

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026**

SUPERVISORS PRESENT:

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

STAFF:

Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Michelle Farzetta, Office Manager
Neil Stein, Esq., Solicitor
Paul Kenny, Police Chief
Fred Zollers, Director Public Works
Jim Hersh, Gilmore, Township Engineer

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:05pm 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 met in executive session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of potential litigation related to code enforcement and emergency services, personnel related to the police department, and meeting logistics.

Touch-a-Truck is back. Join us on Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a fun-filled day exploring all kinds of trucks and vehicles. Note this year's new location at Johnson & Johnson's campus, 1400 McKean Road, across from the Ambler YMCA.

Summer is almost here. Come out to Pen-Ambler Park to see the Grundels perform at the first summer concert of the season on Wednesday, May 27th at 5:30 p.m. The series continues throughout the summer on the 4th Wednesday of the month.

Learn about challenges faced by our volunteer fire companies and potential solutions. There will be a presentation of the findings of the regional fire study completed on behalf of Lower Gwynedd, Upper Gwynedd, North Wales and Ambler on Thursday, May 28th, at 7 pm, at University Hall on the Gwynedd Mercy University campus. Community members are encouraged to attend.

Help shape the future of Bethlehem Pike. Fill out the short survey on the Township's website telling us what you hope to see on Bethlehem Pike in coming years. Also join us at the official kickoff of the Bethlehem Pike revitalization project on Tuesday, June 9th, at 7 pm at Harth Builders, 812 N. Bethlehem Pike.

Pride Flag Raising – Monday, June 1, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Park.

PRESENTATION: Introduction of new Lower Gwynedd Fire & Life Safety Inspection Program by Fire Marshal Al Comly and Code Enforcement Officer Patty Sexton-Furber
Fire Marshal Al Comly and Code Enforcement Officer Patty Sexton-Furber presented the framework for a new Fire and Life Safety Inspection Program for commercial properties in the Township.

Mr. Comly explained that the program's primary objectives are to reduce fire risks and life safety hazards through compliance with the fire code, improve preparedness by ensuring fire protection systems are properly maintained, and strengthen communications with local businesses. The inspections would focus on fire alarms, sprinkler systems, means of egress, emergency lighting and signage, fire extinguisher tagging, and electrical and storage hazards. The program is initially intended for commercial structures only, not residential. In the beginning, inspections will be completed on a volunteer basis. Once established the businesses will receive a notice letting them know there will be an upcoming inspection. There will be no surprise visits.

Mr. Comly described the inspection process as scheduled and collaborative: businesses would receive a checklist with applicable code references in advance, followed by a scheduled inspection, a written report noting any violations, a correction period, and a reinspection if necessary. He emphasized that the program's intent is educational, not punitive, and noted that higher-risk facilities would likely require annual inspections, while others might be on an 18-month or biannual cycle.

Ms. Furber noted that she is in the process of obtaining her fire inspector license and would accompany Mr. Comly on inspections. She described the initial phase as a "beta test," starting with willing businesses to determine staffing needs and time requirements before formalizing fees or enforcement protocols.

The BOS expressed general support for the program. Mr. Twersky raised the question of available personnel and potential budget implications; staff responded that the initial phase would be conducted with existing resources, and staffing needs would be assessed as the program develops. The BOS discussed the distinction between the voluntary, educational approach in the early phase and the Township's legal authority to conduct inspections. Ms. Gleason clarified that while the approach is collaborative and educational, inspections are not indefinitely voluntary – the program will evolve toward a formal required inspection cycle.

Ms. Duckett suggested communicating the program broadly and transparently, including a presentation to the Lower Gwynedd Business Association. Mr. Comly confirmed plans to bring

a presentation to a future LGBA meeting. A tentative launch of the program in the fall was discussed, with the possibility of promoting it at the Township's fall festival. Ms. Furber noted that several surrounding municipalities already have similar programs in place and will continue to be a resource. No formal vote was required. Ms. Duckett asked staff to provide periodic updates to the BOS as the program develops.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from the public.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Further discussion about proposed amendment to the 1616 School House Road subdivision plan to allow for additional tree disturbance on the new lot at 1622 Gypsy Hill Road

Engineer Susan Rice appeared on behalf of the applicant, Tisman Group, LLC to present supplemental information in response to questions raised by the BOS at a prior meeting. Ms.

Rice

presented a plan distinguishing the original approved limits of disturbance from the proposed expanded limits of disturbance associated with the 2026 land development plan.

Ms. Rice explained that within the expanded disturbance area, approximately five healthy trees would be removed, with the remainder being dead or dying trees as documented in an arborist's report. Additional trees outside the disturbance limits are also proposed for removal as a matter of property management and safety. Trees previously fallen or removed due to being a safety hazard were identified on the plan in blue.

Regarding tree replacement, Ms. Rice noted that 54 replacement trees are required under the ordinance. The applicant proposes to provide 27 trees on-site, consisting of a combination of canopy and understory trees. The arborist recommended understory species – including sweet bay magnolia, dogwood, fringe tree, and eastern redbud – rather than additional canopy trees, as planting the full number of canopy-sized trees on the lot would result in overcrowding and competition that would ultimately be detrimental to the forest. Mr. Hersh confirmed that the understory reforestation approach is sound and consistent with good forestry practice, and that the ordinance requires 75 percent native plantings, a standard the applicant meets. A waiver of the remaining 27 replacement trees is requested.

Linda Calligaeri, 1600 Claudia Way, raised questions about the Township's inch-for-inch caliper replacement standard and inquired whether the 27 fee-in-lieu trees (at \$300 per tree) could be directed toward replacing street trees lost in the Gwynedd Knoll neighborhood. Mr. Hersh confirmed that the \$300-per-tree fee is based on the cost of a 3-inch nursery tree installed by Public Works, and that any fees collected are restricted to reforestation and environmental conservation purposes. The BOS noted the Township's annual tree giveaway program as an additional resource for residents wishing to replace trees on private property.

The Board expressed satisfaction with the revised presentation and supporting materials.

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to have Solicitor Neil Stein prepare an approval resolution for 1622 Gypsy Hill Road, Land Development No. 26-04, subject to the conditions agreed upon at this meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Cable television franchise agreements

Ms. Gleason introduced this item, noting that both of Lower Gwynedd's cable television franchise agreements with Verizon and Comcast are simultaneously up for renewal, and that the public hearings were being called to receive community input on past performance and future cable-related needs prior to renegotiation. Ms. Gleason noted that the Township receives five percent of each company's gross cable television revenue as a franchise fee, totaling approximately \$242,000 in 2025. She observed that while franchise fee revenue continues to decline as residents cut the cord, the decline has been more gradual than anticipated.

a. Verizon franchise agreement: Public hearing to receive and discuss public comments about the past performance of Verizon in the provision of cable television services and to identify the future cable-related community needs of the Township

The BOS and members of the public were invited to comment on Verizon's past cable television performance. Ms. Duckett noted that both Verizon has been slow to respond following storm-related line damage, leaving downed wires in roadways for days or weeks, which creates safety concerns for residents – particularly children walking to school who cannot readily distinguish between cable and electric lines. Ms. Gleason indicated she would convey these concerns to the providers.

b. Comcast franchise agreement: Public hearing to receive and discuss public comments about the past performance of Comcast in the provision of cable television services and to identify the future cable-related community needs of the Township

The BOS was similarly invited to comment on Comcast's past cable television performance. Ms. Duckett mentioned she switched from Comcast to Verizon after Comcast took three weeks to repair a service line. Aging infrastructure and transmission box issues affecting portions of residential streets were also noted. Ms. Gleason confirmed she would pass this feedback along and indicated both franchise agreements are expected to return to the Board for formal consideration in late summer or early fall.

Consider approval of proposed "Traffic Garden" at Pen-Ambler Park

Ms. Martin and Morgan High, the Township Program Director, are recommending the installation of a child-friendly traffic garden at Pen-Ambler Park. Mr. Zollers explained that the traffic garden would utilize the existing paved path surrounding the playground, which was already scheduled for maintenance repairs due to tree root damage. The plan includes widening the path where feasible, painting traffic markings and directional arrows, installing child-sized traffic signs, and creating designated pull-off areas. A one-way traffic flow pattern was discussed to enhance the playful, educational character of the area.

Mr. Zollers confirmed that no trees would be disturbed in the process. The total estimated cost is under \$5,000, with the primary expense being the planned asphalt repairs. All the work would be completed by Public Works staff. Completion is anticipated by midsummer.

Linda Calligaeri, 1600 Claudia Way raised concerns about the broader issue of children on motorized scooters and e-bikes operating unsafely in residential streets without parental supervision. Chief Kenny acknowledged the ongoing challenge, noting that officers have made stops and conducted outreach at local schools, and that information is posted on the Township's police department website and social media. He acknowledged that enforcement is difficult when parents are aware of the rules but choose not to enforce them at home. The BOS encouraged continued outreach at community events and noted the Township's Community Response Unit has been active in educating students.

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, authorizing staff to execute the traffic garden installation at Pen-Ambler Park for an amount not to exceed \$5,000. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of invoice Report for May 12, 2026

The BOS received the invoice report for checks dated May 12, 2026, totaling \$243,903.47. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to approve the invoices dated May 12, 2026. Motion passed 4-0.

Approval of minutes - April 28, 2026

The BOS received the minutes from the April 28, 2026 meeting. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to approve the minutes. Motion passed 4-0.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

There were no reports provided to the BOS.

STAFF UPDATES

There were no updates from the staff.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Ms. Martin told residents to look for the summer events schedule coming soon and to participate when possible. Ms. Martin also reported that the Board of Auditors met earlier in the day and delivered positive findings, commending Township staff, particularly Finance, for their diligence in maintaining strong systems of internal control and a sound financial condition. Ms. Duckett echoed these thanks and acknowledged the efforts of the elected Board of Auditors and all contributing staff members.

Mr. Chong announced the Asian Cultural Fair at Wissahickon High School on Saturday, May 16, 2026, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., noting it coincides with Touch-a-Truck.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin. to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Farzetta

Michelle Farzetta
Office Manger