

[NOTES: PHMC says it suspended its historical marker program in late 2022 due to supply chain issues; individual markers and private markers are common, but there do not seem to be any county/local programs in PA though there are in New Jersey and other states; BOS would need to develop an enabling ordinance of some sort to root this as a township program and to justify maintenance, etc.)

LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL MARKER PROGRAM

Mission Statement

The Lower Gwynedd Township Historical Marker Program is designed to highlight important aspects of township history to increase residents' sense of pride of place, to support cultural tourism throughout the county and region, to educate the public, and to encourage the public to preserve historic resources.

Program Administration

Lower Gwynedd Township will administer the historical marker program. The Historical Committee/Commission will set up a framework for vetting proposed marker nominations, receive and review nominations from the public, and make recommendations for approval to the Board of Supervisors. The BOS will make the final decision on any marker nominations forwarded to them from the Historical Committee/Commission.

The Historical Committee/Commission will also review criteria, set priorities, assess the progress of the program. It will also serve to review the marker text accuracy and integrity in consultation with local historical organizations.

Effort will be made to consult and coordinate with, where appropriate, the State Historic Preservation Office, state and regional tourism entities, and PennDOT on issues such as verifying significance, establishing special initiatives for topics, signage design, placement and maintenance, and maintaining an inventory of existing historical marker signs.

Nominations

The public (resident or non-resident), including elected and appointed members of the Lower Gwynedd Township government or committees, may nominate a subject for a historical marker.

Eligibility Criteria

1. The subject of the marker may include events, places, innovations, legends, persons or groups/organizations significant in Lower Gwynedd Township history or that contributed significantly to regional, state, or national history so long as there is a direct connection to Lower Gwynedd Township. The subject must have had a measurable impact on history and sufficient time has elapsed to evaluate that impact based on credible documentation. Places of state or national significance should be considered for a Pennsylvania state historical marker.

A. Events should date from at least 40 years in the past.

B. Places may include public or private buildings, structures, objects, sites, districts, and cultural and natural features/landscapes. Markers may be approved for buildings or structures that are either significantly altered or no longer standing.

They may be associated with: events significant in Lower Gwynedd Township history or contributed significantly to the broad pattern of regional, state, or national history; the lives of persons significant in our past; embodies distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; or represents the work of a master; or possesses high artistic values; or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; have important value to an ethnic group due to associations with past or present cultural practices at the property or due to associations with traditional beliefs, events or oral accounts (these associations being important to the group's history and cultural identity). But places nominated for a marker are not limited to those considerations (unless otherwise specified below). Special consideration will be afforded for recognition of the historical hamlets of Lower Gwynedd Township.

C. A person or group may be a marker subject 20 years after their death. The significance of their accomplishments must have had a measurable impact on history and sufficient time has elapsed to evaluate that impact based on credible documentation. The significance of the subject, particularly for continuing events and organizations, must be historically established rather than of contemporary interest.

D. Topics not eligible for markers include: individual gravesites; churches or religious sites, unless their significance is associated with broader themes in local history and culture.

E. Lower Gwynedd Township recognizes that continuing scholarship may help validate the subject's impact on its times or its significance from a more recent historical perspective.

F. A group of sites can be collectively argued to be significant under any of the criteria.

G. Listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places will be given special consideration for historical markers. However, they must meet the same criteria as other LGT historical markers and have adequate documentation.

Documentation

1. The burden of proof will be on the application's sponsor to provide documentary evidence demonstrating the significance of the proposed marker subject. The submission must include both primary and secondary source documentation for each fact presented to establish the significance of the marker subject. Nominations should demonstrate clearly the age and significance of the marker subject to Lower Gwynedd Township history.

2. Application should include a map and photo of the site proposed for the marker.

3. Application will include proposed text for the historical marker which will be reviewed and may be altered by the Historical Committee/Commission.

4. Nomination paperwork is clear and organized and includes thorough documentation (with selected photocopies and bibliographies from reliable primary and secondary sources) and verification of the facts claimed.

5. The Committee/Commission will be given adequate time to verify the materials presented.

6. Application sponsors are welcome to address the Historic Committee/Commission and should give advanced notice where possible in order to enable members to prepare questions. Sponsors may also be requested by the Committee/Commission to appear in advance of their nomination's approval.

Review Process

1. Submissions will follow a standardized process recommended by the Historic Committee/Commission and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

2. Submissions will be considered by the Historical Committee/Commission no less than twice yearly.

3. Submissions may be returned for clarification or to request additional information.

4. Nominated subjects reviewed and disapproved three times are not eligible for review for a period of five years from the most recent disapproval.

5. If approved by the Board of Supervisors, township staff will notify the application's sponsor, orders the marker, and schedule the dedication ceremony.

Installation/Maintenance

1. Markers should be placed in a safe location in the right of way as close to the significant event, place, or site as possible. The Public Works department will install the signage.

2. The Township will inspect all markers annually and provide a report to the Historic Committee/Commission regarding any degradation.

3. The Township will collaborate with private citizens, PennDOT, and/or other agencies to ensure the markers are properly maintained.

4. Once installed, markers should be considered property of the Township and stealing a sign becomes a prosecutable offense.

Retirement

Markers may be retired by Lower Gwynedd Township. Such requests come to the Historical Committee/Commission and upon a supermajority vote will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors.

Companion Web Site

LGT will develop a portion of its web-site with a map-based capacity to highlight the location of historic markers and print a limited number of self-guided tour brochures for markers.

~~~~~

Portions referenced from:

“Assessment of State Historical Marker Programs.” Preservation Partners.

<https://www.nj.gov/dca/njht/documents/publ/HistoricalMarkersFinal102307.pdf>

“Historical Marker Policy.” Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

<https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Preservation/About/Documents/Historical%20Marker%20Policy%20Adopted%2009092020.pdf>

Additional resources:

San Antonio Local Markers Program: <https://www.sanantonio.gov/historic/Local-Historical-Markers>  
(Which also has a crowd-sourced digital marker program)