will also be greatly impacted by this work and would like the radius to be expanded moving forward to include those neighborhoods. Ms. Worman stated that all the information is on the township website and e-blasts have been sent out.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Waiver of permit fees for “The Flowers Still Grow Fest” in Penllyn

Renee Steward has planned her annual event for Sunday, June 11. Ms. Steward has asked the township to waive her facility fees, which total \$130. She has provided all the necessary permits and a certificate of insurance. Waiving the fees will be Lower Gwynedd’s donation to the event. The Community Response Unit (CRU) will be using funds for a Kona Ice Truck. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to waive the fees for the event. Motion passed 4-0.

Update on development of historical marker program

This item was tabled as Mr. Twersky was not present for the meeting and wanted to be included in the discussion. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Hunsicker, to table this agenda item. Motion passed 4-0.

Authorization to advertise the bid for installation of equipment improvements and related construction for the traffic signal at Norristown Road and Tennis Avenue

In the fall of 2022, the township received a Green Light Go Grant in the amount of \$159,440.80 for a traffic signal improvement at the intersection of Norristown Road and Tennis Avenue. The township will provide a match of \$39,860.20. Mr. Dixon is seeking authorization to advertise the bid for installation and will return at the June 27th BOS meeting with a bid recommendation. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely to authorize the advertisement for bids. Motion passed. 4-0.

Authorization for James D. Morrissey, Inc. to utilize the Township property located at 901 Sumneytown Pike (former Texaco Station) as a staging area for the Spring House Intersection Improvement for the duration of the project

James D. Morrissey is asking the BOS to reconsider allowing them to use a defined portion of the former Texaco station as a staging area for the Spring House Intersection project. If they must use a staging area further away, less time will be spent daily actually doing the work, as a portion of the day will be spent bringing in trailers and loading equipment, prolonging the duration of the construction. Mr. Stein will be making amendments to the contract addressing the BOS concerns of safety and returning the area to its natural state. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to allow the use of 901 Sumneytown Pike as a staging area. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of “Lower Gwynedd Township Cafeteria Plan” for optional employee benefits

Ms. Gleason received an email from the tax attorney who informed her that there is one issue that needs to be cleaned up before the “cafeteria plan” can be approved. This change will be made and ready for the May 23rd BOS meeting. Ms. McNeely asked if verbiage should be added regarding the supervisor’s eligibility for benefits, as they are not salaried employees. Ms. Gleason stated she will investigate that. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, to table this item until May 23rd. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of Inter-governmental Agreement with North Wales Borough and Upper Gwynedd Township to create Joint Board of Appeals for the Uniform Construction Code

At the March 8th BOS meeting Resolution 2023-09 was approved, authorizing Lower Gwynedd Township to participate in the Joint Board of Code Appeals between Upper Gwynedd Township and North Wales Borough. The Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) was revised by Upper Gwynedd's solicitor and now includes Lower Gwynedd Township. Staff are asking for approval to become part of the Joint Board of Appeals. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, to approve this agreement. Motion passed 4-0.

Ratification of General Release

Approval for general release due to an employee's termination. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to ratify the general release. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of minutes - April 25, 2023

The BOS received the minutes from the April 25, 2023, meeting. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to approve the minutes. Motion passed. 4-0.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

Ms. Gleason stated that the purpose of this portion of the agenda is to provide township staff, supervisors, and the public with updates regarding the various board and commission meetings. Moving forward, the staff who take the minutes will make notes about high points from the meetings. These will then be given to the supervisor liaisons to share with everyone. Ms. Martin gave a quick update on the Humans Relations Commission (HRC). She stated that Bernadine Ahonkhai from the Coalition for Justice reviewed her educational project that she would like to propose to Wissahickon School District. Jimmy Chong a member of the HRC will be featured on TV to speak about stopping Asian hate.

STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Dixon announced that PennDOT has evaluated our request for the low-cost safety improvements on Gypsy Hill Road and will move forward with the repairs. They have sent a plan with paving and sign improvements. They will install curve warning signs and make improvements to the one lane bridge by adding yield signs and pavement markings. These improvements can be expected in late summer or early fall. Mr. Dixon will keep in touch with them for any additional updates.

Ms. McNeely asked if anything could be done regarding the ditches along Gypsy Hill Road, as it is unsafe for drivers. Mr. Dixon stated that would not be included in this project as it is just safety improvements of signs and pavement markings. He can ask PennDOT for a timeframe for paving the road, at which time that could be addressed. We are not permitted to make any improvements ourselves, as it is not a township road.

Ms. Hunsicker asked Mr. Dixon to contact Dale Moss with an update, as he is the resident who initially reached out with the safety concerns on Gypsy Hill.

Ms. McNeely also asked Mr. Dixon to investigate the island at 202 and Plymouth Road. The road narrows and makes it difficult to turn onto the road. Mr. Dixon said he will get some more information.

Chief Kenny said the touch a truck will be held on May 20th at the old Siemens property. Many businesses, EMS and food trucks will be present. The first hour will be no sirens to accommodate those who may have sensory issues. Officer Henry has been working on this event and has done a great job!

Ms. Gleason said there will be a Chamber meeting tomorrow. She will be attending to represent Lower Gwynedd Township.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Ms. McNeely had no comment.

Ms. Hunsicker addressed the pride flag raising and asked if there would be a resolution again this year. The Second-Class township code states the following:

Section 1510. Display of Flags. --The board of supervisors may display the flag of the United States or the Commonwealth, the official POW/MIA flag or the flag of any county or municipal corporation on any public building or grounds of the township .

Ms. Hunsicker stated that no other flags should be flown, as there is no language stating that any other flag is deemed appropriate. Mr. Stein stated that if the language said shall or shall not then we would not be permitted to fly additional flags, but it states may/may not, therefore we would have the option, but are not compelled to. He also stated that it is good practice to have a new resolution every year.

Ms. Martin reminded everyone of the Touch a Truck event and invited everyone to the Pride Flag raising event on June 1st at 6pm. There will be students speaking about the impact this has had on them.

Ms. Duckett explained that she wants everyone to always feel welcome. She added that we will hear from kids at the flag raising, there will be no speeches from elected officials. She also thanked the CRU for making the Touch a Truck event inclusive to everyone's needs.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Farzetta