

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2024**

SUPERVISORS:

Danielle A. Duckett, Chairman
Michael Twersky, Vice Chair
Janine Martin
Tessie McNeely
Jimmy Chong

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/Emergency Management Coordinator

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:02pm 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 on July 29th and prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of personnel and litigation.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Irene Lewis, 515 Montgomery Road, and Eric Rudolph, 537 Montgomery Road, asked for the BOS to assist them with the loud sound that comes from the HVAC system at the Wissahickon Middle School. Both Ms. Lewis and Mr. Rudolph have been communicating with the Wissahickon School District for four years to address the issue of the loud noise since the chiller was relocated at the Middle School. A sound study was conducted by the district and a noise blanket was recommended. However, the blanket has not yet arrived, and the noise continues to be a nuisance to the residents in the area. Mr. Rudolph explained that the sound study indicates that the noise is 10 decibels over the maximum decibels permitted in the noise ordinance. Mr. Rudolph would like to have a meeting with Ms. Gleason and Ms. Worman to work through this and discuss with the BOS the next steps that can be taken. Ms. Gleason stated that she has responded to their concerns and has spoken with representatives from the School District. The noise expert has recommended the sound blankets, which have been ordered. Once they come in, we will send our inspector over to assess the situation and then move forward with any additional steps they may be needed. Mr. Rudolph does not believe that the blanket will work, he

believes a building will need to be built around the chiller to address the situation. He would like to work with both the district and the township collaboratively to solve this issue.

BUILDING AND ZONING

Discussion of proposed zoning ordinance amendment for the MF-3 district to add regulations for mixed-use development

BET Investments is interested in redeveloping the property located at 321-323 Norristown Road. A presentation was given at the March 26, 2024, BOS meeting. BET has now submitted a draft proposed Text Amendment for redevelopment of the property. After being reviewed by all necessary parties, further discussion is needed regarding workforce housing, workforce designation, structured parking and conditional use standards.

BET provided updated plans for the property, as well as information regarding workforce housing. The plans show both residential properties, a parking garage, and various stores and restaurants. However, the retail space will be separate from the apartments. Mike Markman, President of BET Investments, explained that the building will be wrapped around the parking garage/structure. Ten percent of the apartment space will be designated for workforce housing. An annual report would be provided with records verifying this component. The BOS asked if the Montgomery County Housing Authority had been asked to assist. Ms. Gleason replied that the Montgomery County Planning Commission is encouraging the workforce housing, however, they are not looking to assist at this time.

Mark Grey, 331 Arbor Lane, asked why the township would want to do this. The project would cause traffic related issues, add density, and require a zoning change. This could potentially be a major problem.

John Kennedy from Kennedy Associated the Township's Planning Consultant provided feedback regarding both the text amendment and map amendment. He stated that currently there is a housing shortage, and this development would be a great way to tackle this issue. Mr. Kennedy suggested specific written out regulations for wrapped parking and language that requires a parking study to verify any proposed reduction in parking. He also recommended trail connections, as well as an onsite trail.

Mr. Markman is going to work with Mr. Kennedy and staff to make any necessary changes to the proposed text amendment.

Presentation of land development plan for Spring House Estates at 728 Norristown Road to construct additions on 2 buildings, add parking and related improvements (#24-01LD)

Acts Retirement Community is proposing various improvements at their Spring House Estates property. These improvements include two building additions, additional parking, an upgraded entrance/drop-off area, a courtyard area, and new lighting and landscaping. Photos and plans were presented to the BOS along with review letters from our Engineer, Traffic Engineer, Fire Marshall and the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Any concerns have been addressed in the amended plans. A waiver request letter has been provided for review by the BOS and Mr. Stein. Mr. Stein stated that the waiver letter will need to be modified if they are looking for preliminary/final land development approval. There was a discussion regarding an easement for future access connection to Radcliff Lane at the signalized entrance of Spring House Estates. Acts is willing to work on this with a

Letter of Intent. Mr. Grey, 331 Arbor Lane, spoke and feels that the township should make this easement a requirement for the improvements as access has been an ongoing problem for this road. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky to authorize Mr. Stein to prepare an approval resolution for land development plan #24-01LD. Motion passed 5-0.

Public hearing to consider and possibly adopt a zoning ordinance amendment updating regulations regarding small cell wireless facilities in rights-of-way

Mr. Stein opened the hearing by stating that this is a public hearing that will add new definitions and provisions governing the installation of small wireless facilities in public rights of ways and municipal poles in accordance with Act 50 of 2021. The information provided was transcribed by a court reporter and will be available upon request. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to adopt Ordinance #547. Motion passed 5-0.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Presentation: Overview of Lower Gwynedd’s sanitary sewer system

Mr. Hersh gave a brief overview of the township’s sanitary sewer system. He discussed how the collection/conveyance system collects and transports the sanitary flow to the Ambler Wastewater Treatment Plant. The system is a gravity sewer with force mains and three pump stations. Yearly maintenance is performed to check for any needed repairs and cleaning. Mr. Hersh explained that they prepare a “Chapter 94” report that details the system flows within the past year, upgrades, expansions or anticipated projects. There are planned upgrades. Forest Manor pump station will need a backup pump. The air release valve along the Open-Door force main will need to be replaced and the Open-Door Pump Station will need to be redesigned/rebuilt. Portions of these projects will be funded through a DCED small sewer grant we were awarded in 2023. Ms. Duckett suggested we circle back around and continue the conversation at an upcoming meeting. At that time, we can discuss any necessary next steps.

Resolution #2024-26 Approving sale of Ingersoll property

On July 29, 2024, an auction was held for the sale of the Ingersoll House and Barn. The bidders were Philip and Shirley Reason with a bid of \$710,000. Resolution #2024-26 authorizes the sale of the property pursuant to the contract and the condition of sale. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to approve Resolution #2024-26 for the sale of the Ingersoll Property. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider proposals for sidewalk and trail plan/trail crossings

Staff have been working with both Gilmore and Associates and Bowman to put together a plan to develop a comprehensive sidewalk and trail plan for the Township. This plan will guide decisions related to sidewalk and trail placement in Township projects and land development applications. There are two tasks involved in this project. First is to review the existing township sidewalk and trail maps, conduct a safety review of the 25 current trail crossings and end with a new sidewalk and trail map, along with a list of potential pedestrian crossing improvements. During the second task Gilmore will take the information from task one and propose ways to address the gaps in the pedestrian network. Bowman will take the information and incorporate that into a new map identifying additional areas where future crossings can be planned. The final report will include recommended updates to the Townships SALDO and Zoning ordinances, edits to existing codes and potential funding sources.

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Gilmore and Associates has submitted a proposal of \$22,500 and Bowman has submitted a proposal for \$13,925 for this project. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely to approve both Gilmore and Bowmans proposals to review the existing sidewalk and trail network, review the pedestrian crossings and develop a plan for future sidewalk and trail connections and safety improvements. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider authorization to advertise bid for traffic signal pole replacements at Bethlehem Pike and Dager Road

A recent traffic signal evaluation indicated that the two traffic signal poles at the intersection of Bethlehem Pike and Dager Road should be replaced. The replacement would include one 20-foot traffic signal mast arm on the northeast corner of the intersection and one strain pole located on the southeast corner of the intersection. Bowman is asking for authorization to advertise this project for bidding in September with a bid to be awarded at the October 8, 2024, BOS meeting. The 2024 budget included the cost for the project including construction documents, bidding and construction. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Chong, to authorize the advertisement for the traffic signal pole replacement bid. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider approval of a request from EAC to buy landscaping materials for flower beds at Wissahickon High School and a donation to Journeywork for pollinator gardens

Members of the Lower Gwynedd EAC, along with area EAC's have been volunteering time to clean up the flower beds at the Natatorium at the Wissahickon High School. Members of the EAC would like to invest \$250 in plants and materials to design a plan with plants that would be very low maintenance for the school district.

Paige Menton of Journeywork, spoke about her upcoming event Pollinator Palooza at the August EAC meeting. This program helps residents gain a better understanding of native plants, pollinators and how to select plants. The EAC is asking the Township to purchase 10 gardens that would be available to the first 10 Lower Gwynedd property owners. The total cost for this would be \$750 dollars.

Ms. Duckett made a motion to authorize a reimbursement up to \$250 for plants and materials for the Natatorium Flower beds and a donation of \$750 to Journeywork for Pollinator Palooza. This motion was seconded by Ms. Martin. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider waiving the requirements of Section 612.01 of the Township Code to permit the sale and consumption of alcohol at the Lower Gwynedd Fall Fest on September 21, 2024

Fall Fest is scheduled for September 21, 2024. The Fall Fest Committee is requesting that the BOS waive Part Six, Section 612.01 of the Township Code, to permit the sale and consumption of alcohol from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. for this event. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the waiver of alcohol for Fall Fest. Motion passed 5-0.

Township Engineer Report

Mr. Hersh provided the Engineer's report for July of 2024. There were no questions or comments.

Traffic Engineer Report

Mr. Dixon provided the traffic engineer's report for July of 2024. There were no questions or comments.

Finance Report - July 2024

The BOS received the July 2024 Financial Report. There were no questions or comments.

Approval of invoice report

The BOS received the Invoice Report for checks dated August 27, 2024, totaling \$914,900.21. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to approve the invoices dated August 27, 2024. Motion passed 5-0.

Approval of minutes - July 23, 2024, and July 29, 2024

The BOS received the minutes from the July 23, 2024, BOS meeting and the minutes from the Special BOS meeting for the Ingersoll Auction held on July 29, 2024. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion seconded by Mr. Twersky to approve both the July 23rd and July 29th BOS meeting minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

The BOS received the reports from the Human Relations Commission and the Environmental Advisory Council Meeting. There were no questions or comments.

STAFF UPDATES

There were no staff updates.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Ms. McNeely thanked the staff for all their work and said all the work is appreciated. She also said the improvements at the intersection are great.

Ms. Martin and Mr. Chong echoed those comments.

Mr. Twersky had no comment.

Ms. Duckett thanked staff and hopes everyone enjoyed their summer.

Adjournment

Ms. Duckett made a motion at 9:08pm to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Martin. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Farzetta
Office Manger