

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION
Department of Public Works

MEMORANDUM

TO: Douglas S. Cleland, Township Manager

FROM: Donald K. Cannon, Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Resolution to Establish Lower Merion Township as a Locally Identified Historic District

DATE: November 2, 2012

Attached you will find a Resolution prepared by Gil High, Township Solicitor, that, in the opinion of Gil and staff, allows for the Township to continue the use of the historic replica street signs currently used throughout the Township to identify its streets. As you may be aware, there was language added to the Manual and Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) by the Federal Government establishing guidelines for the use and/or designation of historic areas that could continue to use street signs that were not in compliance with the new size and reflectivity regulations promulgated in the MUTCD.

With your concurrence, I would like to present this Resolution to the Board for their consideration and approval at the November Public Works Committee meeting.

In addition, if the Resolution is approved, I would recommend amending the Township's Capital Improvement Plan to include funds in 2013, 2014, and 2015 for the replacement of historic replica signs that have been lost due to age and/or accidents.

**RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP
AS A LOCALLY IDENTIFIED HISTORIC DISTRICT
FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAINTAINING ITS
HISTORIC STREET NAME SIGNS**

WHEREAS, The *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*, or MUTCD defines the standards used by road managers nationwide to install and maintain traffic control devices on all public streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public traffic; and

WHEREAS, the MUTCD is published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 655, Subpart F; and

WHEREAS, Lower Merion Township has "historic" street name signs that do not meet the Standards and Guidance of Section 2D.43 of the MUTCD regarding color, letter size, and other design features, including retro reflectivity; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Lower Merion Township desires to retain its “historic” street name signs that are a key component of maintaining the historic character and environment of the Township as a whole; and

WHEREAS, The FHWA has issued regulations providing the following option for communities with historic street name signs that do not meet the provisions of the MUTCD:

“On lower speed roadways, historic street name signs within locally identified historic districts that are consistent with the criteria contained in 36 CFR §60.4 for such structures and districts may be used without complying with the provisions of Paragraphs 3, 4, 6, 9, 12 through 14, and 18 through 20 of this section.”; and

WHEREAS, the criteria set forth in 36 CFR §60.4 provide that there must be present in such district the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture and contain sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and

- (a) that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- (b) that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- (c) that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (d) that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners wishes to establish Lower Merion Township as a locally identified historic district for the purpose of exercising the option to retain the historic street name signs in the Township.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Lower Merion as follows:

1. The Board of Commissioners finds and determines that, for the purpose of exercising the option to retain its historic street name signs, the Township of Lower Merion is a locally identified historic district consistent with the criteria set forth in 36 CFR §60.4 in that the Township contains sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and that embody distinctive characteristics of a type and period, possess high artistic values, and represent a significant and distinguishable entity even though certain components may lack individual distinction. Therefore the Township of Lower Merion is a locally identified historic district.
2. The Board of Commissioners finds and determines that the street name signs at intersection corners within the Township are historic in character in that they represent unique qualities of design, manufacture and color and present an integrated and uniform appearance for those using public highways.
3. The Board of Commissioners finds and determines that the historic street name signs in the Township have for generations effectively served as navigational devices for road users.
4. The Board of Commissioners therefore elects to exercise the option provided by the FHWA to retain without complying with MUTCD requirements the Township's historic street name signs throughout the Township.

RESOLVED, this ___ day of _____, 2012, at a public meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

BY: _____
Elizabeth S. Rogan, President

ATTEST: _____
Eileen R. Trainer, Secretary