

LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL MARKER PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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. Through ordinance, the Board of Supervisors will enable the program and hold the final decision on the placement or removal of markers.

The Township's Historical Advisory Committee will set up a framework for vetting proposed marker submissions, receive and review submissions from the public, and make recommendations for approval to the Board of Supervisors. It will review criteria, set priorities, and assess the progress of the program. It will also review the accuracy and integrity of the marker text and/or digital description explaining the significance of the marker in consultation with nominators and 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 related to verifying historical significance; establishing special initiatives for topics/themes; signage design, placement and maintenance; creation of an inventory of existing historical marker signs.

Once established, the Historical Advisory Committee may make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to update the terms of the program as necessary.

Submissions

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

Eligibility Criteria

Subjects/themes of a proposed marker:

1. Must have direct connection to local history (specifically historical Gwynedd Township or modern Lower Gwynedd Township);
2. Should reference an event(s), place (building, structure, object, site, district, natural or cultural landscape), innovation, legend, person, or group/organization;
3. Should have had a significant impact on its time (and/or the present) or contributed significantly to regional, state, or national history with a specific connection to Lower Gwynedd Township; and
4. Should be sufficiently in the past that enough time has elapsed to evaluate its impact based on credible documentation and historical perspective.

Subjects/themes should meet specific criteria as appropriate:

- Events should date from at least 40 years in the past
 - For continuing events, must be historically established rather than of contemporary interest
- Places may include public or private buildings, structures, objects, sites, districts, and cultural and natural features/landscapes
 - These places may be extant, significantly altered, or no longer standing
 - A group of sites can be collectively argued to be significant under any of the criteria
- Legends and/or folklore should be based on relevant historical documentation and/or scholarship
- A person or group/organization may be a marker subject 20 years after their death or the group's dissolution
 - For continuing groups/organizations, must be historically established rather than of contemporary interest
 - Individual gravesites are not eligible for markers unless there are no other appropriate location associated with the person's productive life
 - Churches or religious sites are not eligible unless their significance is associated with broader themes in local history and culture

Special consideration for subjects/themes:

- Will be afforded for recognition of the historical hamlets of Lower Gwynedd Township
- Will be considered for places already recognized on a registry (e.g., National Register of Historic Places) or landmarks list
 - However, the place must meet the same criteria as other LGT historical markers, have adequate documentation, and will not receive preference or precedence among other marker submissions
- Marker candidates with state or national significance should be considered for a Pennsylvania state historical marker

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. As such, marker submissions that are not accepted may be resubmitted after a period of two years from the most recent rejection for reconsideration.

Documentation

All subjects/themes nominated for a historical marker must be accompanied by relevant, authoritative, accurate, and verifiable documentation.

The burden of proof will be on the application's sponsor to provide documentary evidence demonstrating the significance of the proposed marker subject.

Documentation should include:

- A fact-based description of the subject/theme and its direct connection to historical Gwynedd Township or modern Lower Gwynedd Township
- An explanation of the subject/theme's historical importance to the township
- Footnotes that reference verifiable primary and secondary sources for facts and assertions presented to support the submission
- A map and photo of the site proposed for the marker; historical markers will be installed at the location of greatest historical significance related to subject/theme.
- Proposed text for the historical marker or digital description which will be reviewed (and may be altered) by the Historical Advisory Committee
- A clear and organized presentation that makes documentation verifiable by reviewers without undue burden

The Township may create and require specific paperwork related to the application process.

Review Process

Submissions will follow a standardized process recommended by the Historical Advisory Committee and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

- Submissions will be considered by the Historical Advisory Committee no less than twice yearly
- Submissions may be returned for clarification or to request additional information; the Historical Advisory Committee may return a submission with recommended changes prior to final consideration by the Committee
- Application sponsors are welcome to address the Historical Advisory Committee and should give advanced notice where possible in order to enable members to prepare questions
- Application sponsors may also be requested by the Historical Advisory Committee to appear/re-appear in advance of their submission's public review and/or approval to answer questions
- The Historical Advisory Committee will be given adequate time to verify the materials presented
- Marker submissions that do not win initial approval may be resubmitted; if the submission is denied twice, it may be resubmitted for reconsideration after a period of two years from the most recent rejection.

If a historical marker is approved by the Board of Supervisors, township staff will notify the application's sponsor, order the marker, and schedule the dedication ceremony.

Installation/Maintenance

To the extent possible, historical markers will be installed at the location of greatest historical significance related to subject/theme, as permitted by the owner of the property or right-of-way.

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

The Township will collaborate with private citizens, PennDOT, Montgomery County and/or other agencies to ensure the markers are properly maintained. Historical Advisory Committee

Once installed, markers will be considered property of the Township, unless otherwise specified in the agreement with the property owner or the permit issued by PennDOT or Montgomery County for location in their right-of-way .

Marker Retirement

Markers may be retired by Lower Gwynedd Township. Such requests come through the Historical Advisory Committee where a supermajority vote is needed to forward such a request to the Board of Supervisors.

Website

LGT will develop a portion of its website to highlight the location of historic markers and describe the historical significance of the marker, and will print a limited number of self-guided tour brochures for markers.