

UPPER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BOC BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

April 18, 2023

This meeting was held in person at the Township and live streamed on our website at www.uppergwynedd.org

1. Call to order

The April 18, 2023, Public Meeting of the Upper Gwynedd Township Board of Commissioners was called to order by President of the Board, Denise M. Hull at 7:00 PM. This meeting was recorded and visually taped.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by North Wales Area Library Director, Jayne Blackledge.

3. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Deanna Logan, Executive Assistant to the Township Manager. The individuals in attendance were:

Denise M. Hull	President
Katherine D. Carter	Vice President
Liz K. McNaney	Commissioner
Martha A. Simelaro	Commissioner
Sandra Zadell	Township Manager
Megan Weaver	Assistant Township Manager
Nicole Feight	Township Solicitor
Isaac Kessler	Township Engineer
David Duffy	Chief of Police

Commissioner Ruth Damsker, Finance Director Nathan Crittendon and Zoning Officer, Van Rieker were absent.

4. Announcement of Executive Sessions

Ms. Feight said the Board met in Executive Session prior to this meeting to discuss matters of personnel.

5. Recognition of Jim O'Mara for 5 years of service to the Township (will attend)

Mrs. Simelaro said Mr. O'Mara's supervisor, Bob Hegedus was unable to attend but he shared his thoughts about Jim with her. Mr. Hegedus wrote, over the past 5 years, Jim has been a valuable member of the collections team. He is licensed in the collections system and possesses a Class A license with an activated sludge subclass. Jim is always willing to chip in and help other departments. He is a shining example of a team player, a teacher of new personnel and an overall good person.

The Board of Commissioners offered their thanks and congratulations to Mr. O'Mara.

6. Public comments and concerns (limit of five minutes per individual)

Mark Connelly commented on the proposed development on Pennbrook Parkway. He said many of the comments he hears are that it is government subsidized housing. He said many people may not be aware they are using government subsidies and gave examples such as mortgage interest deductions on taxes, FHA loans, etc. He

UPPER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

discussed affordability and the difficulties of finding housing under \$500,000 in the Township and stated there is a need and demand for affordable housing in this township.

Ralph Jacob said that he is upset about comments that were made at the April 10th meeting that were addressed to the public and implied they were racists. He further commented about how this development will change the Township. He asked if the people surveyed about the comprehensive plan were only white, to which Mrs. Hull replied it was a mix of people and open to everyone. He also asked if the residents of UGT are racist.

Don Hamm said he had to work his way up to living in UGT and we shouldn't lose the ambiance of the town. He would like the Board to consider commercial or industrial development to create jobs.

Carl Smith talked about TOD (Transit Oriented Development). He researched the term TOD and said the TOD Institute lists 3 core values which he summarized; it makes it possible to live a lower stressed life without complete dependence on a car for mobility and survival, it is regional planning to repurpose primarily urban areas, it is a major solution to the serious and growing problems of climate change and global energy security by creating dense, walkable communities that greatly reduce the need for driving. He continued with his opinion regarding a TOD.

Linda Smith commented about the comprehensive plan and the uses for the Pennbrook Parkway property. She also commented that she feels the project is a subsidized housing project by the Walters Group.

Mrs. Hull said the Walters Group was unable to attend tonight, but Chief Duffy has some comments. He contacted the police departments where the Walters Group has multi family developments. All the police chiefs he contacted said there have been no issues with any of the Walters Group properties. None of the police departments altered their staffing of the force or changed their patrol for these developments.

Michael Fellmeth said he was discouraged by the last meeting and said all comments from the podium should be directed at the Board and not at the public.

Carolyn Reyes asked what the term "decentralization of poverty" means that Kim Krauter of the Walters Group used. Mrs. Hull said Ms. Krauter will be at future meetings and will be able to answer your question.

Roger Hammond commented about subsidies, tax credits and race issues. He is worried about this subsidized housing project.

Carolyn Powers commented about leadership and feels it wasn't shown at the last meeting by the comments made by a resident.

Samuel Wampole commented about building in the 3% area that is currently not occupied by homes.

Erin Feltis continued her comments about vision and asked Mrs. Hull if the Walters Group aligns with her vision. Mrs. Hull said she has not made any decisions about this plan as we are still in the learning phase. She also asked how much weight the public has on the decision. Mrs. Hull said everything is relevant and taken into consideration. Ms. Feltis was upset about the comments made last week. Mrs. Hull said we believe in freedom of speech and there were angry comments and grandstanding by more than one person, but we try to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. She feels it's important that everyone has a place to express themselves. Ms. Feltis commented about the racist comments made. Mrs. Hull said we hear inappropriate comments all the time and apologized if people were upset.

Mrs. Carter agreed with Mrs. Hull and said the one comment made last week was not the only offensive comment. She said there have been many offensive comments made over the past three years by residents. She said she respects the amendment of freedom of speech and understands that people have their own philosophies of how they live, so she continues to listen. Mrs. Carter added there is a right way and a wrong way to express an opinion and questioned what is accomplished through all the anger. She continues to take classes and learn more about land development in order to make sound decisions. She has not made up her mind about this project. She feels that respect goes both ways, and we have to learn to disagree without being disagreeable. She continued and

UPPER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

said the yelling, name calling, talking out of turn and talking while others are talking is inappropriate. Mrs. Carter said during her 25 years as resident, it hasn't always been pleasant as a person of color. She went on to say there is a right way and a wrong way to address racism but not with name calling. She said we have to be respectful and learn about each other and learn to give together. There were many times that we as commissioners are disrespected at a meeting.

Denise M. Hull, PRESIDENT **Finance/Personnel/Administration**

7. Motion to approve Resolution 07-2023 approving an intergovernmental cooperation agreement with North Wales Borough and Lower Gwynedd Township to create a joint Board of Appeals

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Carter, seconded by Mrs. Simelaro, the motion was unanimously approved.

8. Motion to approve the Proclamation for Arbor Day 2023

Mr. Jacob commented about cutting trees down for development. Mrs. Zadell said we have no choice but to issue permits to people that meet the requirements of our code. People have rights to take down trees on their private property as given to them by the US Constitution. The Board of Commissioners and the staff have a right to manage the public spaces and plant trees.

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved.

9. Motion to approve the Proclamation for Library Week 2023

- Jayne Blackledge, Director, NWAL

Mrs. Blackledge said she is proud to be the library for UGT and spoke about all the things the library has to offer the community. She appreciates the support of Upper Gwynedd.

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved.

10. Motion to approve Consent Items A – F (via roll call vote)

- A. Staff Department Reports
- B. Public Meeting Minutes of March 13, 2023
- C. Public Meeting Minutes of March 21, 2023
- D. Ambler Olympic Club 5K Race on Saturday, August 26, 2023
- E. Walk the Wissahickon Event on Saturday, September 30th and the Wissahickon 5-mile Trail Race on Saturday, November 4, 2023
- F. Merck waiver request from Chapter 113-1 & 124-5 for Sunday work hours at WP50 for equipment installations with crane lifts. Sunday work beginning May 7 – December 17, 2023

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion to approve consent items A-F was unanimously approved.

Roll call vote:	President Hull	Aye
	Vice President Carter	Aye
	Commissioner McNaney	Aye
	Commissioner Simelaro	Aye

UPPER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Katherine D. Carter, Vice President Public Safety

Mrs. Carter reminded residents about Coffee with a Cop this Saturday in the pavilion.

Ruth S. Damsker Zoning/Planning/Code Enforcement

Liz K. McNaney Public Works/Parks/Recreation

11. Motion to approve the Equipment Rental Bid for various Stormwater Projects to Floyd G. Hersh in the amount of \$313,600

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. McNaney, seconded by Mrs. Simelaro, the motion was unanimously approved.

Martha A. Simelaro Wastewater Treatment

12. Motion to approve Resolution 09-2023, Pre-Treatment Fees for 2022

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved.

13. Motion to approve the Tapping & Connection Fee Agreement with Toll Mid-Atlantic for the Zacharczuk Tract subject to receiving the tapping fee payment

Mike Fellmeth asked if the WWTP has enough capacity. He asked how much capacity we have at the plant. Mrs. Zadell told him we will get the capacity for him and added we are not permitted by DEP to accept flow that we do not have capacity for. Ms. Weaver said the tapping and connection fee goes to future infrastructure of the sanitary sewer system.

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved.

14. Motion to approve the Sanitary Sewer Easement Agreement between Toll Mid-Atlantic, Worcester Township and Upper Gwynedd Township

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. Carter, the motion was unanimously approved.

UPPER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Other Business

15. Motion to approve the April 2023 Open Invoices (via roll call vote)

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Carter, seconded by Mrs. Simelaro, the motion to approve the Open Invoices was unanimously approved.

Roll call vote:	President Hull	Aye
	Vice President Carter	Aye
	Commissioner McNaney	Aye
	Commissioner Simelaro	Aye

16. Motion to approve the April 2023 Paid Invoices (via roll call vote)

Hearing no public questions or comments, upon motion by Mrs. Simelaro, seconded by Mrs. McNaney, the motion to approve the Paid Invoices was unanimously approved.

Roll call vote:	President Hull	Aye
	Vice President Carter	Aye
	Commissioner McNaney	Aye
	Commissioner Simelaro	Aye

17. Adjournment

Mrs. Hull adjourned the meeting at 8:24 pm.



Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Brookley Zadell
Secretary

/djl