

May 16, 2011

United States Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

Reference: Appeal of Closing of Gwynedd Post Office
Docket # A2011-15

Dear Commission Members:

As one of more than 100 people who attended the "Save Our Post Office" meeting on Thursday, March 3, 2011 at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building, I came away convinced more than ever that there is **not a sound business reason** to close the Gwynedd Post Office. However, most people in attendance felt that a decision had already been made and this meeting was just the postal officials way of appeasing us. If so, that would be a travesty, knowing that our voices were not really heard and did not matter. I would hope this was not the case.

However, on April 4, 2011 a letter was placed in each of our post office boxes informing us that just one month after the "Save Our Post Office " meeting was held, our post office would indeed close on May 27 and, as of May 28, we would need to go to the Springhouse Post Office. How could the postal authority accomplish this move so quickly when they said a decision on whether or not to close the Gwynedd Post Office would take up to thirty days. Yet the decision to move and all of the necessary arrangements to move were completed in thirty days! This doesn't make sense logistically. Where is the extra space for an additional 119 boxes coming from? Who is the contractor doing the renovations for the extra space at Springhouse? Was

this “move” put out to bid? How was all of the work associated with this move accomplished in this short amount of time? The Postal Authority just does not move this fast.

At the March 3 meeting at the Lower Gwynedd Township Building, the arguments presented by Mr. Michael Roberts, the District Coordinator for the Post Office Closings, were totally without merit.

The first reason he cited for closure was what he called “*Limited Access*”. While it is true the access will be changed along route 202 because of the relocation of the south end of Meetinghouse Road, that change will be a huge improvement. Not only will the current Post Office building continue to enjoy the same visual exposure it now has on Route 202, but also the access will be even better and safer.

The new driveway entrance for the Gwynedd Post Office will only be about 100 feet north of the current entrance. This new entrance will be just off the newly relocated Meetinghouse Road. The new road will now have a traffic light making it much easier and safer to both enter and exit. We will no longer need to merge into the Route 202 traffic as we do now.

Bottom line . . . Access is better and safer!

The second reason Mr. Robert cited for the proposed closing was an “*Economic Hardship*”? I could understand if this made sound business sense but evidence was introduced that has shown that to be quite to the contrary. The rent at the Gwynedd Post Office is \$4,980.00 per year. That is only \$415.00 per month and the landlord, Foulkeways Retirement Community, takes care of the property as part of that rent.

This Post Office services more than 300 residents who reside on the Foulkeways grounds and walk to the site each day to both pick up their mail and just get out to walk as exercise. In addition, there are no CAM costs (Common Area Maintenance Costs) at the Gwynedd location that you would incur as additional rent in a shopping center. It was also determined that the 119 post office boxes contribute more than \$8,568.00 a year in revenue. This alone more than pays the rent and contributes to the cost of an employee. Also, that \$8,568.00 yearly rent figure is actually much higher because that dollar amount is based on the cost of the lowest (smallest) box rental of \$36.00 per six months, which is \$ 72.00 per year. About half of the boxes are larger boxes and are priced much higher. I personally have one of the many larger boxes - but not the largest - and pay **\$200.00** annually. In addition, I would assume you would be renting extra space at the Springhouse location to house the Gwynedd boxes. It would be unlikely that the extra space will cost \$ 415.00 per month.

Bottom line . . .

It costs less to operate Gwynedd than Springhouse!

The problems associated with a move to the Springhouse Post Office location were voiced over and over by those in attendance at the standing room only meeting. Most of the people have used that facility and were familiar with its shortcomings. Everyone was unanimous in his or her concerns about using this location safely.

Access to that shopping center in Springhouse is extremely dangerous and parking is already very limited. The Post Office itself is located next door to a very busy pizzeria. Mr. Roberts said there is ample additional parking in the rear lot to compensate for the shortage out front. I have since checked on

that rear parking lot many times now and each time it has been full to capacity. Presumably, the employees that work in the other stores in the Shopping Center use those spots. In addition, all deliveries are made at the rear of the center and large trucks are trying to squeeze in tight spaces to complete their deliveries to all of the other businesses. How can you add the traffic of another 119 personal postal boxes and tell us all will be fine.

Exiting the Springhouse Post Office and trying to make a left hand turn back onto Bethlehem Pike to return to our area of the township is even more dangerous than entering. Mr. Mark Grey, a Lower Gwynedd Township Supervisor who had just heard about the meeting and was present, echoed this dangerous situation. He said the township would need to take a hard look at anything the Post Office would want to do to expand the Springhouse site because of the safety factor that already exists at that shopping center.

A possible solution that I see would be to merge the Springhouse Post Office into the Gwynedd Post Office and use the larger carriage house that had been previously proposed and approved by the Lower Gwynedd Township Board of Supervisors for the post office use (see enclosed documents). Mr. Roberts, the Post Office representative, however said he had never heard of any such proposal. In talking to the Representatives at Foulkways we learned that the Post Office did initially agree to the move to the carriage house but at some point Post Office representatives stopped returning calls or cooperating in any way (Is this another indication that a decision had already been made?). If both Post Office operations were to be merged at Gwynedd, the rent factor would have to be significantly less than in a shopping center where the Springhouse Unit is now located. Your business here

in Gwynedd would then have better exposure, better parking, better safer access, and with better hours the result should be a vibrant, bustling and profitable business model. Chris Suroiec has spoken to the management at Foulkways and they are willing to honor the current lease even if the Post Office has given notice to terminate.

It is important to note that the Gwynedd Post Office is one of the 35 original Post Offices set up in Pennsylvania. It dates back to 1810 when it opened across the street (Route 202) in the Gwynedd Friends Meeting House. It then moved across the street to its present location in 1955.

I asked that a similar letter I previously wrote to Mr. Carl Zingle, the North Wales Postmaster, be forwarded with Mr. Roberts recommendations to the board that makes the final decision. I do not know if he did in fact submit it to that Board.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. If you need to get in touch with me, please feel free to do so at my address below.

Yours truly,

Ronald M. DeOrzio, Sr.
P. O. Box 478
Gwynedd, PA 19436