

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2023**

**SUPERVISORS:**

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

**STAFF:**

Mimi Gleason, Township Manager - Absent  
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, McMahan a Bowman Company  
Melinda Haldeman - Finance Director  
John Farrell - Project Manager - via zoom

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

The Chair called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:04 pm 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 met in executive session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss matters of litigation and personnel.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors (BOS), Mr. Twersky made a statement regarding the tragic events that are unfolding in Israel. The statement will be posted on the township website. Mr. Twersky also stated that we would be working on humanitarian projects to help raise funds for the victims. If anyone has any information on such projects, please let us know.

**Presentation of a Proclamation to Wissahickon Valley Public Library in recognition of their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Wissahickon Valley Public Library (WVPL) will be celebrating their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on October 21, 2023. Ms. Duckett read the proclamation and presented it to Anne Frank, Director for the WVPL.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Keith Siegel, 1139 Walnut Farm Road, thanked Mr. Twersky for his statement and support. He came this evening to ask that the township raise the Israeli flag as a sign of solidarity and support. Ms. Duckett asked when and for how long he would like us to do this. Mr. Siegel replied immediately and for one month. Mr. Stein stated that we will need to amend the agenda and take a vote to fly the Israeli flag. Ms. Hunsicker made a motion to amend the agenda, seconded by Ms. McNeely. Motion passed 5-0. Ms. Duckett then made a motion to fly the Israeli flag for the duration of 30 days, seconded by Mr. Twersky. Motion passed 5-0.

## BUILDING AND ZONING

### **Consideration of a Decision and Order for a conditional use application for stormwater management facilities in the wetlands or buffer area at 727 Norristown Road (SHIP)**

A conditional use hearing was held on September 12, 2023, for Spring Houe Innovation Park (SHIP), the property of Beacon Capital, LLC. The applicant is proposing an additional parking lot at Building #14 and an electrical substation building with a retaining wall, sidewalks, landscaping, and a subsurface stormwater management system. The proposed stormwater management facility will encroach on existing wetlands, permitted only with conditional use. Beacon Capital, LLC is requesting permission to locate a stormwater management pipe within the 25-foot wetland buffer. As directed, Mr. Stein drafted a decision and order for approval. Carl Weiner appeared on behalf of Beacon Capital, LLC to answer any additional questions. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker to approve the decision and order for a conditional use application. Motion passed 5-0.

### **Resolution #2023-22 granting conditional preliminary/final approval of a land development plan for an electric substation and parking lot for Building 14 at 727 Norristown Road (SHIP)**

A presentation was given on September 12, 2023, by Beacon Capital, LLC for the proposed land development project for both the electric substation and parking lot for Building #14 at SHIP. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Hunsicker, to approve Resolution #2023-22 granting conditional preliminary/final approval of the land development plan for both the parking lot and electric substation. Motion passed 5-0.

### **Authorization to initiate the ordinance amendment process, including authorization to advertise the legal notice, for an amendment to driveway regulations in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance and Chapter 1044 - Driveways - in the Township Code**

As recommended by the Building and Zoning Subcommittee, Mr. Stein has prepared a proposed driveway ordinance for existing properties that establishes permitting requirements, construction standards, roadway drainage requirements and additional regulations for driveways. Currently driveway standards exist only in the SALDO and not within the general ordinances of the Township. Therefore, the standards only apply to properties seeking land development or subdivision approval. Under this new ordinance horseshoe driveways would be prohibited. Mr. Dixon stated the intent is to reduce the number of driveway openings and further look at how a driveway is defined. After some discussion amongst the BOS, Mr. Hersh and Mr. Dixon, it was decided that this ordinance should be further reviewed before putting it out for advertising. There are properties within Lower Gwynedd that are large, and residents would typically want a horseshoe type driveway. The BOS also asked for language to be added that expands the type of material that can be used should someone want to use environmentally friendly or pervious materials. Mr. Stein stated that we must be careful with the interpretation. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to table this item for further review. Motion passed 5-0.

## GENERAL BUSINESS

### **2024 Budget: review of 2024-2028 Capital Project Plan**

The BOS received the multi-year capital projects plan and the proposed capital equipment purchase plan for 2024. Ms. Worman highlighted a few items in the plan that were either new or required feedback from the BOS.

- Public Works Building – The BOS previously approved a feasibility study and analysis. \$100,000 has been allocated in 2024, as it is anticipated that this will roll into design and engineering.
- Parks Master Plans – The Parks and Recreation Board will make a recommendation to the BOS as to which projects should be prioritized. The BOS should also decide which projects they would like to prioritize. Once these decisions are made staff can seek grant funding.
- Ingersoll Park Improvements – There was a discussion regarding the replacement of the fencing at the Little League Fields. ARPA funds could potentially be used to fund this project. Replacing the fencing now will not impact additional improvements that need to be made later. \$150,000 is budgeted for this project, however Adam Taylor, President of the Lower Gwynedd Little League, feels that \$200,000 would be more accurate, as the fence should be higher than originally proposed.
- YMCA Pickleball Courts – The YMCA has offered to partner with the Township and establish pickleball courts on their property. The YMCA is asking the township to pay for the courts, and in turn they will make them available to all township residents regardless of their membership. The YMCA will assume all maintenance and responsibility for the courts once built. The estimated cost would be \$250,000. Funds from grants or possible community partner sponsorships/donations could be used to fund this project. There were some concerns from Pedro Geraldino, 955 Gladestry Lane, regarding the access residents would have if they were not members of the YMCA. He feels that the residents would benefit more from the pickleball courts being installed at Pen-Ambler Park.
- Stormwater Management – The Houston Creek Stormwater Study has been completed and the projects necessary to help alleviate the problem have been identified. Gilmore Associates have recommended that the road re-profiling at Francis and Knight be completed prior to the upgrading of the storm sewers. Gilmore had also recommended replacement of the driveway culvert.
- Road Program – Public Works would like to establish an official maintenance plan for the township roads. Liquid Fuels Funding has historically been used for the repair and replacement of the roads. The total Liquid Fuels Funding for 2024 is \$364,989. The proposed road program would be \$742,000. There are Liquid Fuel funds in reserve, but we need to consider the cost for road salt this winter.
- Electric Vehicles – There has been some interest in replacing traditional township vehicles with electric vehicles as set forth in the Ready for 100 Resolution passed in 2022. The Police have proposed purchasing a hybrid 2024 Ford Explorer for \$66,000 to replace a current 2014 Ford Explorer and Public works is considering an electric F-150 Lightning Truck for \$58,000. This vehicle will be an addition, not a replacement to the fleet. The BOS are unsure as these vehicles seem to be more experimental. These vehicles may not be able to meet the 24/7 demand required. The Police are also proposing the purchase of an ATV. This would be used for rescues along trails and community events. This would have low use but has a high priority value in an emergency.
- Additional budget items – Administrative Equipment – There was discussion regarding updating our server or moving to the cloud.

**Discussion about electric pickup truck and grant application**

Public works has investigated purchasing an electric pickup truck. This would not replace an existing vehicle; it would be in addition to. There is grant funding available of \$7,500 that can be put towards the cost of the truck. It would be an expense to the township, but a way to reduce emissions, as it could be used to reduce the usage of other trucks. Ms. Hunsicker stated that there must be other ways to reach RF100 goals. Ms. Duckett made a motion to table any further discussions or decisions at this time, Ms. McNeely seconded the motion. Motion passed 5-0.

**Authorization to advertise bid for construction of Phase 2 of the Bethlehem Pike Pedestrian Improvement Project**

Ms. Worman explained that in both 2020 and 2022 the township was awarded grants through the MONTCO 20/40 program to fund the installation of sidewalks and two pedestrian bridges on the east and west side of Bethlehem Pike. The bridges will be designed and fabricated by Contech, a vendor we have used before. However, a public bidding process will need to be completed for the installation of the bridge abutments, bridge installation and sidewalks. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Twersky, to authorize staff to advertise a public bid for the Bethlehem Pike Pedestrian Improvement Project. Motion passed 5-0.

**Approval of invoices- September 2023**

The BOS received the invoices for September 2023 totaling \$644,394.93. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion, seconded by Ms. McNeely, to approve the invoices for September 2023. Motion passed 5-0.

**Approval of minutes - September 26, 2023**

The BOS received the minutes from the September 26, 2023, BOS meeting. There were no questions or comments. Ms. Duckett made a motion to approve the September 26, 2023, minutes, seconded by Ms. McNeely. Motion passed 5-0.

**SUPERVISOR LIAISON REPORTS**

The BOS received the commission highlights from the September Historical Advisory Committee Meeting. There were no questions or comments.

**STAFF UPDATES**

There were no staff updates.

**SUPERVISORS COMMENTS**

Ms. McNeely thanked all the volunteers who attended the reception last week and thanked Ms. Farzetta for putting the event together.

Ms. Hunsicker echoed Ms. McNeely's comments.

Ms. Martin also echoed the comments.

Mr. Twersky thanked everyone for their support of the Israeli flag. The statement made at the beginning of the meeting in reference to the war in Israel will be posted on the township website.

Ms. Duckett also thanked Ms. Farzetta and all the volunteers that attended the reception.

**Adjournment:**

Ms. Duckett made a motion to adjourn at 8:57pm, seconded by Ms. McNeely. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Michelle Farzetta*

Michelle Farzetta  
Administrative Assistant