

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2023**

SUPERVISORS:

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

STAFF:

Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Michelle Farzetta, Administrative Assistant
Neil Stein, Esq., Solicitor
Fred Zollers, Director Public Works
Paul Kenny, Police Chief
Jim Hersh, Township Engineer, Gilmore
Chad Dixson, Traffic Engineer, McMahon a Bowman Company
Melinda Haldeman - Finance Director

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:05pm at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building and virtually on Zoom and led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

The BOS met in executive session on September 20, 2023, and prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of real estate, litigation, and personnel.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kate Madden, 916 Penllyn Pike, came asking for an update regarding the proposed cell towers. Mr. Stein stated that other options are being explored. Gwynedd Mercy Elementary School has been in discussions with Rise Up Towers. There is no deal yet, but things are headed in the right direction.

Dan Steinman, 800 Norristown Road, came to discuss the ongoing problem with dead trees and branches along the trails. It is a continuous problem, and something needs to be done.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Authorization to advertise a public hearing to consider an amendment of a conservation easement, and any other requirements necessary to permit a cell tower in the maintenance area at Penllyn Woods Park

On July 11, 2023, the BOS held a special meeting regarding the installation of cell towers within the township. To move forward with the cell tower proposed at Penllyn Woods, a public hearing must be held to amend the conservation easement that covers a majority of the park. The cell

tower will be located at an existing maintenance area. A 30-day notice period is required; a public hearing will be scheduled for the November 14th BOS meeting. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker to advertise a public hearing for an amendment to the conservation easement at Penllyn Woods Park. Motion passed 4-0. (Mr. Twersky is recused)

Approval of historical marker for Penllyn School

The township received an application regarding installation of a historical marker to recognize the history of the Penllyn School at its former location in Penllyn Park. At the Historic Advisory Committee's (HAC) September 21st meeting the HAC recommended the BOS approve a marker at that site, while they review further the actual text for the marker.

Carmina Taylor, former resident of Penllyn, asked why only Gloria Jones' application was included when she too had applied for the same marker. Ms. Taylor stated that she feels she has been waiting a long time and has been disrespected. She felt that if provisions were made to ensure that Bethlehem Baptist Church had a marker for their celebration in October, then the same should be done for the Penllyn School.

Gloria Jones, 1007 Pershing Road, replied that she worked very hard researching the information for the application. She made sure to highlight what happened after the supreme court decision as that was an important part of the school's history. Anyone should feel free to apply to the HAC.

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Martin, to approve the historical marker for the Penllyn School. Motion passed 5-0.

Consider submitting request to PennDOT to add bike sharrows on Evans Road

Andrew Turner, with the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC), was present to discuss the possibility of adding bike sharrows on Evans Road. He stated that Evans Road, between Plymouth and Welsh Road, has been identified as a location to install sharrows as part of the PennDOT 2024 resurfacing program. A sharrow is a road marking that informs drivers that they are on a road that shares the right-of-way with those riding a bike. The BOS had several questions regarding the safety of this. They noted that Evans Road is a winding road and they had concerns about the safety of both drivers and bikers. Mr. Dixon stated that PennDOT did add warning signs at the "S" curves on Evans Road as part of their low-cost safety improvement plan. Ms. Hunsicker mentioned that this route is already pre-routed as a bike route by PennDOT. The addition will aid in the safety of the road. Mr. Turner noted that if the BOS decided to move forward with the sharrows then a letter will be submitted to PennDOT, and they will determine where the markings will go. If the BOS should decide not to submit a letter, then the road will be resurfaced without bike lines. Harry Hellerman, 100 Coventry, said he is an avid bike rider. PennDOT can only designate state roads, not township roads for bike routes. He suggested that it wouldn't hurt to put markings as this is already an established bike route and experienced cyclists do use it. Ms. Duckett stated that she would like to have Mr. Stein, Chief Kenny and Mr. Dixon collaborate before the deadline to discuss the sharrows further.

Approve contract with Godshall Kane O'Rourke Architects, LLC in the amount of \$18,000 to complete a feasibility study and needs assessment for a Public Works Facility

The BOS authorized staff at the July 25, 2023, meeting to issue an RFP for an architect to complete a feasibility study and needs assessment for a new Public Works facility. Five proposals were received, and three firms were interviewed. Throughout this process Godshall Kane O'Rourke (GKO) came out on top. The staff is recommending the feasibility study and needs assessment contract be awarded to GKO in the amount of \$18,000. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, to award the contract to GKO. Motion passed 5-0.

Review of 2024 minimum municipal obligation for the Township's contribution to defined benefit pension plans and consideration of reduction in rate-of-return assumptions

At the September 12, 2023, BOS meeting Ms. Haldeman recommended the rate of return assumption for both the uniformed and non-uniformed employees defined benefit pension plans be reduced from 7% to 6.5%. The total cost to the township would be \$115,867. The completed General Fund balance projection has enough reserves to cover this change. This lower rate of return will stabilize as we go forward. Ms. Hunsicker made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to reduce the assumption to 6.5%. Motion passed 5-0.

Review of Financials YTD and Balance Sheet – August 2023

The BOS received the financial report for August of 2023. The only question for the BOS was regarding the Bucks County Water and Sewer billing that was being addressed. Ms. Haldeman stated that all issues have been resolved.

Review of Township Engineer's Report

Mr. Hersh provided the engineers' report for the month of September. There were no questions from the BOS.

Review of Traffic Engineer's Report

Mr. Dixon provided the traffic engineers' report for the month of September. There were no questions from the BOS regarding the report. Ms. McNeely asked Mr. Dixon if he knew what work was being done at the intersection of Plymouth and Evans Road and when the work would be completed. Mr. Dixon stated he would look into it and let her know. He knew that PECO was doing some utility work but does not know if that is related to this. Ms. Hunsicker asked for an update regarding the markings at the trail by the schools. Mr. Zollers replied that the project is almost finished. The markings are not yet complete. Once the final inspection is complete the flashers will be active.

Approval of minutes – September 12, 2023

All BOS members received a copy of the minutes from the September 12, 2023, meeting. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Hunsicker made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to approve the minutes. Motion passed 5-0.

SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS

The BOS received the committee reports for both the Human Relations Commission and the Environmental Advisory Committee. There were no questions or comments.

STAFF UPDATES

WCWP Update

Ms. Worman gave an update on the future government structure of the Wissahickon Clean Water Partnership. She reported that the majority of the management committee voted for the consortium government structure as had been the preference of the Lower Gwynedd BOS.

Spring House Intersection construction

Mr. Dixon stated that some of the work is getting done at the Spring House Intersection. PECO has moved the poles and lines, but utility work is not yet completed. The old utility poles need to be removed and the Verizon lines need to be moved to the new poles. The underground stormwater basin has been installed and the contactor is completing minor work that can be done to keep progress moving.

Mr. Dixon then gave an update regarding the pedestrian crossing at the YMCA on McKean Road. He said the final inspection has been completed. There are a few punch list items that will be completed over the next week and then that project will be finished.

Drainage improvement on Stonebridge Rd

Mr. Zollers said they are finishing up the stormwater pipe replacement project on Stonebridge Road. The residents have been very understanding while the work is being completed.

SUPERVISORS COMMENTS

Ms. McNeely congratulated the Fall Fest committee for a successful event. Everything went well.

Ms. Hunsicker also congratulated the Fall Fest Committee.

Ms. Martin echoed the comments and thanked all the community volunteers that came out to assist with the event.

Mr. Twersky echoed all comments.

Ms. Duckett also echoed all comments and thanked Sandi Feight for pivoting so well with the change of venue. She also thanked Wissahickon High School and custodial staff for letting us use the facility. She also thanked all Park and Recreation volunteers, fall fest volunteers and vendors for their help and support.

Adjournment Time:

Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to adjourn the meeting at 8:06pm. Motion passed 5-0.

Michelle Farzetta