

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation
Commission Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, July 10, 2024**

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, June 12, 2024

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, June 12, 2024, and approve said minutes as published. 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. White

There were no landmark nominations.

Landmarks Letters of Recognition

Mr. White

There were no letters of recognition.

Recognition of Center Cemetery Cleaning Gravestone Project – Volunteers

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated that they appreciate the members of Boy Scout Troop 333 which also included their Troop Leader Matthew Wendling and Assistant Troop Leader Paul Minnillio who all worked very hard on Saturday, June 15, 2024. She stated they extend their gratitude to the Avon Historical Society for providing the donuts for the boy scouts and to Ms. Szimpl for coordinating the delivery of the donuts.

There was a presentation recognizing Boy Scout Troop 333 which highlighted their efforts to clean the Center Cemetery. The first two slides showed pictures of the Center Cemetery taken on May 17, 2016, courtesy of Guy Gerbik. The third slide provided information on why they are cleaning the stones. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised they are cleaning the stones as a refresher and to remove dirt, pollutants, biological organisms, and bird droppings, which can accelerate the deterioration of a gravestone.

The slide three picture is courtesy of Linda Gandee of Cleveland.com, and it gives them an idea of what some very dirty gravestones look like, a gravestone in progress in addition to gravestones in the background that have already been cleaned. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki added this slide shows why they are making these efforts to clean them and preserve them as they do. The subsequent slide (slide 4) shows two members of Boy Scout Troop 333, Austin Jenkins and Zack Doucette, who were having a good time cleaning and they accomplished a lot of work while also having fun. The next slide (slide 5) shows Boy Scout Troop 333 member Reece Minnillo, who was working very hard on a stone that was quite large in height. The following slide (slide 6) displays father-son team Alex and Ken Voll working on one of the stones. The next slide shows (slide 7) Boy Scout Troop 333 parents Ken Voll and Jeff Altomari, who were working on a challenging gravestone, and they did a great job cleaning it. The subsequent slide (slide 8) illustrates the Landmark Preservation Commission's thank you to Troop 333 as their service is greatly appreciated. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated at the end of the gravestone cleaning work session that was held on June 15, 2024, Assistant Boy Scout Troop 333 Leader Paul Minnillo, indicated he felt the scouts enjoyed cleaning and helping with the gravestone cleaning project. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated Mr. Minnillo also indicated to her that the scouts would be willing to participate in another gravestone cleaning work session. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised they will reach out to the Boy Scout Troop 333 Leaders to discuss another morning time frame that the scouts would be available to work on the gravestones.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki inquired of Mr. White the potential timing for setting up the next gravestone cleaning work session. Mr. White advised that he has already received 5 gallons of D-2 cleaning solution and would prefer to work on a cool day and possibly earlier in the morning as they have done previously as it helps with the temperature as well. He stated that Jane Crandall of the Cemetery Restoration Company, was doing a project in Eaton Township for their cemetery, and they wanted to have some volunteers that would be interested in learning how to clean stones. Ms. Crandall suggested to him rather than charge the volunteers \$250 for training, she would supply materials and the volunteers could come to Avon and Mr. White could teach them for free and they would clean the stones. Mr. White informed Ms. Crandall that if they are willing to do that it is something they could work out. Mr. White added that he has not heard from Ms. Crandall on setting that up as of yet. He expressed that the boy scouts are the priority whenever they are available to work on the stones.

Mr. White stated he has been going by the cemetery and he noticed a couple spots that appear to have been missed which surprised him as he was using the D-2 cleaning solution. He noted it is just not as clean as the rest of the stones that were completed. Mr. White indicated he may go back up there to take care of any missed areas on the stones. In addition, he advised that he has been up there, and another round of estimates were completed. Mr. Ron Crandall and Ms. Jane Crandall met Mr. White at the cemetery on Monday, July 8, 2024, to get another quote; however, he was unsure if that was the correct date of the meeting. Mr. White advised that it is for smaller tasks that need to be done in the cleaning of the gravestones. Mr. White commented there are also some gravestones that could break, as it is just a matter of time but overall there are not that many and some are smaller. He added there are a couple rows, when looking at the cemetery from Detroit Road, on the northside where the hill comes down where all of the gravestones are leaning. Mr. White advised they are going to arrange to take care of all of those gravestones. Mr. White noted after this round, he believes they will be set for a while.

Mr. White advised that there are foot stones as well that he would like to remedy as they are sinking to the point of being almost gone. He stated he will pull the stones out to fix the sinking issue and commented that this would be a less expensive round and he has further plans to work on this down the road. He added if they could get some of these gravestones cleaned and fixed, he believes it will look

great.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki inquired if they have enough stones that still need to be cleaned but that warrant the boy scouts coming for another two-hour session and Mr. White responded yes. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked if it would be a good idea to have the boy scouts on the same day that he would have the volunteers he would be training the cleaning of the gravestones. Mr. White advised until he knows exactly how many volunteers would be in that training session he would not arrange them at the same time as of yet. He advised he needs to obtain some more information on those interested and how many volunteers there would be total in that training session. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki requested that Mr. White review his calendar for Saturdays in August to see if he has a day that they could request the boy scouts to assist with the gravestone cleaning again. She added the boy scouts prefer a 7:30 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. start time because they have come to realize that once they approach late morning and midday at the cemetery it gets quite warm. Mr. White advised he could work with that time frame and review his calendar for August. Mr. Morahan advised they are making metal brackets for all the GAR Stars and believes they will be ready in a week or so.

Member Comments:

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised that in preparation for Wreaths Across America this coming December 14, 2024, efforts have begun to document the veterans buried in the Center Cemetery. They are grateful to Michelle Morahan from the City's Service Department for providing two reference documents, "Soldiers of 1861" courtesy of Mr. Bennett, the Town Clerk at the time, and the second reference was a 31-page list of Center Cemetery graves from May 17, 2019, organized by row and plot, which indicated there were 1, 010 plots at that time in the cemetery. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated it was from these two documents that they began and after melding the information from those documents as well as a map of the Center Cemetery developed by the W.P.A in the 1930s, efforts were made to physically locate the graves of the veterans in the Center Cemetery on June 15, 2024, when the boy scouts were cleaning. Ms. Murnyack-Czarneck advised that one of the boy scouts volunteered to walk the cemetery with Mr. Leonard Czarnecki to try to document grave information; however, she noted after a few hours walking through the cemetery and looking for the gravestones of veterans, it is evident the project is more challenging than originally anticipated and that they had planned for and she further advised they will regroup on the project in the upcoming weeks.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki referenced Mr. White's prior comments regarding war veteran gravestones and inquired if he is aware of the location for the gravestones of the World War I and World War II veterans. Mr. White confirmed that is correct and added that they are usually marked but if they are not marked on the headstone then he was not sure. He added there are a couple Civil War gravestones as well, but war information is not listed on the stones. He noted war information is documented on paper. Mr. White commented that he believed they had all of the war veterans documented but there may be a couple that they missed. Mr. White advised that Kerry Barvincak, Commander of the VFW, indicated that he counted 20; however, Mr. White was unsure how he came up with that number, but noted it is possible. Mr. White commented there are close to 20 Civil War veterans.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated when she tried to meld this information, they were looking at 34 or 35 Civil War veterans. She added that is how many she was able to locate from the two documents and trying to find those graves was challenging. She is unsure if some stones have sunk completely. Mr. White agreed that possibly many of the stones are broken and he hates to say it but probably discarded. He advised with the restorations of the past year, there are buried markers where the marker is missing but the base

is still there.

Mr. White advised they pulled up at least three bases and they have uncovered a couple of markers that were completely buried. John Spendlove was one of them, who died in approximately 1851. Mr. White advised his marker had been gone a long time. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated it could be quite possible that when they are looking at a list of 32, 34, or 35 Civil War veterans, she was unsure of the exact number and it is possible they may not find all of those stones. Mr. White confirmed that is probably likely as well. He added they could have been unmarked graves because there is a little marker on the front by the Detroit Roadside area, there is no headstone but there is a GAR marker and a star was on it so it always gets a flag but whether there is a grave there or not, he cannot really say for certain.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked Mr. White if there are veterans from any other wars that he is aware of other than the Civil War; World War I and World War II? Mr. White stated there is one veteran from the Revolutionary War and there is one veteran from the War of 1812. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki inquired if there are any veteran graves beyond World War II that served. Mr. White stated he does not believe there are any Korea or Vietnam War veteran graves as they would all be listed. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated they will regroup on how to handle this project and get it moving forward.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki further advised that to date there is no additional information on the preparation of the application for the Ohio Historical Marker for the Center Cemetery. She stated the project is still ongoing, but they have no further updates on it.

Audience Comments:

Rick Varga, 33676 Reserve Lane, stated he wanted to provide an update on a project that the Tree Commission is working on and one that involves the Landmarks Preservation Commission. He stated the project is for a historical tree ring. He noted with the help of Mr. White and Ms. Szimpl of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and Mr. Smith of the Tree Commission, they have been putting together this historical tree ring project that illustrates the history of Avon in relation to this tree ring and it features notable events that take place in Avon specifically from the 1800s to the present date. Mr. Varga thanked Mr. White and Ms. Szimpl as being part of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, who contributed to this historical tree ring project as it is a very exciting project. He added they are having two tree rings made which would include mobile stands so they can be moved to the local schools and to different places throughout the City.

Adjourn: 7:17 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. Szimpl, "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 would be held on Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council