

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2023**

**SUPERVISORS:**

Danielle A. Duckett, Chairman  
Michael Twersky, Vice Chair  
Janine Martin  
Kathleen Hunsicker  
Tessie McNeely

**STAFF:**

Mimi Gleason, Interim Township Manager  
Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager  
Michelle Farzetta, Administrative Assistant  
Neil Stein, Esq., Solicitor  
Paul Kenny, Police Chief

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:03pm at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building and virtually on Zoom and led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

**PRESENTATION**

**Presentation by Rise Up Towers about the proposed cell towers and locations, as well as the expected improvement in cell service**

Four representatives, Mike Malloy, Nick Pollen, Scott Galloway, and Andy Peterson, from Rise Up Towers presented information regarding the proposed cell towers at both the township building and Penllyn Woods Park. The presentation included photos of the proposed locations both with and without the towers from various views in the area. Coverage maps were also shared indicating the coverage currently, with each tower and then with both towers. These maps identified the coverage for T- mobile service only. As of right now T-Mobile will be the anchor tenant for the towers, however, each tower can hold four carriers. As additional carriers join, racks of antennas are added. Rise Up will work with other carriers, such as AT&T and Verizon to bring them on. Other carriers have already said once the tower is up to contact them. Each tower will take approximately 3-6 months to go up. Although the towers could be disguised as trees or a flagpole, Rise Up recommends just putting up the tower without trying to disguise it.

If the tower in Penllyn Woods is approved, then steps would need to be taken to amend the park's conservation easement to permit the tower and the property would need to be rezoned to the MD Municipal District. Mr. Malloy is asking that Lower Gwynedd township exempt them from zoning to move the process along quicker. Mr. Twersky informed the public that the BOS is not denying that there is a cell coverage issue in parts of the township. He invited the public to share their thoughts and concerns about the towers.

Several residents who reside on Richard's Way attended the meeting and are in support of cell towers. They are asking that the process move forward as soon as possible, as they have very little coverage at all in their development or along Penllyn Pike. In an emergency lack of coverage could be a matter of life and death. Mr. Malloy stated that service antennas could be added at no cost to the towers for emergency management purposes.

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Some residents from the Penllyn area in attendance had concerns regarding health issues due to radiation and electromagnetic exposure based on the proximity to the towers. Mr. Malloy explained that all FCC guidelines are followed. The antennas would be 150 feet in the air. A person would have to be within 10- 20 feet for possible exposure. Any risks would affect those working on the structures, not the residents below. However, there are a few Penllyn residents that feel the towers are needed as calls are dropped frequently, requiring them to have land lines to work from home. A few residents asked how coverage would be received in a power outage. Rise Up towers replied that backup generators would be put in during an outage to help with cell coverage. Ken Amey, 1122 Old Bethlehem Pike, resides right behind the township building and feels that the tower would be obtrusive to his house. He questioned if there might be additional locations within the township that would be a better location. Mr. Amey also commented that he does not feel that Rise Up should be exempt from zoning responsibilities. They should have to go through the same procedures as anyone else.

Phillip Shank for SBA Communications asked why the township has chosen to work with Rise Up Towers. His company owns two other towers in the township. Both Ms. Duckett and Mr. Twersky stated that other companies were asked and made proposals, but they never came back.

Jimmy Chong, 1397 Tanglewood, asked if there have ever been any complaints once the towers are installed. Mr. Malloy responded no. Mr. Chong also inquired about any studies regarding any health issues. Mr. Malloy replied that a study completed in 2012 focused on heavy cell phone users and it showed that any harmful exposure was minimal. There was no relationship to usage and brain tumors. Nothing has changed today regarding these results.

A few residents who reside near the Wissahickon schools questioned the coverage indicated on the coverage maps shared. There is a tower currently in that area and cell service is still a problem. They wanted to know who owns that tower. After some discussion it was determined that the water company owns that tower. Mr. Malloy said it could be the way the antennas are oriented that is causing the issue. He said that they would work with existing towers if we should move forward with the project.

The BOS thanked Rise Up Towers for the presentation and the residents for attending. They explained that we are in the early stages of this process. If we move forward be mindful that we cannot control what carriers sign on. The BOS also explained that no matter where a cell tower is put it will cause an issue for someone. The location needs to be based on where there is a lack of coverage in relation to township property. They encouraged everyone to share information from the meeting with others. There will be updates on the website throughout the process.

Mr. Stein explained the process involved. There is zoning to address, environmental conservation easements and reports that need to be submitted. He understands the urgency to get this moving.

Mr. Pollen, President of Rise Up Towers, thanked everyone who has been working on this. He stated that there is security in working with municipalities. If we build the towers the carriers will come.

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, to adjourn the meeting at 9:05pm. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michelle Farzetta

*Michelle Farzetta*