

Lower Gwynedd Historic Advisory Committee
Regular Meeting
September 21, 2023

Committee Members Present

Gloria Jones
Joseph Langella
Fawn Ostriak
Michael Brockway
Allison Klinger

Committee Members Absent

Linda Sacks

Supervisors Present

Janine Martin

Lower Gwynedd Staff

Michelle Farzetta (not present) Took minutes from recording.

Call to order

The hybrid meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Lower Gwynedd Township building. Roll call was taken.

Approval of the Minutes

Ms. Martin asked for a motion to approve the August 17, 2023, minutes. Ms. Ostriak made a motion, seconded by Ms. Klinger. Motion passed 5-0.

Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Written Communication

Ms. Klinger asked to recognize the letter sent out by Matt Metcalf that morning, resigning his position as the Chair of the Historic Advisory Committee. Ms. Martin confirmed his resignation. She thanked him for his hard work and stated this was a huge loss.

Audience Participation

There was no audience participation.

Board of Supervisors - Liaison Report

Ms. Martin said that Fred Zollers, Lower Gwynedd Townships Public Works Director, has taken an image that Ms. Ostriak designed and had it made into a template. This template will then be used to make a temporary marker on the same material used to make a street sign.

Permanent signs will then be made in cast iron. A space will be left for a QR code should we want to include one. Once the marker template is available, she will make it available to the Committee.

Ms. Martin mentioned that the Board of Supervisors (BOS) approved a budget of up to \$250 for a speaker event with the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. The BOS is just asking to know who the speaker would be prior to releasing the funds. Mr. Langella mentioned that they are still looking for a speaker. He has reached out to a professor at Gwynedd Mercy University to see if he would be interested. Mr. Langella wants to make sure the speaker is someone who can talk about the history of Lower Gwynedd.

Regarding the America 250 plan, the township is waiting to get more information from the county, as they are putting together a committee for the celebration. The BOS did pass a resolution stating that the township would participate in the event. Once she has more information, she will update them.

Historical Markers

- **Bethlehem Baptist Church (BBC)**– Ms. Martin mentioned that the BOS approved the Bethlehem Baptist Church marker application and the location of the marker. She confirmed that the HAC has received the proposed text from Reverend Quann, however the HAC would like to do a little research prior to approving the text. Carmina Taylor, a former resident of Penllyn, asked for a timeline related to the submission of BBC’s marker application. Ms. Martin clarified that the application was reviewed at the August HAC meeting with proposed text. The HAC made a recommendation to approve the marker with the text to be determined. Ms. Taylor asked if the person who submits the application has any authority to decide the final text. Ms. Martin replied that the HAC will review the text in a public meeting and the applicant is able to attend. There was a discussion regarding the history of BBC, as the proposed text is not historical enough. The committee would like more research to be completed prior to voting on the approved text for the Historical Marker. Ms. Martin explained that the marker approval at the BOS meeting was the BOS agreeing that the location was worthy of a marker. A temporary marker will be installed with the name and date, but no description for the celebration that BBC will be holding in October for their anniversary. Ms. Jones is going to email an example of suggested text for them to review prior to the October meeting. Ms. Martin is going to check with the township solicitor to see if they are permitted to have discussions about the text via email outside of a public meeting. If this is not permitted, then the text can be discussed at the October meeting.
- **Penllyn School** – Ms. Jones gave a presentation regarding the history of the Penllyn School. She herself attended the school and does not want history to be lost. Ms. Jones

spoke about how segregated schools came to be, the court case of Brown vs the Board of Education, the families asked to leave the Springhouse School, and the Montgomery County court case that closed the segregated schools. Ms. Jones shared photos with the committee.

Ms. Taylor stated that this year marks 100 years since the Penllyn School was built. She would like a marker and a ceremony to commemorate the school. Ms. Taylor would like to know the next steps, as she has been attending both BOS and HAC meetings for a year and a half now and would like something done to recognize and honor the school. Ms. Klinger made a motion to make a recommendation for a marker at the location of the Penllyn School with text to be determined. Mr. Langella seconded this motion. Motion passed 5-0.

- **Other Potential Markers for Nomination** – Ms. Martin asked if the committee had any additional locations for a historical marker in this first roll out. Locations mentioned were the William Penn Inn, Gwynedd Friends, Gwynedd Valley near the post office and Gwynedd corners.

There was also a discussion regarding Penllyn School Field from residents attending the meeting. Carol Jones and Leola Hubbard mentioned that 25 years ago the area was completely redone without any input from the community. The area should honor the desegregation that took place there and be renamed accordingly.

Fred Zollers, Public Works Director dropped off the marker template for the HAC to view. The temporary sign will have the name and date, any text will go on the permanent sign once approved. Overall, the committee was pleased with the marker.

Fall Fest

Mr. Langella mentioned that he will be attending on behalf of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society. He will have artifacts to share from Lower Gwynedd Township. He asked for copies of the Historic Marker application to include on the table. Ms. Martin said she would look into getting this done with Michelle.

Old Business and New Business

These agenda items were tabled due to time.

Adjournment

Ms. Martin made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 pm. Motion passed 5-0.