

## MEMORANDUM

To: Residents of Lower Merion Township, Ward 3

From: Michael McKeon, Ward 3 Commissioner

Re: Lower Merion Township, Ward 3 Report #19

Date: Jan. 26, 2019

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### INTRODUCTION

Ward 3 reports are emailed on a regular basis. Anyone who wishes to be added to the email distribution list should email me at: **commissioner.mike.mckeeon.ward3@gmail.com**

I also maintain a **Facebook page**. To receive updates in your Facebook feed, follow this link and like/follow my page: **<https://www.facebook.com/LowerMerionWard3Commissioner/>**

### CURRENT EVENTS

#### **ROCK HILL ROAD ZONING ORDINANCE PASSES UNANIMOUSLY! (WARD 3)**

On January 16, the Board of Commissioners unanimously approved an ordinance which removed an outdated exception from the zoning on Rock Hill Rd. By removing the exception, **the ordinance terminated a decade old apartment project for 332 units in (4) 4-story buildings at 131/151 Rock Hill Rd.** I am very excited that this ordinance passed unanimously but I do not want to overstate the vote's impact. The property owner or a future property owner can submit new plans, although the developer would be required to dedicate the first floor of each building to commercial use. **Additional long-term zoning work is needed on Rock Hill Rd so that the area can be developed to better benefit the existing Rock Hill Rd occupants and community.**

#### **THE BALA EGYPTIAN THEATRE WILL BE PROTECTED AS A CLASS 1 HISTORIC RESOURCE (WARD 9)**

Also on Jan. 16, the Board of Commissioners granted **class 1 historic status** to the **Bala Egyptian Theatre** on Bala Ave. This is the highest degree of historic protection which the Township can provide. The owner will now need permission from the Board of Commissioners in the event the owner wishes to demolish/significantly alter the property. The property is privately owned and the Township cannot compel the property owner to develop or use it.

Video of the Jan. 16 meeting is available here: <https://lmtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=JHliKdaJs7m0>



A new **BELMONT HILLS** SIGN was installed this January on Mary Watersford Rd. The old sign was badly damaged and the cost of a replacement sign was estimated at nearly \$2,500. The Township was having difficulty budgeting for the replacement. A Belmont Hills firefighter and resident stepped up and generously created an amazing replacement sign at no cost. There is a corresponding sign on Jefferson St which was temporarily removed so that the resident would have a model from which to work. Both signs are now out for the public to view. The old sign was allegedly destroyed twice by youth hockey players who used it for target practice with their sticks. Please take better care of this sign!

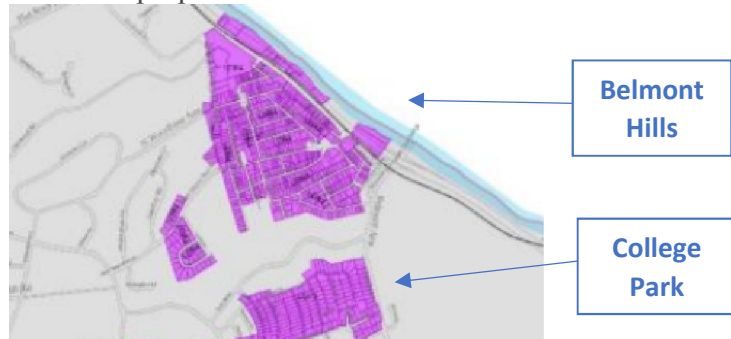
### THE NEW PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

The School District will hold a **public meeting** at **8 p.m. on Jan. 28, 2019** at **315 E Montgomery Ave** regarding the middle school to be built in Villanova. The school will take approximately 1,200 students in grades 5-8, and will open in September, 2022. Students from Gladwyne and Penn Wynne Elementary Schools will feed into it. The School District has ended its pursuit of properties on Spring Mill Rd which were considered for fields. We have seen trailers on the Bala Cynwyd MS track for the past two years (below), and this new school will provide relief from overcrowding. However, the cost of the new school is substantial; the estimated budget is **\$120 million**.



### BELMONT HILLS RESIDENTIAL ZONING

Historically, Belmont Hills has been zoned as R6A/R5. This led to development which the LM Building & Planning Dept described as a “hodgepodge.” Under the new zoning code, which the Township plans to enact on **July 31, 2019**, most residential portions of Belmont Hills will be designated as “Low Density Residential 4” or “**LDR4**.” The proposed LDR4 standards are listed to the right. LDR4 is designed to create a **single family district**, which will make future development less dense. The idea is to create a more cohesive neighborhood to improve the quality of life for the average resident and improve the parking and traffic situation over time. Below in **purple** are the portions of **Belmont Hills** and **College Park** which are proposed for LDR4.



Zoning		LDR4
Lot Dimension	Min. Lot Area (sq. ft. )	7,500
	Units/ Acre	5.81
	Min. Lot Width (ft.)	60
Bulk/Coverage	Max. Lot Coverage (%)	—
	Max. Impervious (%)	45%
	Max. Height (ft.) ★	35 ft/ 2 stories
Setback	Min. Front Setback (ft.)	25
	Min. Side Setback (ft.)	10
	Min. Rear Setback (ft.)	25

As shown above, much of **College Park** will also be zoned LDR4, which is consistent with College Park’s prior zoning. If you have questions, a regional civic association event for the new zoning in **Belmont Hills** and **Bala Cynwyd** will occur at 7 p.m. on March 25, 2019 at the Township building (75 E. Lancaster Ave).

### WELSH VALLEY PARKING RESTRICTIONS (WARDS 2 AND 3)

There is an ongoing parking issue near Welsh Valley MS covering the following locations:

- **1200 and 1300 blocks of Hagys Ford Rd** (adjacent to Welsh Valley Middle School)- where signs indicate "No Stopping or Standing" or similar language. Cars also park directly in front of accessible sidewalk ramps at pedestrian crossings.
- **1300 block of Flat Rock Rd** (between Hagys Ford and Sprague)- parking on both sides of the street during school and athletic events impedes traffic and is a pedestrian risk.

This parking issue is in Wards 2 and 3. Ward 2 Commissioner Josh Grimes and I are working with the Lower Merion Police Department to enforce the parking restrictions and make the area safer. **Please obey the parking signs or you may be cited.**

### BELMONT HILLS LIBRARY

The Library is OPEN on Monday and Tuesday (10 a.m.-8 p.m.), Wednesday and Thursday (noon-8 p.m.), and Saturday (10 a.m.-5 p.m.). The library is closed on Friday and Sunday.

**THINK SPRING!** Now is a great time to sign up for Lower Merion Little League! Ages are 5-14 for both girls and boys. It's a lot of fun! Information and registration can be found at [www.LMLL.org](http://www.LMLL.org), and please direct any questions to Wally Orlov at [President@lml.org](mailto:President@lml.org).

The new **NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB OF BALA CYNWYD WEBSITE** is here: <https://balacynwyd.org/> Check out the local news, pay your dues or become a part of the July 4 event!

If you have a spare room, please consider getting involved with the non-profit program of **Hosts for Hospitals**, which provides lodging and support for patients and guests who travel to the Philadelphia area for medical treatment. Info here: [www.hostsforhospitals.org](http://www.hostsforhospitals.org)

Are we getting nosier (...or smarter)? The Township processed **175 Right-to-Know Requests** in 2018, which was an increase of more than 50% from 2017 (111 requests).

The Township is very, very pleased to report that the **LM Citizen's Police Academy** will return with spring sessions to run on Thursday evenings from **Feb. 28-Apr. 18, 2019**. Citizens can apply here: <https://www.lowermerion.org/home/showdocument?id=21523>

### CRIME & POLICE ACTIVITY REPORT Below is a summary of recent police activity in Ward 3:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1/13/19	DUI	Belmont Ave & Jefferson	DUI- Drugs
1/14/19	Vehicle Accident	Belmont Ave	
1/15/19	Vehicle Accident	Rock Hill Rd & Belmont Ave	
1/16/19	Burglary	1300 Block Hollow Rd	Residential burglary (daytime)
1/17/19	Vehicle Accident	Jones St & Leedom Ave	Injury
1/22/19	Vehicle Accident	Consh St Rd & Manayunk	

- **Please lock your car doors!** Theft from unlocked vehicles is a significant and ongoing problem throughout the Township.
- On Jan. 14, a 62-year old man was arrested for loitering and prowling on the 100 Block of Upland Terrace (Ward 9). A patrol officer spotted the man wearing a ski mask on a property in the early morning hours. More info here on TAPINTO: <https://www.tapinto.net/towns/lower-merion-and-narberth/articles/home-invader-foiled-and-arrested-by-lmpd-special-investigation-detail>

If you missed the **SYDNEY HARPER FOUNDATION'S** January 24 Wilms Tumor research fundraiser, you can donate here: <https://sydneyharperfoundation.org/donate-1>

The heavy rain on January 23 gave the **Belmont Hills Fire Company** plenty to do. Read about their hard work and heroics here: [http://belmonthillsfireco.com/apps/public/news/newsView.cfm?News\\_ID=48](http://belmonthillsfireco.com/apps/public/news/newsView.cfm?News_ID=48)

### **PLEASE KEEP THE EXPRESSWAY RAMP CLEAN**

The Township has worked with PennDOT to clean the expressway ramps (Exit #338) into and out of Belmont Hills. As you can see below, the ramps were a mess in November. They are within PennDOT's jurisdiction and PennDOT cleaned them in December (thanks to Chris Leswing). By January, the ramps were a mess again. PennDOT work crews are not available to clean the ramps every month and we need the littering to be reduced. I suspect that residents are not responsible for much of the littering, but please do not make the situation worse...



### **UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Jan. 26	10:00 a.m.	<b>Rep. Pam DeLissio Town Hall #80</b> , 600 Cathedral Rd, Philadelphia
Jan. 26	2:00 p.m.	<b>8<sup>th</sup> Grade- Navigating the Transition to High School</b> , Belmont Hills Library
Jan. 28	6:30 p.m.	<b>Police &amp; Minority Relations Committee Meeting</b> , Ardmore Library Members of Narberth Ambulance will attend and can respond to questions about the <b>2019 Ardmore bicycle race</b>
Jan. 28	8:00 p.m.	<b>LM School District Meeting re: New Middle School</b> , 315 E Montgomery Ave
Jan. 29	7:00 p.m.	<b>County Line Rd Corridor Traffic Study Public Meeting</b> , Ludington Library
Jan. 30	5:30-7:30 p.m.	<b>Chinese New Year Family Craft</b> , Belmont Hills Library
Jan. 30	7:00 p.m.	<b>Understanding and Challenging Our Biases</b> , Cultural Training Workshop <i>Open to the public, BOC and Township staff, but <b>pre-registration</b> is required and very few spots remain!</i>
Jan. 31	7-9 p.m.	<b>Regional Civic Assoc. Meeting re: New Zoning Code (including Penn Valley)</b> , 75 E Lancaster Ave
Jan. 31	7:30-8:30 p.m.	<b>"Bala Walks" Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety Meeting</b> , BC Library
Feb. 6	6:00 p.m.	<b>LM Committee Meetings &amp; Board of Commissioners</b> , 75 E Lancaster Ave
Feb. 7	6:00 p.m.	<b>Draft Zoning Code Open House</b> , 75 E Lancaster Ave
Feb. 12	7:30 p.m.	<b>Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd Meeting</b> Academy Building, 506 Bryn Mawr Ave <a href="https://bala-cynwyd.com/">https://bala-cynwyd.com/</a>
Feb. 13	6:15 p.m.	<b>LM Building &amp; Planning Committee Meeting</b> , 75 E Lancaster Ave
Feb. 23	11:00 a.m.	<b>Meet Author Deborah Spungen ("Table for One")</b> , Belmont Hills Library
March 4	7:30 p.m.	<b>Belmont Hills Civic Assoc. Meeting</b> , 50 Ashland Ave
March 14	7:00 p.m.	<b>Penn Valley Civic Assoc. Meeting</b> , Penn Valley ES Library
March 25	7-9 p.m.	<b>Regional Civic Assoc. Meeting re: New Zoning Code (including Belmont Hills and Bala Cynwyd)</b> , 75 E Lancaster Ave