

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of October 15, 2025**

Present: Craig Melograno, Chairman
Rich Valiga, Vice-Chair
Maureen Nunn
Danielle Porreca
Michael Mrozinski
Craig Adams

Patty Furber, B&Z Administrator
Jim Hersh, Gilmore & Associates
Chad Dixson, Bowman

Absent: Rusty Beardsley

Call to Order:

The meeting of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes: August 20, 2025

A motion was made by Mr. Mrozinski and seconded by Ms. Porreca to approve the minutes of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission meeting of August 20, 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Melograno started with a tribute to the recent passing of former Township Supervisor, Ms. Kathy Hunsicker. Mr. Melograno stated that Ms. Hunsicker was a big element of the township and did a lot for the community. He stated that she was a big part of helping him and some of the other board members become part of the planning commission. She will be missed.

Subdivision:

**1512 & 1524 Cedar Hill Rd.
Tisman Group, LLC.**

#25-07 SUBD

Present for the applicant was Ms. Susan Rice, P.E. with STA Engineering. Ms. Rice informed the board that there are two properties with existing homes that will be demolished and subdivided into four lots. She stated this was previously part of an approved subdivision where they were combining three lots on Cedar Hill Road and then subdividing those lots into seven new lots. However, that plan was abandoned, and her client purchased two of those lots.

Mr. Melograno wanted Ms. Rice to start with the open space and the trails. Ms. Rice stated that the open space came up in the Gilmore & Associates and Montgomery County Planning Commission's review letters. She stated that the prior plan reflected the open space behind the lots, and both review letters suggested that the open space be moved to the front. She stated that it would be a strip of ground, adjacent to the ultimate right of way and if the open space is moved to the front, that would have to be 50' foot wide

instead of 45' foot. Ms. Rice stated that if they were to move the open space to the front, then the front yard setback would be right up against the ultimate right away. Ms. Rice stated that basins are currently in the open space and are quite complicated because of new NPDES permit requirements. She stated that they have two components, an underground component which consists of a stone seepage bed and an aboveground component that's part of the MRC aspect of the basin.

Mr. Melograno wanted to know if moving the trail into the open space would get it more open and if we're getting something out of it. Mr. Hersh stated that this would be a deed restriction, since the township wouldn't want ownership of it. He stated that it's an interesting ordinance that you don't get any benefit from dedicating open space, but you need to dedicate it to do a by-right subdivision. Mr. Hersh stated that we like to try to get the open space adjacent to other open spaces to create a bigger area, but there's no way to have that happen here. He stated that when people have open space in the rear of their properties, they end up installing sheds and fences. He stated that the open space would be maintained by each property owner.

Ms. Rice stated that they are requesting a waiver to install a trail instead of sidewalks. Mr. Melograno wanted to know about the curbing request. Ms. Rice stated that the prior plan did not have any curbing and there was a note in Gilmore's letter that stated that part of the street was curbed. She stated that the reason they are not installing curbing is because the property is lower than the road. If they install curbs, they will have to install drainage structures throughout the property. Mr. Hersh didn't have any objections to their waiver request and felt that Ms. Rice made a good point about the drainage. He stated that there's never going to be curbing on both sides of the road unless the township decides to pay for that, so he had no problem with their curb waiver. Mr. Hersh stated that notes need to be added to the plans regarding the homeowners being responsible for that portion of open space along their frontage.

Mr. Valiga wanted to know about the street trees. She stated that the trees would be six feet from the trail. Mr. Valiga wanted to know if the utilities are shown on the plan. Ms. Rice stated that some of the trees will have to be shifted to install some of the utilities. Mr. Valiga wanted to know if these street trees are counted as replacement trees. Ms. Rice stated no, they are just street trees, that the past surveyor did an assessment of the trees. She stated that they went back out, and it was determined that most of the existing trees on the property were dead, dying and diseased. She stated that the final count of replacement trees is calculated to be 274 caliper inches. She stated if they did three-inch trees that would be around 93 replacement trees. She stated that the street tree requirement is a two-inch caliper, and if they upsized to a 3-inch caliper, they could use that difference in caliber inches to count towards replacement trees. She stated the ordinance has a subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO) that states one tree per 30 lineal feet of basin perimeter, but in the stormwater ordinance, it's one tree and five shrubs for every 2,500 cubic feet of storage. She stated she wasn't sure what to go by, so they planted extra trees around the basins based on the SALDO ordinance. Mr. Hersh stated that he thought the intention of the stormwater ordinance when it was passed was that the planting requirements for SALDO would be repealed, but they would look it over and choose one. Ms. Rice stated that there's about 28 replacement trees but that's still up in the air since they just received that data today. She stated the ordinance requires the canopy trees to be two-inch caliper, and they are proposing to bump that up to three-and-a-half-inch caliper to account for the required replacement calibers. Mr. Valiga wanted to know if the dead, dying, and diseased trees were not part of the caliper calculations. Ms. Rice stated that was correct. She stated that the total trees were 64, 19 were in fair condition, and 45 were in very poor condition, either dead, diseased or dying. Mr. Hersh stated that they have an arborist on staff who will go onsite to observe the trees to make sure they agree with their assessment.

Mr. Melograno wanted to know if anyone in the audience had questions. Mr. Harold Jones, who resides at 1517 Cedar Hill Road, wanted to know if they were intending to demolish the existing homes? Ms. Rice

stated that yes, those homes would be demolished. Mr. Jones stated that there is concern about runoff to McKean Rd. and how that was a big issue with the last development since the drainage drains from Cedar Hill to the back of the properties. Ms. Rice stated that there are two inlets in the back with some storm piping that takes it down the road and down into a basin. She stated that if you look at this lot, it has a certain stormwater management facility, with two components to it, underground and aboveground, so those should handle all the stormwater runoff from the new development. She stated that they are required to submit a report to the Montgomery County Conservation District to get an NPDES permit which goes through a very vigorous review. Mr. Melograno wanted to know if they made any changes to their stormwater design and the fact that nothing exists currently means that anything that's done will be better than the way it is right now. Ms. Rice stated that an example of what's happening now is that the aboveground is spilling over into the underground and then the underground is taken on that water that goes into the existing inlets. Ms. Nunn stated that the residents on Wooded Pond were all very concerned too since there is a huge drop there.

Mr. Valiga wanted to know how they are going to comply with the emergency spillway flow elevation which is listed in Gilmore's review letter (page 5 (3)). Mr. Hersh stated that they could make the berm higher. Mr. Valiga wanted to know about the waiver from the 18-inch minimum pipe diameter and wanted to know what the proposed pipe sizes are. Ms. Rice stated that the pipes would be 12 and 15 inches and that they're very complicated systems. She stated that they must use multiple different sizes of pipes to control the water that's coming in. She stated that they will be individually maintained by the homeowners. Mr. Valiga wanted to know how the homeowners are going to maintain a pipe that's underground that could potentially be a problem. Ms. Rice stated that there is not a lot of maintenance with those pipes. Mr. Hersh stated that all the basins have underdrains with perforated 4" pipes with clean outs designed at the junctions with catch basins. Mr. Hersh stated that all homeowners will receive disclosure statements with a stormwater management manual attached and a maintenance schedule. Ms. Rice stated that a sheet of notes regarding maintenance requirements is recorded with the stormwater agreement. Mr. Melograno stated that he finds it hard to believe that a homeowner is going to shovel a paved trail, and does it make sense for the trail not to be paved and have it as gravel instead. Ms. Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager, was in the audience and stated from a township perspective; public works are going to want that trail paved. Ms. Rice wanted to know if a trail was really needed. Ms. Worman stated that we can see if there is a preference for either gravel or paved. Mr. Melograno stated that he wishes that it was the township that was responsible for the trails. He wanted to know if the trail numbering signage was going to be installed in case someone gets injured, they know where they are. Mr. Adams stated that there are signs posted that the trails are not maintained during the winter months.

Another audience member questioned the permit to use a smaller diameter pipe on the stormwater management systems. He wanted to know if it was true that the smaller pipe size increases the pressure on the system, and if using larger pipes would help reduce the pressure in a 100-year storm scenario. Ms. Rice stated that the smaller pipe is inside the system, and that's what controls how much water leaves the system; that's why it's smaller. She stated the bigger the pipe, the more water leaves the system. The audience member asked if there would be an open basin and an underground structure as well? Ms. Rice stated that it was correct.

Mr. Melograno asked Mr. Dixon if there were any issues in their review letter that need to be addressed. Mr. Dixon stated that they have just minor plan details with no real issues.

Preliminary/final approval to the Board of Supervisors based on the recommendations below:

1. The P.C. recommends that the open space be deed restricted, not dedicated, and 50' feet.

2. The applicant is to comply with the tree replacement requirements in both ordinances and Gilmore's acceptance of the arborist findings.
3. The P.C. supports:
 - a. the curb and pipe waiver, and the concurrent submission waiver for preliminary/final land development
 - b. an asphalt trail but are not opposed to gravel trails
 - c. not requiring driveway aprons
 - d. moving the open space to the front of the properties
4. The applicant will comply with the remaining comments in both Gilmore and Bowman's review letters.

The motion passed with a 6-0 vote.



Zoning Map/Text Amendment:

Ambler Yards

Present for the application was Ms. Christen Pionzio from HRMM&L, Ambler Yards Managing Partner, Mr. Matt Sigel, Mr. Robert Jordan from Woodrow & Associates, Mr. Steve Kline from Regan Cross Kline Architects and Mr. Shawn Rebeck from SAA Architects.

Ms. Pionzio stated that Mr. Sigel and his partner have been through multiple iterations of the proposed plan since 2019. She stated that they have turned this property around; it was contaminated, desolate, and they have completely revitalized it. She stated they had conversations and meetings with the neighbors, and architectural plans were provided back in 2019. She stated that there were three neighbor meetings about tearing down those buildings and doing an apartment building. She stated that they listened to the neighbors, revised the architectural plans numerous times, and submitted a Zoning Hearing Board application which was opposed by the supervisors, so they pulled the plug. She stated six years later they met with the neighbors again, and their biggest issues were traffic, the aesthetics of the building, and how it was situated with people coming out to the street. She stated there was an area where the buses were stored, but they went away, and they weren't sure what to put in that spot. She stated instead of another industrial building, they thought of a self-storage building which has practically no traffic and would appease the neighbors. She stated last year they filed an application to the Zoning Hearing Board, because they felt it was a permitted use within the "F" Industrial District which permits storage and warehouse. She stated that when they went to the Zoning Hearing Board, the township disagreed, so their application was denied. She stated that they have appealed that decision and that is now pending. She stated that they reached out to the township proposing to try and resolve this to get rid of the litigation and revisit this residential piece. She stated that Mr. Sigel and his partner started again to have communications with the neighbors; they hired another architectural firm and started again with those meetings. She stated that they had numerous meetings with the neighbors, received their input, and finally got to a point where they came to an agreement.

She stated that they drafted the ordinance, submitted it in normal course, and met with staff. She stated that this is the only property zoned "F" within the township, which gives them a little freedom to customize what we're doing here. She stated they have a master plan and a conditional use, so there are a lot of people looking this over and a lot of things that they must go through. She stated that the township wanted the apartments and the self-storage in the mixed-use category with a definition for self-storage. She stated no storing of hazardous materials would be added to the definition, per the supervisors' request. She stated that they went to the supervisors twice after a couple meetings with staff, and this is the ordinance in front

of you tonight. Ms. Pionzio stated that the neighbors requested a larger setback for the apartment building and they didn't want any exits or entrances along the street frontages. She stated that they wanted all the activity from the center of the building. She stated that the only doors on the exterior are emergency exit doors, so there's no pedestrian activity along the exterior, no balconies on the exterior, no rooftop decks, and they even asked to eliminate a bench. Mr. Melograno wanted to know how this is going to be memorialized. She stated that the best time to address this is when they come back for a conditional use hearing. You can list the conditions for the storage facility and buildings, so what you see is what you get. She stated that they worked very hard with the neighbors, so they are not going to mess this up.

Ms. Pionzio stated they are proposing 43 apartment units with a mixture of 9 two bedrooms, 18 one bedrooms and 16 one bedrooms with a den that will be located on the corner of Spring Garden and Francis Ave. She stated that they can accomplish 45 parking spaces since there's offices in those existing four buildings. She stated they do have some parking, but that will go away and will be replaced with 45 spaces. She stated that there will be a cross access easement that will enable them to use the Ambler Yards parking lot. She stated if that area is overparked, there's plenty of parking since they are above the requirements. She stated there are some parking spots that are never used, even though it's not the most convenient parking, but it keeps people from parking on the streets and going into the neighborhoods. She stated that the storage facility will be three stories and 84,000 square feet. Mr. Sigel stated there will be a 24-hour security system with cameras and key fobs for access. He stated they would sign a long-term management agreement with a brand name. The self-storage building will have contractor access, so they will pull up to the front with their trucks, while everyone else can use a dolly or a cart to go inside building.

Ms. Pionzio stated trails already exist from when Amber Yards changed some things around. She stated that they currently have a grant application for a pollinator garden. She stated if they don't receive the grant, it'll just be more of a nature area with an extension of the existing trail system. Mr. Sigel stated that the other thing that was added to the ordinance was storage of boats, since there's a demand for that as well. Ms. Pionzio stated that the building will be close to the railroad tracks, not visible and there's space between two buildings. Mr. Melograno wanted to know if there were any restrictions on the location of the building. Ms. Pionzio stated, no there is no restrictions, but the location is something that could be addressed during the conditional use hearing and would be added to their master plan. Mr. Melograno wanted to know if the sidewalk would continue. Ms. Pionzio stated that there were mixed feelings about the sidewalks. Mr. Sigel stated that the only thing the neighbors requested was the continuation of the black aluminum fence.

Ms. Pionzio stated when they first approached this concept, this was part of the live work play atmosphere that they were trying to achieve. She stated that the lot size, everything in the ordinance allows this building to fit where you see it. Mr. Melograno stated some of the parking required for this was on the other side of the entry driveway and was that still like that. Ms. Pionzio stated yes, there will be 43 units and 45 spaces. Mr. Klein stated that one space per bedroom is the requirement, there are 52 bedrooms and 10 spaces available across the street. Mr. Melograno wanted to know if there would be any shared parking for the other uses. Mr. Sigel stated they have around 150 spaces available with 96 access spaces.

Mr. Melograno wanted to know if there would be any further construction in the future or if this was it. Ms. Pionzio stated that she didn't know if they are ever going to ask to build something again. Mr. Sigel didn't know the answer to that and stated if they intend on doing something else, they would amend their master plan. Mr. Melograno stated that someday some of these buildings will become functionally obsolete and the possibility of those being replaced with something else. Ms. Pionzio stated that it's an absolute possibility that could happen. She stated that they are permitted office, admin, warehouse research, industrial manufacturing, storage, commercial and retail restaurants as uses. Mr. Sigel stated that they can't

do anymore residential on the site and that's one of the reasons that building looks vacant because that is the only location they are permitted to do residential.

Mr. Melograno wanted to know how they are going to handle the storage of R.V.'s. Mr. Sigel stated that the access spaces they have now is where the middle school used to park 73 of their school buses. Mr. Melograno wanted to know if they had a circulation plan for EMS and some of the larger vehicles to access the site. Ms. Pionzio stated that they will submit access plans during their conditional use and land development applications.

Ms. Pionzio stated that the residential building there is cross access easement over to the Ambler Yards track. Mr. Valiga wanted to know about the parking area near the building. Ms. Sigel stated it's their hope that when the residents go to work in the morning, the office employees will park there and when they leave for the day those spaces will be available. Ms. Pionzio stated there is a requirement for parking. Mr. Valiga wanted to know what if someone had an SUV or a recreational vehicle how are they going to designate that area for parking. Ms. Pionzio stated that they don't have to have outdoor storage for vehicles, that they can designate spaces, but the bottom line is they must have all the parking to meet the requirements. Mr. Sigel stated that they have enough room for outdoor storage parking of RV's. Mr. Valiga wanted to know if someone wanted to park a tractor-trailer truck, would they be able to accommodate those too. Mr. Sigel stated that tractor-trailers already park onsite. He stated that the neighbors are okay with it since it's a better scenario then when 73 school buses were coming and going.

Mr. Valiga wanted to know about any additional setbacks. Ms. Pionzio stated that all the setbacks are the same for the "F" district, except for the residential. Ms. Pionzio stated that the proposed front yard will be moved 10' feet back further than the existing houses. Mr. Sigel stated that it will be 10' feet off Spring Garden and 50' off Francis Ave. Ms. Pionzio stated that the existing house is now 20 feet from the street and this will be 30 feet.

Mr. Melograno brought up the Montgomery County Planning Commission review letter regarding their concern for a setback, specifically for self-storage and how do we address that concern. He wanted to know if we should pick a setback number for the self-storage. Ms. Pionzio stated when they come in for conditional use, they will include that in with their land development and master plans. Mr. Hersh stated that he thought they used the cross sections to represent what the impact would be and wanted to wait until the conditional use to nail this down. He stated he didn't think the footprint would be changing much, that the building is not going to get any bigger than what's currently proposed. Mr. Melograno stated that everything else can be addressed during their conditional use.

The P.C. recommends approval of the Zoning Map/Text Amendment to the Board of Supervisors.

The motion passed with a 6-0 vote.



Zoning Map/Text Amendment:
Gwynedd Point

Present was the applicant, Mr. Pete Penna and his attorney, Mr. David Shafkowitz from

Shafkowitz Law. Mr. Penna stated that he is proposing a zoning map and text amendment to extend the Lower Pike Overlay District from the Spring House Intersection, where it currently stops, to Cedar Hill including the six properties within the triangular piece at Cedar Hill Road and Bethlehem Pike. He stated that his most recent development at Fairland Village is also located within the Lower Pike Overlay with 23 townhouses and a commercial center. He is proposing to develop the 6 properties at Cedar Hill and Bethlehem Pike into a 52-unit townhouse community. He stated that he is here to answer any questions regarding his application.

Mr. Melograno stated that the township has an internal building and zoning meeting and during that meeting it was clarified that the number of parking spaces, not including the garage, need to be at three. Mr. Melograno wanted to make sure that Mr. Penna agreed with that, and he stated yes. Mr. Melograno stated that the idea is for future developments to make sure that there is sufficient parking within these developments.

Mr. Penna stated that he recently had a community open house and keeping green space was a big issue with neighbors. He stated the proposed site is on nine and half acres, they scattered parking around the development, to include more green space. He stated the impervious coverage on this site is already existing at 31% and they are proposing about 45%. Mr. Penna stated there were only two changes that they are proposing... extending the existing overlay district from Bethlehem Pike to include his parcels and then the parking went from one and a half in the driveway and one offsite to three total. He stated however it gets done, every house will basically have five parking spaces, including the garages. He stated that most developments do not have anywhere near this balance and there's plenty of room for it, so it just works. He stated that they are not proposing any type of commercial building which was discussed earlier. He stated that at the open house, the commercial aspect of the development was brought up and was quickly squashed by the residents, so this will be strictly residential. He stated that they would be back with a conditional use application where any conditions can be imposed. He stated at that point he would have elevations and architectural plans available for his development.

Mr. Cary Levinson and his wife, Linda, who reside at 1204 Cedar Hill Rd., were in the audience. Mr. Levinson felt that it was his understanding that in the comprehensive plan, which is currently under consideration, the proposed property, at the triangle, was intended to be low-density. Mr. Levinson felt that if this parcel was included in the overlay ordinance, it's not going to be considered low density, but higher and felt that this was inconsistent from the previous thinking of the township. He stated density affects all kinds of things and that the traffic on Cedar Hill Road has become increasingly significant. He stated that adding the proposed 52 units will have a very significant impact. He stated that he didn't have any formal studies, that he takes walks between his house and the trails and the traffic is becoming very significant. He stated that he was hoping to have some consideration about modifying the plan slightly since it seems to have a little too much flexibility in the statute. He stated that the second thing is that if there could be some consideration regarding the appearance of the proposed townhomes, which would require them to be more consistent with the existing homes, text could be added dictating things like the size of the stone or brick so that it would mimic the existing exteriors. He wanted to know if the PC would consider making these changes to the ordinance to make it more consistent with the community. Mr. Melograno stated that one of the requirements in the ordinance is the applicant is required to submit architectural plans to the township. He stated that we will impose what

you see is what you get, so when Mr. Penna comes in with his architectural plans, there will be the condition that he's going to build exactly what he's showing us. He stated that Mr. Levinson will have an opportunity to express his concerns as it relates to architectural features during Mr. Penna's conditional use and land development. He also informed Mr. Levinson that the Board of Supervisors are the ones who make the ultimate decisions, that the PC is just a recommending body. Mr. Levinson stated that the recommendation given to him about density would be to propose four units, rather than six. Mr. Penna stated there's a lot to go into this engineered plan that can easily lead to modifications and eliminations of density.

Mr. Levinson questioned if the extension of the overlay would create a situation of spot zoning. Mr. Shafkowitz stated that one of the things listed in the Montgomery County Planning Commission's review letter stated that this proposal was consistent with the county's comprehensive plan, they call it a "suburban residential area", and they believe what's being proposed is consistent with the surrounding area. He stated that the development across the street is also a townhouse community, not too dissimilar to this 52-unit proposal. He stated that for this parcel, six units per acre plus a commercial component would be permitted. He stated that it would be more like 58 homes plus commercial, also referenced in the county letter, is eight units per acre. He stated that this plan currently shows five units per acre at almost 10 acres, so they are not asking for maximum density with this.

Mr. Penna stated that there is a sewer easement that goes through the lower end of the property that they will be going over, so there's a lot of things that are going to happen. Mr. Penna stated that there also is a nonconforming commercial use that's currently on this property that they're trying to eliminate. Mr. Melograno stated that Ms. Claire Warner from Montgomery County did a presentation regarding the future land use map and the purpose of her presentation was to get feedback from the steering committee. Ms. Worman stated that parcel was identified as medium density. Mr. Melograno stated that he is part of the steering committee and that this plan is consistent with the new comprehensive plan that is currently under review.

Mr. Melograno wanted to discuss traffic. Mr. Dixon stated that we can put restrictions on right turn in/out. He stated that if this application moves forward and once, they get into the conditional use and land development phases, there will be detailed traffic studies done. This is their best guess right now where the access points may be located on Bethlehem Pike and Cedar Hill Road. He stated the process will start with a scoping study and they will be required to get PennDOT permits for their access to Bethlehem Pike. He stated that we will work with PennDOT during that review process where the accesses should be, how they should be configured and how they need to mitigate their impact both on Cedar Hill Road and Bethlehem Pike. He stated that the Cedar Hill Road access will be taken into consideration, where it's located, and how it will be configured under different scenarios during the traffic study to determine how their access points should be configured. He stated that most of the traffic for the development is going to use Bethlehem Pike to get in and out. He stated that the developer agreed to look at how to potentially realign Cedar Hill Road with Bethlehem Pike to improve the angle where it intersects Bethlehem Pike. Mr. Levinson wanted to know if Cedar Hill would be widened or moved. Mr. Dixon stated that they would look at the alignment and whether any turn lanes need to be added at that intersection during land development.

The P.C. recommends approval of this Zoning Map/Text Amendment to the Board of Supervisors.

The motion passed with a 6-0 vote.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Furber, Secretary