

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023**

SUPERVISORS:

Danielle A. Duckett, Chairman
Michael Twersky, Vice Chair
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
Jim Hersh, Township Engineer, Gilmore
Chad Dixson, Traffic Engineer, McMahon a Bowman Company
Melinda Haldeman – Finance Director
John Farrell – Project Manager

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:04pm at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building and virtually on Zoom and led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Board of Supervisors met in executive session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of personnel, real estate, and litigation.

Recognition of Leola Hubbard

Leola Hubbard has been a volunteer in Lower Gwynedd township for over 14 years. Ms. Duckett read a thank you letter to Leola on behalf of the Board of Supervisors (BOS) and presented her with a proclamation. Ms. Hubbard spoke and said that she would still be available to help when needed, just give her a call.

PRESENTATION: Master Plans for Ingersoll Park, Oxford Park, Pen-Ambler Park and a trail connection from Pen-Ambler Park to Penllyn Train Station

Mr. Hersh and Judy Stern-Goldstein from Gilmore presented the draft master plans for three of the township parks. These are plans for suggested improvements. Implementation of the final master plans will take place in phases over several years. The phases will be determined by grants and other funding opportunities.

Ingersoll Park, home of the Lower Gwynedd Little League, recently had their fields reskinned. Additional improvements in the draft master plan include replacement of fencing, backstops, additional ADA compliant parking, a bullpen, and concession stand with a combination bathroom and press box. A determination still needs to be made regarding the future of the McCormick House. Potentially there

could be a tot lot, batting cages, a picnic grove and additional parking spaces put in that location. If a tot lot were to be constructed storyboards, as well as additional educational components, would be included to pay respect to the former school. Some stormwater maintenance would be required, as well as sewer lines and a grinder pump installation for the concession stand and bathrooms. Some reconfigurations of the intersection with traffic lights and curbing would also be required for safety purposes.

Oxford Park, home of our summer concert series, could have a fully inclusive playground area with a Gaga pit. Gilmore is suggesting a trail spur to connect the park and Cambridge Drive. There is also the suggestion of installing a pollinator garden (potentially partner with the EAC for this) around the pergola.

Next, they reviewed Pen-Ambler Park. The open field area could potentially be used for carnival style parking, where it remains grass but is used for parking during events, such as concerts. This area would only be used during events where police or volunteers would be directing traffic and parking. Currently there is an amphitheater, but the area should be regraded, and the stage area could be enhanced with a Pergola for performers and a pavilion. There would be space for food trucks, an entrance with a crosswalk and a seating area with planter boxes.

The baseball field at Pen-Ambler Park is used by Ambler Baseball. They have asked for batting cages and a storage area. Currently there are basketball courts and a playground. Gilmore is proposing four pickle ball courts be installed. The plans also provide for the installation of bathrooms requiring a sewer line and grinder pump to be installed. The playground would be redesigned along with solar charging stations and seating. The draft plan shows a trail connection from Mathers Road and Ambler Yards.

The last plan Mr. Hersh and Ms. Goldstein talked about was the trail connection from Pen Ambler to the trail at the Septa train station. Currently, there is no curb on the road. The safest solution would be a crosswalk with ADA ramps and a three-way stop. This property is owned by PennDOT so it would have to be approved by them. We have not fully decided what the safest way is from Pen Ambler to Amber Yards to the Septa train station.

Residents of Georgetown came out to voice their concerns with some of the suggested improvements. Some of those concerns at Ingersoll included light pollution from the Little League fields, general overdevelopment of the area and possible flooding from the creek. The concerns voiced at the meeting pertaining to Pen Ambler Park included safety concerns with the proposed crosswalk and entrance into the park, added traffic, and the lack of lighting for evening events. The BOS explained the events would end at dusk; therefore, lighting should not be an issue. Some residents were also concerned about ownership of property along the proposed walking trail, how much belongs to the township and how much to Georgetown? Mr. Twersky replied that we have not investigated the right-of-way yet. The public will be informed before any work is done. He stressed that these plans were wish list items. Several Georgetown residents had concerns about land being taken for the installation of the trail and curbs. They asked for other options to be evaluated. Some Georgetown residents are in favor of the trail, as it will allow for safer walking for their families.

Ms. Duckett clarified for everyone that a survey was sent out three years ago, before the park plan started, asking residents for feedback regarding park improvements. Several individuals asked for safer options to get to the train station. The option presented tonight is just one of them. Sidewalks are installed all the time; they mitigate risks and address concerns. The draft master plans will be displayed in the lobby though the 22nd of September and then at Fall Fest on the 23rd for the public to review. Comments can be left, which will then go back to Mr. Hersh.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carmina Taylor, former resident of Penllyn, came for an update regarding recognition of the Penllyn School, as it will be the 100th anniversary of the school in the fall. Mr. Twersky stated the marker program has been approved and applications for historic markers have started coming in. The information is on the website. The Historic Advisory Committee (HAC) will review the application and then make recommendations to the BOS for approval. Ms. Taylor would like for there to be a ceremony to honor the location of the school, a marker can come after that. Ms. Martin stated that this is the first time a ceremony has been mentioned, her understanding was that Ms. Taylor was advocating for a historic marker. Ms. Taylor feels the marker is not enough, a ceremony needs to occur too. Ms. Duckett stated that a marker has already been discussed among the HAC for Penllyn and a marker will happen this year. Ms. Taylor is welcome to attend the HAC meeting next week to discuss the marker.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Consideration of a Decision and Order for a conditional use application for a lot size reduction at 400 Houston Road

Ms. Duckett stated that this application has been withdrawn.

Public hearing for a conditional use application for stormwater management facilities in the wetlands buffer area at 727 Norristown Road (Spring House Innovation Park)

Solicitor Neil Stein opened the hearing and submitted his exhibits for the record verifying that notification requirements were met. The applicant is requesting permission to permit the grading of land and the installation of stormwater facilities within a portion of the wetlands buffer area located on the subject property.

The information provided was transcribed by a court reporter and will be available upon request. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, to have Mr. Stein draft a decision. Motion passed 5-0.

Presentation of a land development plan for an electric substation and parking for Building 14 of the Spring House Innovation Park at 727 Norristown Road

Beacon Capital is proposing an additional parking lot with 37 new spaces at Building 14 and an electrical substation building along with a retaining wall, sidewalks, landscaping, and a subsurface stormwater management system. Representatives from Beacon spoke about the project and shared photos. The enclosed substation will not be seen from the road and will have no impact on the community. There was also discussion regarding the tree replacement plan. Beacon proposes planting 48 new native trees along McKean Road. Beacon is seeking preliminary and final land development approval. The review letters from both Gilmore and McMahan were reviewed and the applicant's attorney went through the list of requested waivers. Mr. Twersky made a motion,

seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, granting Mr. Stein permission to address the waivers and propose a draft resolution. Motion passed 5-0.

GENERAL

Discussion about digital signs/plans for Veterans Park and Texaco property

Ms. Gleason explained that there have been previous conversations regarding the installation of an electric sign at Veteran's Memorial Park. Ms. Gleason continued that the staff is recommending we pause this project and come up with a long-term plan for Veteran's Park and the former Texaco property. She suggested that a subcommittee be created or possibly ask the Park and Recreation Board to work with staff to put together some options for consideration next spring.

The BOS agreed to hold off for now and perhaps have the current sign at the park state something general, so it does not have to be changed regularly. It was suggested to possibly have the Park and Recreation Board work with the Comp Plan Steering Committee to develop a plan for this area of the Township. Mr. Twersky mentioned that the rotary had reached out regarding possibly expanding Veteran's Park and using the former Texaco property. There was also mention of removing the three-sided building that is currently at the intersection, as it is not being used appropriately. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, to revisit the electrical sign at Veteran's Park. Motion passed 5-0.

Discussion about proposed structure for multi-municipal effort to comply with Wissahickon Watershed TMDL requirements

The Wissahickon Clean Water Partnership (WCWP) is looking at the implementation phase of the Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP). They are looking at options regarding how this transition can occur and what form the WCWP will take in the next phase. The goal is to select a structure that is flexible and able to adapt through the implementation period. The four options WCWP is looking at are a joint venture entity, a social welfare organization, a municipal authority, and a municipal consortium. The BOS agreed that they prefer the municipal consortium. Ms. Worman will attend the September WCWP meeting and will vote on behalf of the BOS for the consortium governance structure. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, to have Ms. Worman vote for a municipal consortium structure. Motion passed 5-0.

Review of 2024 minimum municipal obligation (MMO) for the Township's contribution to defined benefit pension plans and consideration of reduction in rate-of-return assumption

Ms. Gleason explained that at the January Investment Advisory meeting it was suggested by Actuary David Reid, from CBIZ, to lower the pension rate of return assumption from 7% to 6.5%. This rate of return is the amount your assets will earn until your benefits are due. The MMO is the minimum annual amount a municipality must contribute to an employee's pension plan. Ms. Haldeman is going to work on the projections for the fund balance with a rate of 6.75% and 6.5%. A vote is not needed today, but a determination will be necessary at the September 26th BOS meeting. The BOS will review the information and vote at the next meeting.

Award bid and authorize use of ARPA funding for paving of Pen-Ambler Park parking lot

Gilmore received eighteen bids for the Pen Ambler Park Parking lot reconstruction project. Upon review Gilmore determined that Gaver Industries, Inc dba Barker and Barker Paving, is the low

bidder for the project. The total cost will be \$220,843.65. The project should be completed at the end of October. Ms. Gleason asked the BOS for approval to use ARPA funds to pay for this project. Ms. Martin made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to award the bid to Gaver Industries, Inc dba Barker and Barker Paving, as well as authorize the use of ARPA funds to pay for the project. Motion passed 5-0.

Ratify approval of Memorandum of Agreement and approve Collective Bargaining Agreement with Police Collective Bargaining Unit

Ms. Duckett made a motion to ratify the approval of the Memorandum of Agreement and to approve the 2023-2027 Collective Bargaining Agreement (contract) between Lower Gwynedd Township and the Police Department for Lower Gwynedd Township. Ms. McNeely seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of invoices

The BOS received the invoice history for August of 2023 totaling \$812,550.10. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to approve the invoice history. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of minutes - August 22, 2023

The BOS received the minutes from the August 22, 2023, meeting. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to approve the minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

The BOS received the committee reports for the Historic Advisory Committee and the Environmental Advisory Committee. There were no questions or comments.

STAFF UPDATES

There were no staff updates.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Ms. McNeely thanked the engineers and the Park and Recreation Board for their work on the park master plans.

Ms. Hunsicker seconded Ms. McNeely's comments.

Ms. Martin echoed the comments. In remembrance of the 9/11 attacks, she thanked all police, firefighters and rescue workers for their hard work and dedication.

Mr. Twersky echoed all comments.

Ms. Duckett also echoed the comments and reminded everyone about Fall Fest on September 23rd.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion to adjourn at 9:51pm, seconded by Ms. McNeely. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Farzetta