

Lower Gwynedd Township EAC Meeting Minutes

June 10 ,2026

Township Building Conference Room

Members in Attendance: Robert Sawyer, Karleigh Burns and Maureen Nunn

Members Virtual: Rea Monaghan and Andrea Brockway

Associate Members: Lisa Brown, Steven Saffier

Staff in Attendance: Morgan High, Program Director

Call to Order

Mr. Sawyer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

Approval of May 13 ,2026 Meeting Minutes

The May 13, 2026 minutes were approved.

1. Tree Giveaway

The committee discussed preparations for the upcoming fall tree giveaway. Ms. High noted that Ms. Doll, who coordinates with Tree Authority, is currently traveling but had communicated via email that the committee should consider reducing the total number of trees offered and shifting toward more shrubs and smaller trees, as some residents have been intimidated by full-size trees or have smaller landscapes and HOA restrictions. Previously, approximately 300 trees were ordered.

Regarding logistics, it was noted that the traffic flow route tested during a recent Goodwill drive — entering from Old Bethlehem Pike and exiting by the bay, with the main entrance closed to reduce traffic on Bethlehem Pike — worked well.

Ms. Doll and Ms. High are to review the form to be used by residents for registration.

2. Recycling Drives and Recap of Republic Service Presentation

The committee reflected positively on the recent Republic Services presentation by representative Angela Celeste, with a recommendation to invite her back as a recurring speaker in approximately two years. The committee also discussed the recent Goodwill collection drive, which drew between 45 and 50 cars and was considered a success by Goodwill, who expressed interest in returning in the fall for another event.

The next techno trash event, to be held by the EAC, is scheduled for August 15th.

3. Going Green Awards

The committee discussed the status of the Going Green Awards program, noting that no external nominations had been received to date despite the program being advertised. One member raised the question of whether the program should continue annually or shift to a biennial cycle, given the difficulty in generating community nominations. Others countered that the program needs time to build momentum and that consistency year over year is important to avoid community confusion.

Several strategies to increase nominations were discussed, including reaching out to previous winners and asking them to recommend others, contacting science teachers and clubs at local schools, and presenting to the Lower Gwynedd Business Association, for which a contact was offered.

4. Plastic Bag Ban Implementation

The committee reviewed the status of a letter to Giant Food encouraging a reduction in single-use plastic bags. Township Manager Mimi had reviewed the draft letter and added a paragraph acknowledging the township's strong partnership with Giant. The revised letter was ready to be placed on EAC letterhead and emailed to Giant's contact, Jim Geiger.

It was also suggested that the letter include a question about Giant's in-store plastic bag collection bin: specifically, where those collected bags go, what happens to them, and whether Giant would consider donating a plastic recycling bench to the township in the store's name.

5. Fall Programming and Earth Day 2027

The committee reviewed two related programming initiatives: a fall composting education event and planning for Earth Day 2027.

Regarding composting, the committee confirmed a dual-track approach: a fall educational presentation aimed primarily at local businesses, focusing on the financial feasibility of composting, followed by a spring 2027 residential compost bin giveaway. Ms. High offered to reach out to Colleen from Back to Earth, who has previously presented for the EAC, to lead the educational event. It was suggested the presentation could include both a formal talk and a hands-on demonstration component, as modeled by a successful Lower Gwynedd EAC event. The possibility of presenting to or in coordination with the Lower Gwynedd Business Association was also raised.

For Earth Day 2027, the committee discussed building on the existing Wissahickon Trails Earth Day programming by adding an EAC-organized component, such as a trail cleanup. Ideas for complementary giveaways — including native wildflower seed packets (previously

distributed at approximately \$1 per packet) and a plant swap — were floated. It was also suggested that Earth Day programming could incorporate broader topics such as energy conservation and bird feeders, as had been done at prior events. The committee agreed to keep Earth Day 2027 planning on the agenda as a future discussion item.

6. Inform Residents Of The Availability Of Green Energy Options

The committee discussed the township's existing RF-100 (100% Renewable Energy) commitment, noting that the Board of Supervisors passed a formal resolution on record some years ago. The status of the new public works building as a potential site for solar panels was discussed; it was noted that the project is still in the concept phase, that the lot presents size constraints, and that while the township intends to incorporate green and eco-friendly features to the extent funding allows, solar panel infrastructure may need to be phased in as grants or future funding become available.

The committee discussed several approaches to advancing this agenda item with residents, including a home energy efficiency presentation. It was recalled that a prior event had featured a PECO energy audit program, in which a presenter conducted free home audits — including blower door tests and LED light bulb replacements — for a nominal \$50 fee that was effectively recouped through rebates and materials. Given rising electricity costs, the committee agreed there would be value in hosting a similar event, tentatively targeting late January or early spring of next year.

The concept of community choice aggregation (CCA) — a model by which a municipality purchases renewable energy collectively on behalf of residents at lower rates — was raised as an emerging option being pursued by other municipalities. While not currently permissible in Pennsylvania, it was noted as a model worth monitoring.

7. Conduct Educational Events

This item was acknowledged as one that overlaps significantly with several other work plan items discussed throughout the meeting and was noted to be evolving in scope.

8. Bird Walks/Bird Town

Mr. Saffier, provided an update on the Bird Town Pennsylvania program and Lower Gwynedd's path toward advancing its certification level.

He explained that the program has transitioned to a new framework aligned with the national Bird City network, replacing the previous numeric scoring system with a category-based structure across four areas: Habitat, Threats to Birds, Education & Engagement, and Sustainability. To maintain Bronze certification, a municipality must complete five actions

in two of the four categories; Silver requires additional actions across more categories; and Gold requires 15 actions across all four categories.

Mr. Saffier noted that Lower Gwynedd is well-positioned to advance to Silver, as many of the committee's ongoing activities — including bird walks, table events, native plant initiatives, and the RF-100 sustainability commitment — already count toward the required strategies. Three requirements apply to all certified Bird Towns: maintaining a Bird Town committee, celebrating International Migratory Bird Day (the second Saturday in May and October), and enrolling new properties in the Bird Habitat Recognition Program. Three new residential properties must be enrolled to maintain Bronze certification, with five required for Silver. The recognition program carries a \$30 fee and includes a yard sign, newsletters, and engagement resources.

Mr. Saffier indicated he plans to create a handout about International Migratory Bird Day for the fall tree giveaway, and will have a Bird Town table at Fall Fest. He also shared that he intends to organize a community event around ornithologist James Bond — a Lower Gwynedd resident and the source of Ian Fleming's famous character name — featuring the author of a related book, to be hosted by Lower Gwynedd Bird Town and open to all regional Bird Towns.

On the matter of signage, Mr. Saffier requested three new Bird Town street signs at \$60 each (total: \$180): one to replace the outdated Audubon-branded sign at William Penn Inn, one at the Route 202 and Township Line intersection where a large sign was lost during road construction, and one at the Route 202 overpass near the Trader Joe's entrance. He requested the committee formally authorize the expenditure.

Motion to approve the purchase of three Bird Town signs at \$60 each, for a total of \$180, was made and seconded. The motion carried.

Ms. High confirmed she would coordinate with Public Works to install the signs upon receipt of an invoice from Mr. Saffier.

9. Trail Stewardship Liaison

The committee discussed the status of trail stewardship efforts, noting that following a prior meeting with Public Works Director Fred, the original framing of the task — collaboration with Public Works on sustainability practices — had evolved. It was observed that Public Works has already adopted electric equipment where feasible, leaving little new opportunity in that area.

The conversation shifted to the possibility of developing a trail stewardship program to engage the public. It was noted that the Parks & Recreation Board has already

implemented a trail inspection grading system in coordination with Public Works, through which Parks & Rec volunteers walk designated trails, rate conditions on a scale of one to five across various categories, and report findings to Public Works for follow-up.

The discussion turned to the challenge of invasive plants along township trails. It was described as heavily overtaken by invasives with little room for native species to regenerate.

The committee agreed that the next steps should include: confirming jurisdiction over target trail segments, identifying a manageable pilot area, developing a removal and replanting plan, and pursuing resident education on common invasive species. It was suggested that educational outreach — such as e-newsletter blasts identifying common invasives — could be a near-term action.

3. Reports

Board Of Supervisors

Ms. Brockway reported that the Bethlehem Pike Revitalization kickoff meeting had taken place the prior day, drawing approximately 35 to 40 attendees. Over 200 survey responses had been submitted in advance, and infographics summarizing trends in responses were presented. Feedback was described as positive and constructive. The next phase will involve recruiting volunteers for a focus group expected to meet in August and September to develop recommendations further.

Ms. Brockway also noted that the next Board of Supervisors meeting is scheduled for June 23rd, and that the Township building will be closed in observance of Juneteenth.

Planning Commission

Mr. Sawyer reported that the Planning Commission recently voted to advance zoning changes for a property on Northtown Road proposed for development, including revisions to the MF-3 mixed-use zoning ordinance. The developer reduced the number of units and adjusted setbacks during the process. It was noted that residents who had previously organized opposition to the project had withdrawn their objections following meetings with supervisors, reportedly in exchange for commitments related to a town center development on Bethlehem Pike. Mr. Sawyer anticipated a vote on the related ordinances at the June 23rd Board of Supervisors meeting.

Parks & Recreation

Ms. High reported that trees at the Texaco lot location had been removed because the original selections were not suited to the site's conditions and could not be adequately maintained. A site visit with a landscape consultant named Brenda was scheduled for the following day to assess the location and plan for replacement plantings. It was noted that native and flowering tree varieties are under consideration, and that the new planting arrangement would be more naturalistic rather than in a straight line. Final tree selections had not yet been confirmed.

Points Of Interest/General Comments

Several additional topics were raised by committee members:

Road Salt Seminar: Mr. Sawyer noted having shared a link to an hour-long road salt seminar with the group and encouraged members to view it.

Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Ordinance: The committee discussed a trend among neighboring municipalities, to pass ordinances restricting gas-powered leaf blowers. It was noted that Lower Merion appears to be revising its ordinance to focus on handheld and backpack models, which may make enforcement more practical. The committee agreed to monitor Lower Merion's revised approach before pursuing a similar recommendation locally.

No Mow Month: Mr. Sawyer shared that Ms. Doll had expressed reservations about a "No Mow May" initiative, citing concerns about lawn damage from delayed cutting, increased tick habitat in tall grass, and the program's short-term nature relative to long-term ecological needs. Ms. Monaghan stating the educational framing — encouraging residents to designate a portion of their yard as a meadow rather than forgoing mowing entirely — addresses many of those concerns. Mr. Sawyer agreed to reach out to Springfield Township, which has implemented the program, to gather feedback before taking further action.

EAC Conference – Fort Washington: Ms. Monaghan spoke enthusiastically about the annual Montgomery County EAC conference held at a historic church in Fort Washington, describing it as highly worthwhile for networking with EAC members from other municipalities and learning about effective programs. In prior years, registration was approximately \$75 per person, with a group rate available for up to five members. The committee agreed to identify the date and cost and revisit attendance at the next meeting.

Fall Fest Table: Ms. High reminded the committee that the EAC will share a table with Parks & Recreation at Fall Fest on the 19th. The township will separately operate its own table focused on the Bethlehem Pike revitalization. Committee members were asked to ensure coverage at the shared EAC/Parks & Rec table.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 pm