

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 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
Fred Zollers, Director Public Works
Melinda Haldeman, Finance Director
John Farrell, Project Manager/Emergency Management Coordinator
Jim Hersh, Gilmore Assoc, Township Engineer
Chad Dixon, Bowman, Traffic Engineer

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:07pm 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 litigation related to zoning, personnel, and emergency management, and real estate related to the proposed Public Works garage.

A special Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 6th at 7:00 pm in the Township Building to discuss a proposed zoning ordinance amendment regulating data centers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public came forward with comments on items not on the agenda.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Consider Resolution #2026-19 amending the approval resolution for the 1110 Wissahickon Avenue subdivision plan, including tree waivers and payment of a fee in lieu of planting for the new house at 1112 Wissahickon Avenue

The Board considered Resolution #2026-19, amending the approval resolution for the 1110 Wissahickon Avenue subdivision plan. Ms. Duckett stated that the applicant requested a waiver from the requirement to plant 15 replacement trees, required to mitigate the removal of 45 inches of existing tree caliper during construction, on the grounds that the limited planting area, underground utilities, and other site constraints made it impracticable to accommodate the trees on site. The proposed fee in lieu was calculated at the Township's standard rate of \$300 per three-inch caliper tree, resulting in a total contribution of \$4,500. Mr. Twersky confirmed with staff that the fee would be paid from the existing escrow account, which had been established to cover remaining project obligations including the landscaping requirement, and that this was the last remaining obligation. The current escrow balance was confirmed to be approximately \$12,000.

A motion to approve Resolution #2026-19 amending the approval resolution for the 1110 Wissahickon Avenue subdivision plan and accepting the fee in lieu of tree planting, was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded Mr. Twersky. The motion carried unanimously.

Consider Resolution #2026-20 granting a waiver of land development for Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School parking lot expansion

Attorney Christen Pionzio of HRMML, appeared on behalf of Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School (GMAHS), along with site engineer Tim Woodrow. Ms. Pionzio explained that the proposal involves the installation of 42 new parking spaces, with 6 existing spaces being eliminated, for a net gain of 36 spaces. The new lot would be located adjacent to an existing parking area near the athletic fields off of Sumneytown Pike, using an existing curb cut so no new driveway access onto the public road would be required.

Ms. Pionzio noted that the Planning Commission had reviewed the application and recommended approval, that all engineering review letters were noted as "will comply," and that the applicant had signed the resolution. She explained that the chosen location was selected after considering other sites on campus, all of which were more environmentally impactful, and that existing stormwater management facilities were adequate to handle the additional impervious coverage.

Mr. Twersky raised questions regarding several comments in the Gilmore engineering review letter, specifically regarding a planting strip between the two parking areas, lighting, and additional landscaping. Ms. Pionzio and Mr. Woodrow explained that eliminating the planting strip was a deliberate decision to preserve every possible inch of the adjacent practice field along the Sumneytown Pike frontage, and that a lighting plan with three proposed fixtures had already been submitted and reviewed without objection by the Township Engineer. No additional landscaping beyond existing frontage trees was proposed.

Mr. Dixon indicated no circulation concerns and noted recommendations for stop signs and pavement markings to improve internal safety, with which the applicant agreed to comply. Ms. Pionzio also said that the school president, Denise Marbach, indicated this junior class is the largest in recent history, but that enrollment can be controlled, making a future additional parking request unlikely. Questions were also raised regarding a comment from Fire Marshal Al Comly calling for the

naming of internal driveways and their submission to county emergency dispatch; the applicant agreed to follow up with the Fire Marshal on that matter.

A motion to approve Resolution #2026-20 granting a waiver of land development for Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School parking lot expansion was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Twersky. The motion carried unanimously.

Presentation of 2-lot subdivision plan for 813 Plymouth Road

Christen Pionzio spoke on behalf of the applicant for a proposed two-lot minor subdivision at 813 Plymouth Road, accompanied by builder Corbett Hall and engineer Tim Woodrow. The proposal would subdivide the existing lot into two parcels, with a flag lot to the rear served by the existing right-hand driveway of the current property's circular drive, thereby avoiding any new curb cut onto Plymouth Road. Both lots were confirmed to have access to public water and sewer. The applicant also committed to meeting the fire marshal's requirement for a 16-foot-wide access strip to the rear lot. The applicant requested three waivers: from road widening, curbing, and trail/sidewalk installation along Plymouth Road, citing the established character of the road where none of these improvements currently exist.

The Board engaged in substantial discussion regarding the sidewalk and trail waiver, as Plymouth Road is identified as a priority corridor on the Township's sidewalk and trail strategic plan and is approximately half a mile from the Gwynedd Valley train station. Ms. Martin and Mr. Twersky expressed concern that granting repeated waivers would prevent the Township from ever achieving a connected trail network, noting that similar subdivisions on Gypsy Hill Road and Cedar Hill Road had been required to install trail improvements. Ms. Pionzio proposed that, because the builder is only purchasing the rear portion of the lot, the seller's cooperation would be needed for any frontage improvements, and offered instead a fee in lieu of construction, which could be held in a restricted fund for future trail use.

Ms. Gleason and Mr. Hersh provided substantive context: Plymouth Road presents significant design challenges given its geometry, topography, creek crossings, and uncertainty about which side of the road a future continuous trail alignment would ultimately follow. Ms. Gleason advised that it would not be fiscally sound to construct a segment at this time given these unknowns, and that the fee in lieu option was contemplated when the trail plan was originally developed. Mr. Hersh noted that fee-in-lieu funds are not restricted to Plymouth Road and could be applied to any Township sidewalk or trail project, including as a grant match. Mr. Hersh committed to working with Tim Woodrow on a cost estimate for Board review.

The BOS proposed that the matter be continued at the next meeting. Mr. Stein was instructed to prepare two alternative draft resolutions — one reflecting a fee in lieu of construction and one requiring installation — and that the cost estimate and fee amount be worked out between the engineers prior to that meeting.

Ms. Worman asked about a comment from the Fire Marshal's September 14th letter noting that, because the proposed house would be located more than 500 feet from the road, it should ideally be equipped with automatic fire sprinklers per NFPA Standard 13D, though this is not required under

the Township's current ordinance. Ms. Pionzio indicated she had not seen this comment and committed to reviewing it and consulting with the Fire Marshal before the resolution was drafted. Ms. Duckett asked that the resolution include language requiring compliance with all applicable fire codes and the Fire Marshal's recommendations.

On the issue of the existing driveway flare that encroaches slightly onto the adjacent property, the BOS confirmed that the condition would be addressed by sending the neighbor a certified notification letter, rather than requiring formal documentation of consent, as the flare falls within the public right-of-way. No formal vote was taken. The item was continued until the next Board meeting.

Review the Zoning Hearing Board application for 1345 Sumneytown Pike (Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School field lights) and determine action to be taken, if any

Christen Pionzio presented on behalf of Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School regarding a pending Zoning Hearing Board application to install athletic field lighting at the school's Evans Road field. Because the school is zoned residential, any such use requires Zoning Hearing Board approval via special exception. Ms. Pionzio noted that in 1997, when the field received approval, a condition was imposed prohibiting lights which she said reflected the large, glare-heavy lighting technology available at the time. The applicant is now seeking to revisit that condition given the advances in LED lighting technology over the intervening 29 years.

Ms. Pionzio described the proposed installation of four 80-foot poles equipped with modern LED fixtures that direct light downward onto the field with zero spillover beyond 130 feet from the field edge. Evans Road, where neighboring residences are located, is approximately 400 feet from the field edge. A community outreach meeting was held in June, to which notices were mailed to all properties on Evans Road between Sumneytown Pike and Parsons Lane, and all of Parsons Lane, exceeding the 500-foot notification requirement. Only three residents attended. The school indicated a willingness to shut off the PA system by 9:00 PM and the lights by 10:30 PM.

The BOS raised significant concerns. Mr. Twersky questioned whether the outreach effort was adequate given that only three residents attended and emphasized that neighboring homeowners had purchased or retained their properties with the legally established understanding that no lights would be installed on this field. He drew a distinction between the improvement of technology and the broader issue of noise and activity generated by games and PA systems running later in the night. He suggested that a single mailed letter — particularly the one sent in mid-June — may not have reached residents in a meaningful way and advocated for door-to-door outreach. Ms. Martin seconded these concerns and suggested that a more direct community engagement effort would benefit both the neighbors and the applicant's case before the Zoning Hearing Board. Board members also questioned whether the 1997 condition was based solely on light pollution or whether noise and activity levels were also a consideration. Ms. Pionzio confirmed that the Zoning Hearing Board decision referenced lighting specifically, with no discussion of noise. Board members raised the possibility of comparing the proposed technology to the existing older lights at Gwynedd Mercy University, which neighbors across Sumneytown Pike have experienced, as a potential way to demonstrate the technological improvement to skeptical residents.

The Board ultimately encouraged the applicant to postpone its Zoning Hearing Board hearing, conduct expanded door-to-door outreach — including to properties in Foulkeways and potentially further along Evans Road — and invite Board members to participate in or observe the community meeting. The Board noted it could not take a formal position at this time. The applicant agreed to conduct additional community outreach before proceeding to the Zoning Hearing Board.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Discuss 2027-2031 capital projects plan

Ms. Gleason presented the updated 2027–2031 Capital Projects Plan, which had been revised prior to the meeting following a conversation with Mr. Twersky. The key enhancement was the addition of a final column showing the Township's net share of each project cost after accounting for grants, providing a clearer picture of the actual financial burden on the Township. Ms. Gleason highlighted several notable items across major categories:

Public Works Facility: The Township has secured just over \$3 million in grants, and staff is working toward a project cost target of \$29 million

Traffic Signals: The Township has been active in pursuing PennDOT Greenlight Go grants and Local Share Act (LSA) grants and is systematically working through its signal upgrade program.

Bridges: The Old Bethlehem Pike Bridge project is complete. A recently completed Bowman inspection of Township-owned bridges identified the need to rehabilitate the culvert under Meetinghouse Road. This will be coordinated with a related stormwater pipe replacement project in the same area and an LSA grant application is planned for the November 30 deadline. The Forest Hill Drive bridge, which is weight-restricted, was identified as a significant upcoming priority with a seven-figure cost estimate.

Stormwater: The Old Bethlehem Pike streambank restoration is nearly complete. The Marion Drive culvert replacement (part of the Houston Creek flood study) is expected to be completed in the fall. The basin project on school district property will be deferred approximately one year given the volume of active projects. A new initiative was proposed to proactively inspect corrugated metal storm pipe throughout the Township to identify failing infrastructure before emergencies occur.

Transportation: An update to the Act 209 capital plan is planned for 2028. Larger transportation infrastructure projects are pushed out given their scale.

Parks and Trails: Oxford Park Phase 1 (playground construction) has over \$800,000 in grants in hand. Work is underway on the Penllyn Station Trail. Phase 3 of the Bethlehem Pike sidewalk (to Dager Road) is proposed to start in 2027 with preliminary work for a grant application. Staff also is proposing to develop a pedestrian crossing of Penllyn Pike near Bethlehem Pike as a priority trail plan project.

Ms. Gleason flagged a significant development affecting the Township's grant strategy: the state has reduced LSA grant funding by two-thirds, redirecting those funds to cover increased teacher and

police pension benefits that the state will reimburse to school districts and municipalities. This reduction will make grant competition considerably more intense and may delay park improvement projects, where typical state park grants of approximately \$250,000 fall well short of project costs for planned Township projects.

Ms. Gleason identified the recommended priorities for near-term grant applications: an LSA grant in November for the Meetinghouse Road bridge and stormwater projects; a multimodal grant for Bethlehem Pike sidewalks; and a Montco 2040 grant for the Penllyn Pike pedestrian crossing.

Mr. Twersky commended staff for the significant effort in securing grants and suggested the Board explore private funding and naming opportunities for park projects given the reduction in state funding. The Board expressed general support for the plan and the approach presented. Ms. Gleason stated that full capital and operating budget will follow later in the budget cycle.

Consider authorizing advertisement of the legal notice for the sale of vehicles and equipment on Municibid

The Board considered authorizing advertisement for the sale of surplus Township vehicles and equipment on the Municibid online auction platform. Staff indicated that winning bids would be presented for Board acceptance at the November 17, 2026, regular meeting. A motion to authorize advertisements for the legal notice for the sale of vehicles and equipment on Municibid was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Twersky. The motion carried unanimously.

Consider approval of Ordinance #559 authorizing execution of a cable franchise agreement between the Township and Comcast of PA, LLC and Comcast of Southeast PA, LLC.

The current franchise agreement for Comcast is up for renewal. This agreement continues cable TV services in Lower Gwynedd and requires Comcast to pay the Township 5% of the cable revenue as an annual franchise fee. Ordinance #559 allows for the adoption of this agreement. A motion to approve Ordinance #559 authorizing execution of a cable franchise agreement between the Township and Comcast of PA, LLC and Comcast of Southeast PA, LLC was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Twersky. The motion carried unanimously.

Finance Report – August 2026

The August 2026 financial report was included in the Board packet. Mr. Twersky asked about the approximately \$1.4 million negative balance in the capital reserve fund. Ms. Haldeman explained that the balance reflects capital expenditures made thus far in 2026 from reserves, prior to the year-end transfer of general fund surplus into the capital accounts — a transfer that typically occurs in November or December. Additionally, grant reimbursements that are budgeted in the capital accounts have not yet been received, which will further reduce the negative balance when they come in. Ms. Haldeman confirmed that there are sufficient funds to cover all obligations.

Approval of invoice Report – September 22, 2026

The BOS received the invoice report for checks dated September 22, 2026, totaling \$377,695.45. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to approve the invoices dated September 22, 2026. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of minutes -September 8, 2026, and September 17, 2026

The BOS received the minutes from the September 8, 2026, public meeting and the September 17, 2026, minutes for the Town Hall held at Foulkeways. Motion to approve the minutes for the meetings of September 8, 2026, and September 17, 2026, was made by Ms. Duckett and seconded by Mr. Twersky. The motion carried unanimously.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

The BOS received the reports for the Park and Recreation Board and the Environmental Advisory Council. There were no questions or comments.

STAFF UPDATES

There were no updates from staff.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Several Board members recognized the success of the recent Fall Fest event. Ms. Martin offered extensive thanks to program director Morgan High, Kathy Morris and the Fall Fest committee, Public Works Director Fred Zollers and his team including Santino, seasonal staff, volunteers, Ms. Gleason, Township staff, police, fire, and ambulance personnel. Ms. Martin noted that planning for next year's Fall Fest is already underway and that a date would be announced soon. Ms. Duckett echoed her thanks and extended appreciation to the event's sponsors and vendors.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion to adjourn at 8:40pm, seconded by Mr. Twersky. Motion passed unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Farzetta

Michelle Farzetta
Office Manager