

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2025**

SUPERVISORS PRESENT:

Danielle A. Duckett, Chair
Michael Twersky, Vice Chair
Janine Martin
Tessie McNeely
Jimmy Chong

STAFF:

Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Michelle Farzetta, Office Manager
Neil Stein, Esq., Solicitor
Paul Kenny, Police Chief
Fred Zollers, Director Public Works
Melinda Haldeman, Finance Director
Jim Hersh, Township Engineer, Gilmore and Associates
Chad Dixon, Traffic Engineer, Bowman

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:07pm 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 (BOS) met in executive session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of litigation related to infrastructure and code enforcement; and matters of real estate related to parks and open space.

Recognition of Mary Trocino for her years of service to Lower Gwynedd Township

Mary Trocino is retiring after 19 years from the Township. Ms. Duckett spoke about Mary and thanked her for her hard work and dedication. Mary was presented with a proclamation and a Lower Gwynedd blanket. Mary thanked everyone for the recognition and well wishes.

PUBLIC HEARING

Public hearing and possible decision to consider an amendment to the Penllyn Woods Park conservation easement to add 26 acres to the easement area

For a couple of years, Township officials have worked to address the gap in cell service in certain areas of the Township. It has been proposed that a cell tower at Penllyn Woods Park would be a feasible location to help address this gap. Requirements from a County grant used to acquire Penllyn Woods Park required approval from the Montgomery County Commissioners before a cell tower could be installed. This approval occurred on April 17th with conditions intended to achieve a net conservation

benefit. One condition was for the Township and Wissahickon Trails to identify a parcel to achieve a conservation benefit. An adjoining 26-acre parcel has been agreed to by both parties to be added to the existing conservation easement on the Park.. A public hearing was held and transcribed by a court reporter and will be available upon request. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to approve the third amendment to the Penllyn Woods Conservation easement. Motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Keith Binsfeld, 616 Penllyn Pike, spoke regarding the Penllyn Electric Upgrade project being done by PECO. There are several trees along Penllyn Pike and Dager Road, as well as on resident's properties that are being taken down. Mr. Binsfeld stated that workers are showing up on his property, as well as those of his neighbors and cutting down trees. They were not given any notice of the workers showing up and do not agree with the number of trees being removed. He is looking for some assistance from the Township to get PECO to reconsider this project. Ms. Gleason stated that there is information on the Township website about this project, but we put Mr. Binsfeld in touch with the Peco government liaison for Montgomery County to get more information. Mr. Twersky stated that the goal of the project is to have less trees taking out power lines in storms. Unfortunately, the Township has little control over public utilities. Township staff are going to reach out to the Government Liasson from PECO and see what information they can gather.

Donna Westley, 707 Kyle Lane, voiced frustration on the way Asplundh cleans up small debris but leaves the logs behind when removing trees. Mr. Zollers stated that Asplundh chips what they can, but then leaves the rest behind, as it is supposed to be good for the ecosystem. Ms. McNeely said this is true, but it is not an attractive look for our properties.

Jeff Bill, 600 Penllyn Pike, stated that there were people out a few weeks ago tagging trees and he stopped them. He asked if the new poles could be put on the other side of the road, as the side they are proposing work on the side that has historic value to it.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Consider authorization to initiate process to amend F District regulations and zoning map boundaries, including advertisement of a legal notice, for Ambler Yards' proposed self-storage and apartment development

Ambler Yards is planning to add a self-storage facility and an apartment building. Christen Pionzio, Esq., has applied for a zoning map and text amendment for these improvements on their behalf. Ms. Pionzio said they have changed the definition of a storage unit to prohibit hazardous materials from being stored there. Ms. Pionzio also addressed previous questions related to trees on the property. She stated that they hired an arborist that came out to assess the condition of the trees. Ms. Pionzio provided a report with photos of the trees identifying the condition of each tree. Matt Segal, owner of Ambler Yards, stated that 14 of the 18 trees were recommended for removal, but he would be happy to keep them if the BOS would prefer.

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin to authorize staff to initiate the formal process to amend the F district regulations and zoning map boundaries, including advertisement of a legal notice for the proposed apartments and self-storage building. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider authorization to initiate the process, including authorization to advertise a legal notice, to amend zoning ordinance regulations and zoning map boundaries for the Lower Pike Overlay District for a proposed townhouse redevelopment of Spring House Nursery and surrounding properties

Pete Penna came before the board in both July and September to present his proposed redevelopment project between Cedar Hill Road and Bethlehem Pike, including the current Spring House Nursery. The properties total approximately 9.5 acres. Mr. Penna is proposing a residential townhouse community. A map amendment to extend the current Lower Pike Overlay district is required, as well as a text amendment related to overflow parking.

Mr. Penna stated that he held a community meeting since his September presentation to the BOS, as requested. It went well and he gained some good feedback. He made some changes to the plans based on the feedback, such as more green space. As requested by the Township, the plan also reconfigures the intersection at Cedar Hill and Bethlehem Pike to a 90-degree angle.

Kevin Gentilcore, 1250 Rossett Court stated that he was in favor of the development. It will look nicer and make a good impact on the neighborhood. Cary Levinson, 1204 Cedar Hill Road, asked the BOS when restrictions to the project would be decided. Mr. Stein stated that the change to the zoning map and text amendment are the first step. Once a conditional use application is submitted then conditions can be imposed.

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chong, to initiate the process, including authorization to advertise a legal notice, to amend the zoning ordinance regulations and zoning map boundaries for the Lower Pike Overlay District for a proposed townhouse redevelopment of Spring House Nursery and the surrounding properties. Motion passed 5-0.

Overview about location of batting cage at Ingersoll Park and conditional use process

The Lower Gwynedd Little League (LGLL) is proposing a batting cage pavilion to be constructed at Ingersoll Park. Conditional Use approval is required by the BOS as its proposed location is 25 feet off the right of way, when 50 feet is required by ordinance. The LGLL is paying for the batting cage with Public Works assisting with clearing the area. The batting cage will have a roof and netting around it. They have filed for a conditional use application with a hearing scheduled for October 28th. The BOS had some questions regarding a concrete pad for the solar charging table; trees being removed and the orientation of the batting cages.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Consider EAC's request for a \$750 donation to Journeywork for pollinator gardens

Journeyworks have reached out to the Township asking if we would consider sponsoring pollinator gardens for 10 Lower Gwynedd residents. The cost is \$75 per garden for a total donation of \$750. The Township participated in this program last year, as well. A few Supervisors wanted to clarify those who received a pollinator garden last year would not be eligible. Ms. McNeely confirmed that

new participants who live in the Township would receive the gardens. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to authorize a \$750 donation to be used for Pollinator Palooza. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider approval of text for historic marker for Gwynedd Friends Meeting

The Historic Advisory Council (HAC) have been working on approving the language for various historical markers throughout the Township. The HAC is now making a recommendation for the text for a historical marker for the Gwynedd Friends Meeting, which was also reviewed by the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the text for the historical marker at Gwynedd Friends. Motion passed 5-0.

Review required minimum municipal obligations (MMO's) for retirement plans and consider recommendation to lower target rate of return for non-uniformed pension plan

At the August Pension Investment Advisory Committee meeting it was suggested by Actuary David Reid, from CBIZ, to lower the pension rate of return assumption from 6.5% to 6.25% for the non-uniformed defined benefit pension plan. Since the plan will not have any more incoming participants, a lower, more stable rate makes sense.

Ms. Haldeman also provided MMO's for both uniformed and non-uniformed defined benefit pension plans and the non-uniformed defined contribution plan. The MMO is the minimum annual amount a municipality must contribute in the next budget year to each pension plan. By law, the Board must receive the MMO's for review by the end of September but does not need to take action. The only action needed is to approve the reduction in the rate of return assumption.

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chong, to approve the change in the rate of return to 6.25% for the non-uniformed defined benefit pension plan. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider approval of proposal from Bowman for bridge inspections in the amount of \$31,300

Mr. Dixon provided a proposal for Bowman to complete an inspection of the 12 township bridges less than 20 feet in length. It will complement the bridge inspections that PennDOT does for bridges longer than 20 feet. The inspections will help to identify the condition and maintenance needs of each bridge. There are two tasks to the inspection process. First is a field inspection where all accessible bridge elements and substructure units will be assessed. Second, is the inspection report for each bridge composed of a location map, description of the structure, recommendations, photos, sketches, and the inspection forms. Mr. Dixon said starting these inspections will provide a long-term strategy for capital budgeting and grant opportunities. The assessments will identify the needs over the next few years. The inspection process will be completed by the end of 2025. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the proposal from Bowman for bridge inspections in the amount of \$31,300. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of invoice report for September 30, 2025

The BOS received the invoice report for checks dated September 30, 2025, totaling \$531,604.20. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to approve the invoices dated September 30, 2025. Motion passed 5-0.

Financial report – August 2025

The BOS received the financial report for August of 2025. The BOS had questions regarding the Business Privilege Tax (BPT), asking why the total amount collected was over budget. Ms. Haldeman stated that Berkheimer collected BPT from prior years that had not been received previously. Ms. Haldeman will get reports of the total amount collected and types of businesses that were delinquent.

Township Engineer Report – September 2025

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Hersh provided the Gilmore Engineers report for September 2025. There were no questions or comments

Traffic Engineer Report – September 2025

Prior to the meeting, Mr. Dixon provided Bowman's Project Status Report for September 2025. There were no questions or comments

Approval of minutes – September 9, 2025

The BOS received the meeting minutes from the September 9, 2025, BOS 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 liaison reports for the EAC and the Parks and Recreation Department. There were no questions or comments.

STAFF UPDATES

Chief Kenny announced that Officer Shannon Gallagher would be retiring as a patrol officer on Friday, October 3rd. She will be moving to an admin position in the police department the following week.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

All the Supervisors thanked Mary Trocino again for her hard work and wished her a happy retirement. They also thanked all of those involved in Fall Fest. This included the Fall Fest committee, Public Works employees, township staff, Sandi Feight, and all those who volunteered to assist. The day was a huge success with beautiful weather.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion to adjourn seconded by Mr. Twersky at 8:45pm. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Farzetta
Office Manger