

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2026**

SUPERVISORS:

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

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

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:10pm 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 personnel related to hiring and union matters; potential litigation related to emergency services; real estate related to the planned public works facility and parks; and supervisor training.

BET will present plans for the proposed redevelopment of the Spring House Corporate Center at the April 15th Planning Commission meeting at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be available via zoom and will allow full participation from the public. Check the website for the zoom link.

The Zoning Hearing Board meeting scheduled for April 16th at 6:00 PM has been cancelled.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Discussion about proposed changes to Lower Gwynedd's draft 2045 Comprehensive Plan and consider authorization to repeat the adoption process for the plan as revised at the meeting

The Comprehensive Plan discussion centered on revisions made to the plan following significant public feedback from previous meetings. Ms. Duckett explained that the main change involved removing all density characterizations (high, medium, low) from the plan while maintaining mixed-use designations for certain areas. The updated land use map was shared indicating the changes made to the mixed-use sites.

Tony Memis, 1145 Cleaver Road, raised concerns about email communication, noting he had not received township notifications despite signing up at a previous meeting. After an explanation that the email signup circulated at a previous meeting was coordinated by a resident, not the Township, Ms. Worman demonstrated the Township website's email signup process and encouraged residents to visit lowergwynedd.org regularly for meeting updates and agendas. A brief discussion occurred about the Township's communication methods and the availability of meeting information, board packets, and recordings on the website dating back to 2020.

Several residents expressed concerns about the Giant shopping center area being designated as mixed-use rather than remaining commercial. Jim Thomas, 1466 W. Lamplighter, advocated for keeping the Giant center as commercial rather than mixed-use, suggesting that mixed-use with residential be limited to the Bethlehem Pike corridor near existing establishments. He expressed concerns about traffic impacts and the potential for large-scale development if residential uses were permitted at the Giant location.

Mary Scott, 919 Chesterfield Drive, provided important context about community concerns, explaining that residents felt overwhelmed by multiple simultaneous developments including the BET proposal, Johnson & Johnson expansion, and the comprehensive plan changes. She emphasized the need to "bring the temperature down" and approach changes thoughtfully, suggesting that change should happen incrementally with careful monitoring of traffic impacts.

Several residents, including Tony Memis and Cary Levinson, 1204 Cedar Hill Road, engaged in detailed discussions about the implications of mixed-use designations. Levinson, a third-generation resident with Zoning Hearing Board experience, argued that comprehensive plans carry significant weight in future zoning decisions and suggested either removing mixed-use designation from the Giant site or explicitly limiting it to low-density uses.

Board members explained the distinction between comprehensive planning and zoning ordinances. Mr. Twersky emphasized that the comprehensive plan provides high-level guidance while specific density and use regulations would be addressed in upcoming zoning ordinance revisions. He noted that mixed-use designations have been consistently recommended by developers as necessary for successful redevelopment of Bethlehem Pike. Ms. Duckett stressed the Township's priority for Bethlehem Pike redevelopment from Veterans Park to the BMW dealership, explaining that mixed-use flexibility would allow for various combinations of commercial, office, institutional, and potentially residential uses without mandating any specific development type.

Ed McBurnie, 1205 Kingsley Court, sought clarification about the relationship between Planning Commission recommendations and board decisions, referencing the 5-1 planning commission vote against the BET proposal while noting the commission's unanimous support for the comprehensive plan. Ms. Duckett explained that the Planning Commission makes recommendations to the BOS. She also clarified that the BOS has not yet rendered a decision for BET. The public has been given an opportunity to hear from the developer and the changes they have made to the plan for that site.

The community concerns continue to be about traffic, density, and maintaining the character of Lower Gwynedd while balancing the need for economic development and property owner flexibility.

Ms. Brockway made a motion to change the Giant shopping center designation from mixed-use to general commercial. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Ms. Duckett made a motion to authorize staff to repeat the adoption process for the comprehensive plan as indicated in the April 14, 2026, packet. This motion was seconded by Mr. Twersky. Motion carried 4-1. (Aye- Duckett, Twersky, Chong, Martin. Nye- Brockway)

Consider Resolution #2026-07 approving a waiver of land development for the Goddard School

Pharrell Townsend, representing Beth Pike LLC, presented the application for a land development waiver for the Goddard School at 820 Bethlehem Pike. The request relates to extending the school into the back of the lot, following a use variance approved by the Zoning Hearing Board in January 2026. Mr. Twersky questioned whether the Planning Commission's condition that no additional waivers be granted was reflected in the resolution. Legal counsel clarified that such conditions would not appear in this resolution since it specifically addresses only the land development waiver. Ms. Martin inquired about compliance with engineering review comments regarding construction details for sidewalks, fences, gates, crosswalks, and ADA ramps. The applicant's engineer, Joel Commenda, confirmed they were prepared to address all outstanding technical comments once the waiver was approved. Ms. Duckett inquired about tree replacement requirements, with staff noting that trees would need to be relocated where the connecting walkway between daycare facilities would be constructed. Ms. Duckett made a motion to approve Resolution #2026-07 granting the waiver of land development for the Goddard School, seconded by Mr. Twersky. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider appointing John Walko from Kilkenny Law as conflict counsel for Penn Florida's applications for the Spring House Village Shopping Center

The Township has received a Zoning Hearing Board application for a use variance to permit a veterinary clinic at a property located at 1111 N. Bethlehem Pike, within the Spring House Village Shopping Center, owned by Penn Florida Realty. Ms. Worman explained that a conflict of interest exists because Penn Florida is represented by the same law firm that represents the Township. Mr. Walko would provide legal guidance to the staff and board for the Zoning Hearing Board application should legal representation or guidance be needed in connection with the application. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to appoint John Walko from Kilkenny Law as conflict counsel for Penn Florida's Spring House Village Shopping Center. Motion passed 5-0.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Discussion of feedback received following the March 24, 2026, presentation about the Gwynedd/Penllyn School memorial playground concept, and consideration of authorization to proceed with grant preparation

Mr. Farrell provided a comprehensive overview of community feedback received regarding the memorial playground concept. Seven emails were received, with three expressing direct support and two others becoming supportive after clarification that the expensive \$2 million option to rehabilitate the existing building had been rejected. The Township has begun collecting historical materials, stories, and photographs from community members, with recognition given to the Moore and Stewart families for their contributions. Staff planned to interview Gloria Jones and acknowledged the assistance of Carol Jones and Carmina Taylor in community engagement efforts.

Ms. Duckett expressed support for the project and suggested creating a comprehensive archive of all collected stories, potentially through a website with QR code access rather than limiting content to what could be displayed on interpretive panels. Mr. Twersky raised practical concerns about costs associated with incorporating existing building walls into the design, suggesting that if structural reinforcement proved significantly expensive, the Township should reconsider that aspect of the plan. Mr. Farrell confirmed that the retained existing walls were intended to only be about knee high.

Staff are asking the BOS to consider the Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program grant available through the PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) for \$250,000 with a match of 15% of the total project. The grant application would need to be submitted by May 31, 2026. Staff will provide the BOS with a project estimate for authorization prior to submitting the grant application.

Ms. Duckett strongly supported moving forward with the grant application and suggested expanding outreach beyond current Lower Gwynedd residents to former students who might have relocated but possess valuable historical materials or memories. This outreach could be done through the newspaper or news outlets, or perhaps social media. There are former students out there who could have no idea that we are looking for this historical information.

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to authorize staff to proceed with the Greenway Trails and Recreation Program grant application for the Penllyn School Memorial Playground concept. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider approval of a ground lease with Rise Up Towers for a cell tower in the Penllyn Woods Park maintenance area

Mr. Twersky recused himself from this item and left the platform due to a conflict of interest. Ms. Duckett stated that the Montgomery County Orphans' Court issued an order on March 30, 2026, approving the ground lease, clearing the way for Township approval of a cell tower in the current maintenance area at the end of the driveway by the Advanta baseball field in Penllyn Woods Park. Jim Thomas raised health concerns about cell towers near residential areas and questioned whether the township had studied these issues. Ms. Duckett responded that environmental impact studies

had been conducted in 2023, with information and safety studies still available on the Township website. Ms. Duckett made a motion to approve the ground lease with Rise Up Towers for a cell tower in the Penllyn Woods Park maintenance area. Ms. Martin seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0, with Mr. Twersky recused.

Consider authorizing advertisement of the bid for Welsh Road traffic signal upgrades

Bowman is requesting authorization to advertise construction bids for traffic signal upgrades at Welsh Road and Evans Road, and Welsh Road and Darden Avenue/Gwynedd Crossing. The project timeline calls for advertising in May or June 2026, with bid recommendations in June and construction completion by winter/spring 2027.

Linda Callegari, 1600 Claudia Way, inquired about how potential development might affect traffic signal timing decisions on Welsh Road. Chad Dixon explained that the current upgrades focus on equipment improvements to enhance efficiency, while any future development would require separate traffic impact analysis.

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chong, to authorize advertisement of the bid for the Welsh Road traffic signal upgrades at Welsh Road and Evans Road, and Welsh Road and Darden Avenue/Gwynedd Crossing. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider Resolution #2026-08 amending the 457 Retirement Savings Plan to allow loans

In 2025 a new plan was adopted for the 457 deferred compensation retirement savings plan. Resolution #2026-08 corrects an oversight from the 2025 plan adoption, allowing employees to borrow from their retirement savings, restoring loan provisions that had previously been available to employees. Ms. Duckett moved to approve Resolution #2026-08 amending the 457 Retirement Savings Plan to allow loans. Ms. Martin seconded this motion. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of invoice report for April 14, 2026

The BOS received the invoice report for checks dated April 14, 2026, totaling \$582,189.85. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chong, to approve the invoices dated April 14, 2026. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of minutes for the meeting of April 7, 2026

The BOS received the minutes from the April 7, 2026 meeting. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

There were no Liaison reports to review.

STAFF UPDATES

Ms. Gleason reported that staff have been conducting traffic observations around both the middle and high schools, in person and using drone videos to better understand traffic patterns and identify potential solutions. The aerial perspective proved particularly helpful in analyzing backup points and traffic flow issues.

The Police Chief provided an update on the department's reaccreditation process, noting that external reviewers had completed their assessment of the department's compliance with 127 applicable standards (out of 140 total, with exceptions for canine and self-dispatch capabilities). The department will receive recommendation for approval at the April 23rd accreditation meeting in Harrisburg.

Mr. Hersh reported that the Old Bethlehem Pike bridge project was nearing completion, with final paving scheduled for that week and guide rail installation the following week. The bridge was expected to reopen to traffic before the next board meeting.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Mr. Chong commended Sergeant William (Townie) Henry for his community engagement during a youth flag football event at Penllyn Park, noting the officer's positive relationships with residents and his effective handling of a potentially difficult parking situation.

Ms. Duckett reported that she and Ms. Martin attended Lower Gwynedd Little League's opening day, praising the improvements to Ingersoll Park including new paved walkways, an upgraded snack stand, improved speaker systems, and renovated facilities.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chong, to adjourn the meeting at 9:30pm. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Farzetta

Michelle Farzetta
Office Manager