

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025**

SUPERVISORS:

Danielle A. Duckett, Chairman
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
Fred Zollers, Director Public Works
Paul Kenny, Police Chief
Jim Hersh, Township Engineer, Gilmore
Chad Dixson, Traffic Engineer, Bowman Company
Melinda Haldeman, Finance Director
John Farrell, Project Manager/EMC
Sandi Feight, Park and Recreation Director

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Vice Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:03 pm at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building and on Zoom and led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Board of Supervisors (BOS) met in an executive session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of personnel and litigation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Marc Schafer, 23 Brookline Court, wanted to make the BOS aware that Ms. Gleason handled herself with professionalism in a difficult environment when she attended the Wissahickon Trails meeting.

Carol Jones, 390 Mansion Avenue, stated that lack of cell service continues to be an issue in Penllyn. Residents need to keep a landline in case of an emergency. Ms. Jones attended the Montgomery County Open Space Board meeting and received confirmation that a member of that board suggested an alternative to locating the cell tower in Penllyn Woods park would be condemning a home and knocking it down. Ms. Jones also understands that Wissahickon Trails submitted a letter to the township with conditions for allowing the cell tower in Penllyn Woods and has requested to see this with a RTK request. Ms. Gleason explained that the conditions are in relation to the park's conservation easement. Ms. McNeely asked if there was any information available to the public about the Open Space Board's recommendation. Ms. Gleason stated the information will be in the minutes, which will not be available until approved at their next meeting.

Ms. Stewart, who resides at 1137 Wissahickon Ave, reiterated the need for better cell service. Mr. Twersky said the BOS is aware that better cell service is needed. Nelson Stewart, who lives on Trewellyn Avenue stated he lives in the house that someone mentioned taking down for the cell tower. He will fight to keep his house.

Ms. Gleason explained that the Open Space Board made a recommendation to the Montgomery County Commissioners to approve the change in use at Penllyn Woods Park to accommodate the cell tower, contingent about Lower Gwynedd accepting the conditions in the letter referenced by Ms. Jones. The Commissioners still have to make their decision and then the Township will file a petition with the Orphans' Court Division of the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas for their approval.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Review Zoning Hearing Board applications for 821 N. Bethlehem Pike and 901-911 N. Bethlehem Pike and determine action to be taken, if any

A presentation was given at the February 25 BOS meeting related to the ZHB application for 821 N. Bethlehem Pike. The BOS had previously voted to send Mr. Stein in opposition to this application, however, the BOS has the option to modify that decision. Ms. Duckett asked for any comments from the BOS, to which there were none. Therefore the supervisors we will stay with the Board's original decision to have Mr. Stein attend the ZHB to oppose the use.

An amended ZHB application was submitted for 901- 911 N. Bethlehem Pike challenging the township's interpretation that cars could not be parked in the lot or within the buildings surrounding the lot. The BOS had a discussion and felt that the use of the property for vehicle storage is not something they want for Bethlehem Pike. In fact, the comprehensive plan currently being updated does not intend any automobile dealers to be on Bethlehem Pike other than those that are already there. Mr. Twersky made a motion, seconded by Ms. Duckett to have Mr. Stein attend the ZHB to oppose the use.

Authorize the filing of a complaint for 800 Norristown Road

Ms. Worman stated that a dog rescue is operating at 800 Norristown Road in violation of the zoning ordinance. There have been nuisance complaints from neighbors. Ms. Worman explained what has been going on since we were first notified in August of 2024. A kennel is not a permitted by right use, only by a conditional use. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to have Mr. Stein file a complaint with the Court of Common Pleas for injunctive relief. Motion passed 5-0.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Discuss and consider authorization of EAC plan for community conversation about single-use plastics

At the February EAC meeting the effects of single-use plastics on the environment were discussed. The township has held several successful community engagement events and the EAC thinks a similar format would be beneficial in educating the community and gaining valuable feedback from residents and businesses about single-use plastics.. A survey will also be conducted for those that attend. They

would like to hold a community conversation on April 9th. Mr. Twersky asked if the EAC would be making a recommendation after this event. Mr. Schafer replied that the EAC can recommend a ban on single-use plastics, but they want to first make sure that they are making the right decision for our residents. Ms. Duckett asked if there was enough time to get the word out about the community conversation. Ms. Feight replied yes. EAC members have started some of the work behind the scenes to make this possible. Ms. McNeely asked how the survey would work. Ms. Feight replied that it would be similar to the Park and Recreation Survey completed a few years back. The input will be gathered and then analyzed to determine the feedback. Ms. Duckett asked if there were any monetary needs for this event. Ms. Feight said just the cost to feed EAC and other volunteers participating in the event. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to authorize the community conversation about single-use plastics. Motion passed 5-0.

Authorization to advertise the 2025 Road/Concrete Programs

The Lower Gwynedd annual road program will include three contracts for the year, consisting of concrete, mill and overlay, and ultra-thin bonded wearing course. Staff are seeking approval to advertise for bids. Bids will go out by March 21st with a bid opening on April 16th and potential decision at the April 22nd BOS meeting. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to advertise the 2025 Road Program. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider approval of Costars mulching contract in the amount of \$22,575. Discussion of grass-cutting, possible authorization to advertise mowing bid.

The township's landscaping contract with Brightview is expiring. They have notified us that they're not interested in renewing or extending the contract due to higher than expected costs. Public Works reached out to Corbo, a local COSTARS contractor, for pricing. Their price was significantly higher than what we were paying Brightview. Therefore Mr. Zollers is suggesting two different options. First would be to have Public Works take on the landscaping responsibilities and hire two seasonal employees. Mr. Zollers said this would be the time to try it as we have new employees that can handle the work, and we have ordered a new budgeted lawnmower, and could hang on to the old one for the season. The other option would be to put the landscaping out for bid and see what kind of prices we receive. We could also try both and see which option is better, while Public Works staff handles the mowing that will start at the end of the month. Mr. Twersky asked if having the Lower Gwynedd Little League (LGLL) mow fields would be a help. Mr. Zollers said having LGLL mow the baseball fields at Ingersoll would help because that would essentially cover that park, but not so for baseball fields at other parks where there are other areas that would still need to be mowed. Ms. Mc Neely asked if it would be possible to designate areas that were not mowed or mowed less often. Mr. Zollers said we could look into that. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to advertise mowing bids. Motion passed 5-0. Ms. Duckett then made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to advertise for seasonal help. Motion passed 5-0.

The proposal Corbo provided for mulching was comparable to Brightview at \$22,575. Staff are asking that we accept this proposal as mulching of all the parks and around the township building is not something that Public Works can take on. Public Works will maintain it once it is complete. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve Corbo's mulching bid for \$22,575. Motion passed 5-0.

Consideration of a tax appeal settlement agreement for 899 Penn Oak Road

The owners at 899 Penn Oak Road filed an appeal to the Montgomery County Board of Assessment Appeals seeking a reduction to the assessment of their property set by Montgomery County for 2025 real estate taxes. This agreement was negotiated with the Wissahickon School District. Staff are asking the BOS to authorize Mr. Stein to sign this Stipulation to Settle. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, authorizing Mr. Stein to sign the tax appeal settlement. Motion passed 4-0. (Mr. Twersky abstained)

Approval of invoice report – March 11, 2025

The BOS received the invoice report for checks dated March 11, 2025, totaling \$270,500.83. There were no questions or comments related to the report. Ms. McNeely asked if the financial presentation tabled at the previous meeting would be presented at an upcoming meeting. Ms. Haldeman stated that she would include the information with her financial report for the next meeting. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the invoice report dated March 11, 2025. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of minutes – February 25, 2025

The BOS received the February 25, 2025, BOS meeting minutes. There were no questions. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky to approve the February 25, 2025, minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

There were no Liaison reports to review.

STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Farrell gave an update on the sidewalk and trail plan. He stated that he will be presenting it to the EAC, the Planning Commission, and the Park and Recreation Board over the next few weeks. He will then present his findings at a future BOS meeting. Mr. Farrell also provided an update on the landscaping to be installed at 900 Sumneytown Pike, and mentioned that they are looking to rename the property so it isn't referenced as "the former Texaco station". Ms. Martin suggested waiting until we know if the Rotary will be helping, as we might want to somehow include them in the name. This plan is phase one. We want to see how this area is being used by residents and then re-evaluate. It is not a destination at this point. There has also been discussion about merging this property with Veteran's Park. The current plan will allow for flexibility in the future.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Ms. McNeely stated that the last meeting had a great turnout. It gave residents a great opportunity to voice their thoughts. She thanked staff and all involved for their work putting the meeting together.

Ms. Martin said Happy Spring.

Mr. Chong wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day.

Mr. Twersky stated that we are planning for the future. Doing nothing is not an option, change will happen.

Ms. Duckett stated that this board wants to be transparent and intentional.

Board of Supervisors Minutes

March 11, 2025

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely at 8:25pm to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Farzetta

Michelle Farzetta

Office Manger