

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation
Commission Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, May 14, 2025**

The Chair, Cynthia Murnyack-Czarnecki, called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Roll Call

Members:

Present- David Morahan; Theresa Szimpl; Vice-Chair, Ralph White; Chair, Cynthia Murnyack-Czarnecki

Also in Attendance: Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council

Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission Held
Wednesday, April 9, 2025

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Szimpl to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission held Wednesday, April 9, 2025, and to approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Mr. Morahan, "yes"; Ms. Szimpl, "yes"; Mr. White, "yes"; Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki, "yes".

The vote was 4 for and 0 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

Landmarks Nominations

Mr. Morahan advised that he spoke with Mr. White after the last meeting about Avon Boot Shop since they are such a long-standing business in Avon, granted they moved, but they are still a long-standing business in Avon. He added he just wanted to mention it to the Commission. Mr. White stated he has still yet to speak with Mr. Reynolds, who owns the Dairy Treat, as he would really like to get that business nominated as well. Mr. White noted that the owner has said no in the past, but Mr. White is hoping he could be persuaded.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked how long the Avon Boot Shop has been in Avon. Mr. White responded it goes back to Century Hardware which would be around the 1950s. He added it changed from Century Hardware (also known as Avon Hardware) to Avon Gun and Tack to Avon Boot. He noted they moved out of town for a short time and moved to North Olmsted then closed that store; then they built their free-standing building on Chester Road. The business was originally located at (36775 Detroit Road) where Avon Eye Design is currently located; across from the former municipal building; Old Avon Village and next to Stringer, Stringer and Gasior Law.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked if the same family owned it and Mr. White responded basically because the Century Hardware (Avon Hardware) owner Julian Forthofer passed away quite a long time ago. He added that his son, Daniel Forthofer, and Daniel's wife, Ann Zinni Forthofer, own Avon Boot Shop. He clarified that the Avon Boot Shop was a part of Avon Gun and Tack which was in the 1980's.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki inquired of Mr. White if the business is over 50 years old and Mr. White responded he believes so if you include Century Hardware (Avon Hardware) store and Gun and Tack shop. He added he wished it was in the same location, but it is something to consider and Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki agreed. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked if Mr. White knew Julian Forthofer's son, Daniel Forthofer. Mr. White stated he knows who Daniel Forthofer is.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked Mr. White if he would be willing to ask Daniel Forthofer of Avon Boot Shop if would like to have his business recognized. Mr. White stated that he is sure he would like to be recognized,

and he believes Daniel's wife regularly works there. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked if Mr. White has any photos of the preceding businesses that they could include with the application and show on the monitors during the presentation should Daniel Forthofer be willing to participate. Mr. White stated he had some pictures, but they are not the best pictures.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated if they get to that point possibly looking through old photos so that they could show those on the monitors the evening of the presentation. Mr. White stated he does not have any good photos but has some photos of the building in the background and a nice photo of the post office which was at the end of the west side of the building. He added he does not have any photos and noted it has been remodeled quite a bit. He stated back when it was a hardware store it was kind of plain, but for Avon Gun and Tack they put in a boardwalk out front, and it was kind of fancy but that is all gone now.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked, regarding the next nomination Dairy Treat, if Mr. White believes he would be interested in speaking with Mr. Reynolds and Mr. White advised that he plans to speak with him.

Landmarks Letters of Recognition

There were no landmarks letters of recognition to consider at this time.

Avon Cemetery- Ohio Historical Marker Application

Ms. Szimpl provided a PowerPoint presentation of the Ohio Historical Marker Update. She advised the application submission has been completed and the revised application criteria included the America 250-Ohio Originals: Highlighting Points of Pride and Unity. Ms. Szimpl provided a review of the Avon Landmarks additional supporting documents which included Avon Center Cemetery America 250, Relevance of Location, and Bibliography.

Ms. Szimpl referenced the application that was submitted on April 26, 2025, and a prior date of April 17, 2025, had to be moved due to a change in criteria focus.

Ms. Szimpl advised the revised criteria – Ohio History Connection - Special Call May 2025 noted:

- The Ohio Historical Markers program is seeking marker applications that celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States. Applications should recognize individuals who have shaped our shared identity as a state and nation. Is there an individual who influenced or transformed your community and, in doing so, contributed to our national story? The markers program wants to help you honor and celebrate them during the semi quincennial year.

Throughout 2026, Ohio will join the nation in celebrating America's 250th birthday. As part of this celebration, the Ohio History Connection is pleased to announce an America 250 Ohio Historical Markers Special Call: "Ohio Originals: Highlighting Points of Pride and Unity."

To commemorate Ohioans' significant role in our nation's history, successful marker applications will feature individuals from Ohio's first inhabitants to the late-20th century and highlight stories that honor Ohio's rich heritage.

Note: The markers program attempts to award markers equitably throughout Ohio. This means that priority will be given to counties with fewer than 12 markers vs. awarding multiple markers to counties with more than 24 markers.

Ms. Szimpl added that Lorain County has 37 Ohio Markers as of April 26, 2025. She advised there is revised

documentation focused on the new criteria with the Commission Members. Ms. Szimpl stated they had to write a relevance statement in relation to Center Cemetery America 250, which included the following:

Avon Center Cemetery America 250

- “Ohio Originals: Highlighting Points of Pride and Unity.”
- “Our points of pride and unity surrounding the Avon Center Cemetery focus not only on the unique geological feature that it is, but also on the noteworthy, significant, distinguished, and influential individuals who have been laid to rest there.”
- “Revolutionary soldier, John Prentiss Calkins (1752-1836), who served in the New Hampshire Regiment, and Wilbur S. Cahoon (1772-1825) who was Avon’s first settler (Williams, 1879 271), are buried in the cemetery. Along with these individuals, Dr. Norton S. Townshend (1815-1895) and veterans of the War of 1812, the Civil War, WWI and WWII have been inhumed in this cemetery (Herdendorf, 2010, 167).”
- “Mr. Cahoon arrived in 1814. In 1825 he built the first framed house in Lorain County (Williams, 1879, 271) which stands now in Avon and is open to the public as a museum. The museum hosts tours to educate the public on the history of not only the family, but also of Avon (The Villager Newspaper, 2022 and Wicinski, 2025). The Wilbur Cahoon House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (National Park Service, Reference No. 78002104). Mr. Cahoon, an Old-Line Whig party member (Beers & Co., 1894, 622 and Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. Whig Party), established the first sawmill and gristmill (Williams, 1879, 275) in the area which allowed the community to thrive and flourish around them. Prior to being known as Avon, the township was organized as Troy (Williams, 1879, 274). As part of this organization, a special election was held on June 22, 1819, which resulted in Wilbur S. Cahoon and Jabez Burrell being elected the first Justices of the Peace for the townships of Avon, Sheffield, and Dover (Herdendorf, 2010, 167 and Williams, 1879, 274).”
- “Dr. Norton S. Townshend served this district as a U. S. congressman from 1851-1853 (Ohio Historical Marker 6-47) and later he served as an Ohio state senator. Townshend was a member of the antislavery “Free Soil” Party that espoused civil rights for women and free blacks. Dr. Townsend was instrumental in the founding of the Ohio Agricultural and Mechanical College in Columbus, which in 1878 this land grant college became The Ohio State University (Ohio History Connection, 2025 6-47).”
- “It is these significant individuals, among others who shall not be mentioned here, who ventured, persevered, and built the foundation of the community of Avon that thrives today. It is these people of foresight and fortitude that organized and united the community that we, many generations hence, owe a debt of gratitude and one that can never be repaid.” Page 2 of 3

Avon Center Cemetery - Relevance of Location to Subject of Marker

- “Visitors to the Avon Center Cemetery naturally gravitate to the current Veterans Memorial and U.S. flag. We are proposing to place the Ohio Historical Marker near the Veterans Memorial in the maintained landscaped bed. Placing the marker in our

proposed location will also mitigate any potential damage which may result from mowers. Presently, there is a State Route 83 and State Route 254 Intersection Improvement Project (State of Ohio PID 111283, LOR ST 0254 05.66) underway directed by the State of Ohio. We do not anticipate any issues with the current location of the Veterans Memorial and the U.S. flag nor our proposed Ohio Historical Marker placement. However, in the event the State of Ohio changes course in a manner which would necessitate the need for the Veterans Memorial and U.S. flag to be relocated, we would maintain our plan which is to install the Ohio Historical Marker alongside the Veterans Memorial and U.S. flag in the newly designated area in the Avon Center Cemetery.”

Entire Bibliography- Ms. Szimpl advised the bibliography includes the entire list of resources used in the application process (available upon request).

Ms. Szimpl stated there are points that they use for highlighting points of pride and unity, the second section for the statement of significance which they reviewed several months ago, section three was for their actual marker text that they submitted, and the fourth section was their tentative dedication date and location of which they just noted as the relevance of the location.

Mr. White inquired in reference to the plaque if their application is approved, will it have the “Ohio Originals” listed on it. Ms. Szimpl responded no as that was a sample of the marker they are going to get. She noted there are two different markers so it will just be the Ohio Historical Marker and then their verbiage.

Ms. Szimpl advised the next slide goes over what is next in the review process. She added she provided an additional document tonight because they just received an email response this morning from Ms. Russell, Ohio History Connection. Ms. Szimpl read the Ohio Historical Marker Application email response received by Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki from Laura Russell of the Ohio History Connection on May 14, 2025, at 11:02 a.m., which states, “Your marker application arrived safely in my office (or inbox) before the end of our May 1 deadline. All applications have been checked-in, and a list compiled of suggested titles, topics, and counties around the State.”

“Here is what happens next:

- All applications will be checked to make sure they are complete.
- All applications will be checked to make sure they meet the America250-Ohio SPECIAL CALL.
- If your application is complete, it will be read by marker program staff and other internal readers at the Ohio History Connection. “

“They will be carefully looking at your Statement of Significance, Suggested Marker Text, and supporting sources.

- The applications will be discussed and sorted from top to bottom in order of ranking and some decisions made around what applications to accept or return.
- Decisions will be made around program capacity and the number of applications we can accept for the marker cycle that runs July to June.
- The list of the applications that the grant committees approved and those that did not request funding will again be scrutinized internally and final decisions made about what applications to accept into the program.”

“All applicants will be notified by email and/or regular mail by mid-August.

This process takes time, and the Ohio Historical Markers program does its best to balance the program across

the state and across the topics presented. We truly appreciate the hard work that you put into pulling together all of the materials requested in the application.”

Ms. Szimpl stated the last item to cover that Ms. Russell did not mention is that part of the application said, “should you be awarded/application accepted in mid-August, your text is then sent into a production phase” in which “once a historian from the Ohio History Connection confers with the Commission and ensures all of their text is complete it takes approximately 6 months for your marker to be completed.” She noted if they accept them in mid-August, it would probably be 1-2 months before they go to everyone so there are potentially two more windows to October that they will review your text, approve the text, then probably by November it would then go into production so probably the earliest a plaque would be available would be May of 2026. She noted they are not proposing their installation to happen until September of 2026 due to the road widening and tight schedules.

Mr. White what stands out to him is that Lorain County already has 37 plaques and there is probably a reason for that. He added to think back 150 to 200 years ago where people were located, near the lake, near the Ohio River so those are probably the heavy areas where there is historical significance. He added the middle of the State may not have anything, but they probably had nothing to make note of. Ms. Szimpl added, or they do not have a Commission or the people to go through the intensity of the application process. Mr. White added the thing that scared him about this application is they had to do equal and diverse, nothing on merit.

Ms. Szimpl stated the Ohio History Connection had been previously awarded a grant by the federal government that has been rescinded and that grant was going to help pay for approximately 10 markers for certain topics and now the grant money is no longer there so she does not know if those organizations if they would pursue getting a marker since they are not going to get federal money to pay the \$5,000 marker, whereas they have the commitment of the City to back them and noted that may be an advantage to them because there may be 5 organizations that wont be able to award. Mr. White stated he cannot believe how much the price went up on the markers. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated with the refocusing on the criteria around the America 250 Special Call, they have to be realistic and not assume that they will be awarded a marker. She added in that case, to save them from having to do all this work again, the entire file has been copied and transferred to portable devices, one that Ms. Szimpl has and one that she has. She advised she also has the entire file on her laptop and believes Ms. Szimpl has the file on her laptop as well. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki noted the file is stored in four places and in the event, they are not awarded a marker when the next season comes around, they will go to the file and update as needed and re-submit.

Member Comments

Mr. White stated he received a phone call from a man that oversees the Frostville Museum located at 24101 Cedar Point Rd. in North Olmsted. He added this person is interested in any houses that are set for demolition because he would be interested in going inside to salvage doors and windows, etc. for projects in buildings and homes that they are rebuilding on the Frostville Village premises.

Mr. White noted if no one has been there, the Frostville Museum is on Cedar Point Road and is a very cool place. Mr. White added it is similar to Olde Avon Village but without the business aspect. He stated it is just a museum where people work every day in maintenance, and they rebuild these homes, churches, etc. and it is really nice. Mr. White advised they could make a note of this so when a demolition permit request comes before the Commission and if the house has some cool features that Frostville Museum could be contacted to invite them to go inside to survey for salvageable items. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated she is sure he is interested in windows and door frames, woodwork, etc. and Mr. White agreed.

Mr. White referenced the DeChant home that was demolished on Detroit Road in Sheffield Village, Matt Nahorn salvaged the fireplace and Ed Herdendorf salvaged some things that he had incorporated in his house and noted that is the perfect example. He added there are always cool things that can be repurposed. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated she does not know how many Commission Members have gone to the Frostville Museum for events, but they do a marvelous job, and they utilize their buildings in different ways. She noted she attended a tea event there and they utilized the Frostville Village Church for the program and their Strelau Events Barn for the actual serving of the tea and they have built nice public washroom facilities in the Stearns Carriage House. She added they really invested in making this a place where the public can come and learn and utilize the facility. Mr. White agreed it is very nice.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated that this is the last time Ms. Markovitz will be with the Commission. She expressed that they wish her the best of luck and thanked her for her service to this Commission. Ms. Markovitz thanked the Commission and stated she will miss everyone very much and it was such a pleasure working with all of them.

Audience Comments

There were no audience comments.

Adjourn: 7: 26 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Morahan to adjourn the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission, and the vote was: Ms. Szippel, "yes"; Mr. White, "yes"; Mr. Morahan, "yes"; Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki, "yes".

The vote was 4 for and 0 against and the Chair declared the motion passed.

The Chair announced that the next Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission will be held on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at 7:00 P.M

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council

PASSED: _____

SIGNED BY: _____
Cynthia Murnyack-Czarnecki, Chair

ATTEST:

Barbara Brooks, Clerk of Council