

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2024**

SUPERVISORS:

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

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

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:04pm 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 on June 11, 2024, and prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of personnel, litigation, and real estate.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Irene Lewis, 513 Montgomery Road, wanted to put on the public record a complaint regarding the loud noise from the Air Conditioning (AC) Unit at Wissahickon Middle School (WMS). Several of the neighbors have been communicating their concerns to the School District, but after 4 years nothing has been done. Ms. Lewis shared a video of the sound from the track at the WMS. The BOS mentioned that Ms. Gleason made them aware of the residents' concerns and has reached out to WMS. The school officials are aware of the issue and have been looking for solutions. A sound blanket was recommended and ordered. It will take roughly 6 -8 weeks to come in. Ms. Lewis would like to find out if a noise study has been conducted.

Richard Gilly, 525 Montgomery Road, also had concerns about the loud noise from the AC Unit. Mr. Gilly stated he received communication from Ms. Gleason about her conversation with the WMS. Mr. Gilly is concerned about the effect the loud noise is having on the children that attend camp on the property. He would like to see some form of concrete proof that the sound blanket has been ordered. Mr. Twersky suggested he submit a Right to Know request to the school district, as the township would not have that documentation.

Andrew Mills, 94 Harlow Circle, read a statement regarding the war in Gaza. He came requesting that the BOS adopt a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Previously he had submitted this request in an email. He also mentioned that the township has shown support previously, by hanging the Israeli flag for a month when the war first started.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Discussion about Board positions on pending Zoning Hearing Board applications

James Cimbak, resident of Meadowcreek Circle is concerned about the land that Bethlehem Baptist Church owns and what they are proposing to do with it. Mr. Cimbak is asking the BOS to send the Township Solicitor, Mr. Stein, to the July 11 Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) meeting in opposition of application 24-17z. Mr. Cimbak would like to know what a "religious use" means. The neighbors fear what the church will do with all the land they now own. Will they build a new church, a soup kitchen, hold large events, nothing is known. The BOS suggested the neighbors meet with the church to discuss their concerns and what the church intends to do with the land they have acquired. At this point the church has not proposed what they intend to do with the land. The ZHB application they have submitted is to extend the special exception for a religious over this new parcel and then consolidate the parcel into the overall campus. Therefore, at this point there is nothing to oppose. The church already owns the land in question, they are just looking to consolidate the multiple parcels into one and utilize the parcel for uses customarily incidental to a church. Mr. Cimbak stated that they have a meeting scheduled with the church tomorrow evening.

Mr. Stein explained the process of the ZHB. He said most conditions are worked out in advance. He suggested the neighbors attend the ZHB meeting on July 11th and give their testimony.

Other residents of Meadowcreek Circle came to voice their concerns. They are concerned about the proximity of their homes to the church properties. They are worried that the property could be used for large events that would bring strangers in and out, that the property could be used as a soup kitchen or a safe haven, or other uses that will negatively impact them.

The BOS suggested that the residents go to the meeting tomorrow evening with the church and see what they say. If there are still concerns after that contact the township and update us.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Review of the Township's 2023 audited financial statements

The audit for 2023 has been completed. Finance Director, Melinda Haldeman, gave a brief overview noting that overall, we did very well. Ms. Haldeman explained that there was a surplus due to the delay of the Spring House intersection project, but once that project is complete the surplus will go away. The BOS thanked the staff for the report.

Ratification of the execution of an engagement letter with PFM to serve as financial advisor to Lower Gwynedd Township

Ms. Gleason reported that Staff has been meeting with a few experienced and reputable financial advisors and have chosen PFM to help evaluate options to finance the new Public Works Facility. Ms. Gleason explained that the Township will not pay anything to PFM unless the BOS authorizes and executes a bond issuance. The fees would be on a sliding scale depending on the size of the bond. Each bond is roughly \$150,000. We are not committing to issuing a bond, we are agreeing to let them help us walk through the information and see all the options. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to execute the engagement with PFM to serve as a financial advisor to Lower Gwynedd Township. Motion passed 4-0.

Consideration of proposal for forest evaluation and strategic plan

Project Manager, John Farrell, explained that in recent years the Township has received fees in lieu of planting trees from various land development projects and staff would like to develop a priority list for future planting projects utilizing these funds. Gilmore and Associates has provided an outline to assist with this plan. The plan will evaluate wooded areas owned by the Township and look at the ecological health of each one. The second part of the plan will prioritize the use of the funds. Gilmore will work with Township staff to create a list of goals and develop a work list for tree related projects moving forward. Some of these projects could be completed with in-house staff, while others may be better suited for bidding. Versions of these plans will be shared with both the EAC and the Parks and Recreation Board to gather their input, before there is a finalized plan. Gilmore's proposed cost is \$14,510 with additional areas for future evaluation at a cost of \$305/forested acre. Staff anticipate having this plan ready for implementation by next spring.

Mr. Farrell also noted that Township staff is also looking into a free service provided by DCNR that performs woodland evaluations. Staff will be comparing the evaluations from both Gilmore and DCNR and will decide how to proceed. Ms. Duckett made a motion to approve the proposal for the forest evaluation and strategic plan, seconded by Ms. McNeely. Motion passed 4-0.

Ratification of authorization to approve a change order to replace a stormwater pipe under Sunneytown Pike

Ms. Gleason explained that during the installation of Manhole S-14, it was discovered that the existing 42" stormwater pipe under Sunneytown Pike was deteriorated and in need of replacement. The BOS directed staff to have the pipe replaced while the road was opened. That

work was completed and the change order is before for the BOS for formal action. The total for the change order is \$59,222.54. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to approve the change order to replace the stormwater pipe under Sunneytown Pike. Motion passed 4-0.

Budget amendment to add WIFI to Penllyn Woods Community Building

Verizon will be able to install Internet at the Penllyn Woods Community Building. Our IT consultants, All Covered, have recommended a firewall be installed for both safety and security. The total cost for the firewall will be \$5,467. This will include the cost of the hardware and the equipment configuration. This project was not included in the budget; therefore, an amendment is required. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin to approve the budget amendment to install WIFI at the Penllyn Woods Community Building. Motion passed 4-0.

Finance Report – May 2024

The BOS received the May 2024 Financial Report. There were no questions or comments.

Review of Township Engineer’s Report

Mr. Hersh provided the Engineer’s report for April of 2024. There were no questions or comments.

Review of Traffic Engineer’s Report

Mr. Dixon provided the traffic engineer’s report for June of 2024. There were no questions or comments.

Approval of invoice report

The BOS received the Invoice Report for checks dated June 25, 2024, totaling \$1,489,175.66. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the invoices dated June 25, 2024. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of minutes – May 28, 2024

The BOS received the minutes from the May 28, 2024, BOS meeting. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion seconded by Mr. Twersky to approve the May 28, 2024, BOS meeting minutes. Motion passed 4-0.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

The BOS received the reports from the Parks and Recreation Board Meeting and the Environmental Advisory Council Meeting. There were no questions or comments.

STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Farrell reminded everyone that the first Open House for the Ingersoll Property will be this Thursday at 6pm.

Ms. Gleason informed the BOS that she forwarded an email to them from Leola Hubbard regarding a resident who was an example of good community service. Barbara Schwarzenbach,

346 Old Penllyn Pike, and her son, James, who were cleaning trash and leaves from under the Septa train tracks on Penllyn Pike.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Ms. McNeely thanked the staff for getting the tree plan started.

Ms. Martin reminded everyone about the Concerts in the Park. The first one will be tomorrow night at Pen Ambler Park. They will run every Wednesday through July 31st.

Mr. Twersky had no comment.

Ms. Duckett wished everyone a Happy 4th of July.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion at 8:50pm to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Farzetta

Michelle Farzetta
Office Manager