

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026**

SUPERVISORS PRESENT:

Danielle A. Duckett, Chairman
Michael Twersky, Vice Chair
Janine Martin
Andrea Brockway
Jimmy Chong

STAFF:

Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Michelle Farzetta, Office Manager
Neil Stein, Esq., Solicitor
Paul Kenny, Police Chief
Chad Dixon, Bowman, Traffic Engineer
Jim Hersh, Gilmore and Assoc, Township Engineer

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:04pm at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

Ms. Duckett welcomed everyone to the meeting. Before beginning the agenda, Mr. Twersky recused himself from consideration of this application due to a conflict of interest and left the dais to sit in the audience.

BET's revised proposal to redevelop the Spring House Corporate Center at Norristown Road and Route 309

Presentation by BET about their applications

Christen Pionzio from Hamburg, Rubin, Mullen, Maxwell, and Lupin introduced her team including Michael Markman, BET President; Peter Clelland, BET Vice President; Matt Hammond, Traffic Engineer from Traffic Planning and Design; and Tom Knob, Polar Engineering.

Ms. Pionzio emphasized that the evening's purpose was to request authorization to begin the process for ordinance consideration, not to make any land use decisions. She explained that BET had been working on the project for a year and a half, conducting public meetings, neighbor meetings with Gwynedd Estates and Old York Road Country Club, and holding a community meeting two weeks prior, where modifications were shared based on community feedback.

Ms. Pionzio presented several legal and factual arguments. She stated that 321 Norristown Road is a "problem property" with 75,000 square feet occupied by Berkadia, whose lease expires in 2027, and 62,400 square feet that is practically vacant. She also mentioned that Berkadia has indicated they will

leave if the property is not revitalized, potentially creating blight on the 25-acre site. She argued that this is the "perfect location" for mixed-use development given its proximity to multifamily housing at the Gwynedd Estates retirement community, a golf course, and the Route 309 interchange.

Ms. Pionzio addressed what she characterized as inappropriate comments from the community meeting, including statements that apartment buildings would "destroy Lower Gwynedd culture," change the township's makeup, and bring "welfare people" to the area. She cited Pennsylvania Supreme Court precedent stating municipalities cannot exclude housing types or people.

Ms. Pionzio referenced the housing crisis in Pennsylvania, citing Governor Shapiro's housing action plan and Montgomery County's 2040 comprehensive plan. She noted that while Lower Gwynedd has some rental housing such as Hunt Club, The Meadows and Georgetown, the inventory is old (1971-1980), primarily duplexes, and restricted to 30 feet in height. The township currently permits apartments in only 0.02% of its land area, including the mixed-use provisions adopted last year.

Michael Markman then presented the revised development plans, first showing BET's existing 555 Flats project in Horsham as an example of their resort-style apartment development. Mr. Markman then presented the revised plan for 321 Norristown Road, incorporating significant changes since the prior iteration based on community feedback. The changes include:

- Apartments reduced from a 5-story to 4-story building,
- Decreased density from 15 units per acre maximum to 13.5 units per acre,
- Increased setbacks from Norristown Road from 10 feet to 75 feet for paving and from 50 feet to 100 feet for buildings,
- Retail split into two pods instead of a continuous wall,
- Total units reduced from 350 to 278, and
- Reduced max building height from the current zoning allowance of 70 feet to 65 feet.

Peter Clelland then presented additional proposed site improvements including tree preservation along Norristown Road, pollinator gardens near the property line with the country club, and an emergency access/trail connection with the Gwynedd Estates property. The architectural renderings showed residential-style rooflines with frequent breakups to avoid the appearance of a monolithic structure.

Matt Hammond from Traffic Planning and Design addressed traffic concerns. He explained that their traffic study projects where additional traffic from the development would travel, with 34% using Norristown Road west of Route 309 (45 trips in morning peak, 56 in afternoon peak - essentially one additional trip per minute during peak hours). He noted that while residents had commented that the traffic study's projection of traffic accessing Route 309 north was low, historical data, including from prior proposed traffic studies done for the adjacent Spring House Innovation Park, supported this analysis.

Mr. Hammond detailed the traffic review process, noting they submitted a study in March 2025, received township comments in June 2025, and resubmitted a revised study in February 2026. He highlighted upcoming PennDOT improvements at the Maple Glen Triangle totaling nearly \$24

million, scheduled for construction through 2030, which would address regional traffic concerns. BET's proposed improvements include widening the development driveway to two lanes, extending left turn lanes, and creating a pedestrian connection across the Route 309 off-ramp to connect existing pedestrian infrastructure.

Michael Markman concluded the presentation with financial projections showing the development would generate \$651,000 net additional annual revenue for the school district and \$70,000 for the township compared to current levels. The project includes 10% workforce housing with units priced below market rate, one bedroom at \$2,000 vs. \$2,500 market rate: two-bedroom at \$2,583 vs. \$3,000 market rate.

Markman addressed concerns about the project changing Lower Gwynedd by comparing demographics with the Promenade at Upper Dublin: median age (49 vs. 50), 65+ population (29.1% vs. 36%), median household income (\$139,615 vs. \$150,000), and average household income (\$160,000 vs. \$209,221). He argued the demographics are similar and would provide a lifestyle choice for existing residents who want maintenance-free living.

Community questions and feedback

Ms. Duckett opened public comment, with numerous residents providing feedback and concerns.

Several residents raised traffic concerns. These concerns were related to cumulative traffic impacts, noting the upcoming J&J facility on Sumneytown Pike with 500 full-time employees, along with other housing developments in the Maple Glen area. Some residents stated that they take alternate routes to avoid the high traffic areas. Mr. Hammond responded to all concerns related to traffic. He clarified that the traffic study spanned seven years and included all roadways and developments that would be impacted by the proposed project, as well as a factor for future growth. The only facility not taken into consideration is the future J&J facility, as it was announced after the traffic study was completed. It would be up to J&J to complete their own traffic study. Mr. Hammond stated that BET would work with both PennDOT and the Township to try and mitigate the traffic impact. He noted that his job is not to fix today's problems, but to try and improve it with adjustments.

There were also residents that expressed concern that the zoning change affects both the subject property and Gwynedd Estates through the MF-3 amendment, questioning why another property was being included. Hope Haldeman, 1165 Stonehouse Road, along with Adreienne Ames, 1448 West Lamplighter Lane, have concerns about the pace of the zoning changes in recent years and asked for these changes to be slowed down.

Margaret Harkins, 216 Nevin Lane, asked about fire department capabilities for the proposed building height. Fire Marshal Al Comly confirmed their 100-foot aerials could handle the 60-foot height and noted the building would be built to modern life safety standards with full sprinklers.

Multiple speakers addressed broader planning concerns. Jim Thomas asked about minimum density requirements and expressed concern about financial relationships with state officials. While the number of units has been reduced, some would still like to see the density reduced more, as well as a definition for each density level.

Carol Jones, 390 Mansion Avenue, provided extensive historical context of Lower Gwynedd's development from 1698 through various growth periods, emphasizing that change has been constant throughout the township's history. She argued that Lower Gwynedd has always adapted to accommodate different types of housing and that resistance to change is not new, citing, among other examples, a 1912 newspaper article about community opposition to trolley service.

Several residents spoke in favor of the project. Keith Beal of Gwynedd Estates supported the development, worrying about what might happen if Berkadia leaves and no redevelopment occurs. Mark Schafer of Gwyn Ayre praised the presentation and noted that the traffic impact would be like his own development, while emphasizing environmental benefits of redeveloping an existing site with existing infrastructure. This is the ideal space for a development like this.

Cathy Pagano, 411 Brookside Ave, said she went to many meetings with the developers of the Amber Yards project and saw how they revised their plan to respond to neighbor comments, and expected the same to happen with this plan. She appreciated the architectural design in this project and supports providing housing options for young professionals. Emily Vanneman, 117 Rockledge Drive, shared her perspective as a 34-year-old renter who can only afford to live in Lower Gwynedd because of Georgetown's rental options. She emphasized the importance of welcoming people of all backgrounds and noted that many college-educated millennials earn \$68,000-\$72,000 annually, fitting the proposed pricing bracket.

Board of Supervisors questions and feedback

Ms. Duckett stated she had seen previous presentations and observed dramatic changes in the current proposal. She questioned staff about school district communication, with Ms. Gleason confirming the district had been consulted on the previous 350-unit proposal and estimated 21 new students, with Business Manager Tim Bricker indicating they could accommodate the increased enrollment.

Ms. Duckett also asked for confirmation regarding tax revenue projections, staff explained they could verify real estate tax impacts but would need business names to calculate business privilege taxes. The financial analysis included earned income tax projections prepared by David Babbitt.

Ms. Duckett then asked Township Traffic Engineer Chad Dixon to explain the review process. Dixon confirmed he had reviewed the initial traffic study submitted in spring 2025, provided technical comments in June, and was currently reviewing the resubmitted February 2026 study. He explained that the review process involves the township's traffic engineers and PennDOT both reviewing BET's traffic study, and coordination occurs between the reviewing agencies.

Additional questions from the BOS addressed the Berkadia lease situation, with staff confirming direct communication with Berkadia in 2025 about their intention to leave if the adjacent building remained vacant but stay if redevelopment proceeded. Mr. Chong asked for specific citations from Montgomery County 2040 and the governor's housing plan referenced in the presentation.

Ms. Brockway had questions about a potential zoning ordinance conflict, particularly regarding building height restrictions in the current MF-3 district requirements versus proposed mixed-use

provisions. Ms. Pionzio agreed to work with staff and the Planning Commission to resolve any conflicts during the review process.

**Review application processes for ordinance amendment and conditional use plan
Lower Gwynedd Planning Commission**

Ms. Duckett stated next steps are public meetings with the Planning Commission to review and eventually make a recommendation to the Board. This process could take place at multiple meetings. The first meeting will be Wednesday, April 15th at 7:00 pm at the Township Building. Subsequent meetings are to be determined.

Lower Gwynedd Board of Supervisors

After the Planning Commission has made a recommendation, the BOS will hold public hearings. The dates for those hearings are to be determined. The public hearings will be advertised through a legal notice and promotions through the Township's website, e-news, and social media.

Board of Supervisors action at this stage required for the application processes

Authorization to advertise a legal notice for a public hearing to be held following Planning Commission review to consider a text and map ordinance amendment for the Spring House Corporate Center

Ms. Duckett explained that two authorizations were needed to allow staff to advertise the public hearings following Planning Commission review. Ms. Duckett moved to authorize the advertisement of a legal notice for a public hearing to be held following Planning Commission review to consider a text and map ordinance amendment for the Spring House Corporate Center. Mr. Chong seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Authorization to advertise a legal notice for a public hearing to be held following Planning Commission review to consider a conditional use application for the Spring House Corporate Center

Ms. Duckett moved to authorize the advertisement of a legal notice for a public hearing to be held following Planning Commission review to consider a conditional use application for the Spring House Corporate Center. Mr. Chong seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0.

Reminder: Sign up for Lower Gwynedd e-news on the [Township's website](#)

Ms. Duckett reminded residents to sign up for the township's e-news letter to receive updates about upcoming meetings and the application review process.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Approval of invoice Report for April 7, 2026

The BOS received the invoice report for checks dated April 7, 2026, totaling \$292,657.14. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chong, to approve the invoices dated March 24, 2026. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of minutes - March 24, 2026

The BOS received the minutes from the March 24, 2026 meeting. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to approve the minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

Announcement: The Board of Supervisors met in executive session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of personnel decisions; potential litigation related to emergency services; and supervisor training.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

There were no Supervisor Liaison Reports included.

STAFF UPDATES

There were no comments from the staff.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

There were no comments from the Supervisors.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky to adjourn the meeting at 9:52pm. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Farzetta

Michelle Farzetta
Office Manger