

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, August 12, 2026
At 7:00 p.m.**

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: Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council

**Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission
Held Wednesday, July 8, 2026**

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Morahan to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission held Wednesday, July 8, 2026, 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. White, Mr. Morahan, Ms. Szimpl, and Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki reported that there were no Landmark Nominations.

Landmarks Letters of Recognition

Mr. White, Mr. Morahan, Ms. Szimpl, and Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki reported that there were no Landmark Letters of Recognition.

Avon Center Cemetery

Restoration

Mr. White reported that restoration efforts at Avon Center Cemetery are presently at a standstill. The Commission is awaiting Sweat Brothers Tree Service to perform tree work at the site, the cost of which will consume a portion of the funds set aside for restoration. Mr. White noted that if funds remain after the tree work is completed, restoration efforts will resume in the fall. Regarding the volunteer cleaning initiative, Mr. White stated he has not yet spoken with the local schoolteacher to arrange student volunteers, but that he plans to do so when the weather turns cooler.

Ohio Historical Markers Program

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki reported that there is no new update on the Ohio Historical Landmark Application. She referenced the most recent correspondence on file: an email dated April 28, 2026, at 3:05 PM from Betsy Hedler, Ohio Historical Markers Program Manager, which confirmed that the Commission's application had been accepted. That email also requested that applicants refrain from contacting the program before mid-August. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki noted that as today's date is August 12th, the Commission has not yet received any further update from the Ohio Historical Markers Program. No additional comments were offered by Commission Members.

Wreaths Across America

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki reported that the Wreaths Across America initiative is still in process. The Commission has received confirmation from the DAR that it is on their list, and the Commission will proceed as instructed.

Update from the City Council Work Session held on Monday, August 3, 2026

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki invited Ms. Szimpl to present the update to the Commission and the audience.

Ms. Szimpl reported that she and Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki attended the City Council Work Session on Monday, August 3, 2026, for the purpose of bringing City Council up to date regarding the meeting that had taken place on July 20th about the Colvin Sweet Home, attended by Mr. Morahan, Mr. White, Ms. Fechter, and Mayor Jensen.

Ms. Szimpl explained that at the July 20th meeting, Ron Larson — a local preservationist who owns the Avon Village on Detroit Road and another nearby property — had expressed interest in potentially moving the Colvin Sweet Home to his property in order to save it from demolition. Mr. Larson toured the home and engaged a house-moving contractor from Pennsylvania with whom he had worked on prior projects. The initial estimate to physically move the home — blocking and relocating it approximately one mile — was approximately \$100,000, and that figure did not include the cost of a new foundation, which would be an additional expense. The Commission is also awaiting an estimate from First Energy regarding the cost of managing power lines along Detroit Road.

Ms. Szimpl described the key themes presented to City Council at the Work Session: the relocation feasibility study being assembled by Mr. Larson, the intent for Mr. Larson to report his findings back to the Mayor, and the Commission's goal of using that data to guide flexible, collaborative conversations with the property owner (Petros Homes), the City Administration, and potentially Mr. Larson. She noted that the Commission communicated it would keep Council informed as new information became available, and that Council was welcome to reach out to the Commission.

Ms. Szimpl relayed that Mr. Modic of Petros Homes was also looking at the possibility of relocating the home elsewhere on the existing property, and that the Mayor had asked whether Petros Homes might have some financial buy-in. Council Members acknowledged they could not make any commitments without full cost estimates in hand. Ms. Szimpl also noted that the City's legal counsel had commented on the legal complexities involved, warning that fighting demolition efforts could ultimately lead to litigation. One Council Member raised the question of whether the Commission's authority could be strengthened through additional legislation or regulations. Mr. Gasior advised that doing so was very difficult and that the likely result would be litigation. Ms. Szimpl noted the observation that while a small number of historic homes in Avon still sit on sizable parcels of land, this may not be a frequent issue going forward, but that it might warrant a closer review of what properties could face similar circumstances in the future.

Following Ms. Szimpl's report, Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki opened discussion among Commission Members.

Mr. White offered a substantive commentary on the circumstances surrounding the Colvin Sweet Home and the broader challenge facing the Commission. He observed that the previous property owner had never accepted a Landmark designation plaque, meaning the home lacked a visible Historical Marker even though it remained on the Commission's list. When the developer acquired the property, he had no knowledge of its Landmark status and only discovered it upon applying for a demolition permit — at which point, in Mr. White's view, it was nearly "too late." He reflected that once the community's attention was drawn to the house, broad support emerged to save it, but that a more proactive approach is needed to prevent such situations from arising again. He suggested that when properties come before the Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, or City Council, there should be some form of acknowledgment — perhaps a

shared list of Landmark designated properties — so that all parties are informed early in the development review process. He noted that currently, the Building Department is the only body in possession of such a list, and that developers are only made aware of a property's Landmark status when they seek a demolition permit, by which time they have often already completed planning review, had initial discussions, and purchased the property.

Mr. White was candid about a historical decision made by the Commission: approximately 20 years ago, when the Commission was established, the Members chose not to pursue "Certified Local Government" status, which would have provided the Commission with stronger regulatory authority but would have also brought considerably more rules, regulations, and oversight. He acknowledged the trade-off openly, stating, "We knew that we wouldn't be able to save anything really without that, but we let it go because we didn't want that kind of oversight." He expressed that this situation has highlighted the need for better coordination and organization, and suggested that the Commission should work more closely with the Planning Commission and other bodies to ensure Landmarks are on the radar of developers from the beginning of any project.

Mr. White also reflected on the history of successful preservation in Avon, noting that several historic structures — the old schoolhouse, the George Sweet House, and others — had been saved when development occurred around them, often because a private party such as Mr. Larson had intervened to purchase or protect the property. "If a developer goes in buying a property and knows that, he can either choose not to buy it or find a way to work around it," he said, expressing optimism that better information-sharing could lead to better outcomes.

Mr. Morahan offered a direct suggestion: that the most practical course of action for the City would be to negotiate with the developer to acquire one of the available lots and move the Colvin Sweet Home to that location.

Ms. Szippel added that the Commission needs to follow up with the Mayor, as a meeting between Mr. Modic and the Mayor had been anticipated, and the Commission does not yet know the outcome or whether there are resulting action items. She stated that someone on the Commission needs to take ownership of that follow-up.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki then noted a procedural concern related to the City Charter. She referenced Article 14, Section 2 of the November 2022 edition of the Avon City Charter, which addresses the Commission's duties and powers with respect to demolition permits, and noted that under that provision, once the Commission receives the application for demolition, the applicant has six months before the demolition may proceed. She observed that the Colvin Sweet Home's demolition permit application was first brought before the Commission at the April 8, 2026 meeting, meaning that six months from that date would be October 8, 2026 — a date that is now approaching. She raised the question of whether the six-month clock begins from the date of application or from the date of a formal denial vote.

Mr. White clarified his understanding of past Commission practice: the six-month period has always been interpreted to begin from the date the Commission votes to deny — not from the date of application. He emphasized that the Commission has never formally voted on the Colvin Sweet Home application; it has only been tabled. He stated that in his view, "Once we say no, then you've got six months." He expressed concern that, under a different interpretation of the charter, the six-month window could already be running out without the Commission having had an opportunity to fully explore alternatives.

Ms. Szippel recalled that Mr. Gasior had raised the same point at the Work Session, suggesting that the six-month period may have begun from the date of application — and that this uncertainty had prompted additional concern among Commission Members. She indicated this matter needs to be clarified directly

with the Mayor at the anticipated follow-up meeting.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki confirmed that this Charter clarification would be added as a specific action item for the Commission's conversation with the Mayor.

The Commission then heard from an audience member. Rick Varga, 33676 Reserve Way, addressed the Commission. Mr. Varga explained that the Mayor had contacted him approximately one week prior, inquiring whether he had a relationship with Zbin Landscape of Rocky River — a business that owns approximately ten acres of land on the south side of Detroit Road. The Mayor asked Mr. Varga to reach out to Zbin to explore whether they would be willing to accept the Colvin Sweet Home on their property. Mr. Varga reported that he contacted Zbin, who expressed that they would be "more than happy to work with the City" to explore the possibility. Mr. Varga relayed this back to the Mayor, who responded positively, and that is the extent of his current knowledge of where the matter stands.

Mr. Varga noted that while the business is based in Rocky River, the owner has lived in Avon for at least 20 years. Mr. Morahan clarified that the Zbin property is located approximately one quarter of a mile west of the Colvin Sweet Home, on the same side of Detroit Road.

Commission Members received this information positively. Mr. White expressed enthusiasm for the prospect, noting that a location one quarter of a mile away on the same street — compared to Mr. Larson's property, which would have placed the home at the back of a lot out of public view — would allow the house to remain visible from Detroit Road. "It needs to be seen. It's a beautiful house," he said, adding that the shorter distance would make the move less complex and less costly.

Reports and Comments **Members:**

Mr. Morahan had no comments.

Ms. Szipp had no comments.

Mr. White had no formal report, but stated his intention to visit the Mayor's office and, if the Mayor's Administrative Assistant is available, to raise the Charter clarification question at that time.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki had no comments.

Audience:

Mary Berges, 3471 Mass Drive, City Council Member, addressed the Commission. Ms. Berges informed the Commission that the City of Avon's Charter Review Commission is scheduled to meet next year in 2027 to consider recommendations, additions, and changes to the City Charter. She suggested that the Landmarks Preservation Commission may wish to consider whether it has an interest in seeking an extension of the six-month demolition delay period — either for all Landmark properties or for a defined subset of particularly significant historic properties. She noted that changes of this nature would need to go through the Charter amendment process.

Mr. White acknowledged that the six-month standard had been researched years ago in consultation with the City's legal counsel, and that comparable communities — including Lakewood and Oberlin — also operate on a six-month period. He reiterated his position that the six months should begin from the Commission's no vote, not from the date of application, and expressed that if the Charter does not clearly reflect that, it needs to be corrected.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked whether the Charter Review Commission would proactively reach out to the Landmarks Preservation Commission for input. Ms. Berges indicated that the process is typically driven by the City's legal counsel, who recommends items for review, and that individual Commission Members or the public may also bring issues forward. She suggested that Commission Members would be welcome to attend a Charter Review meeting to present proposed changes. She noted that the Charter Review Commission is likely required to hold its first meeting by February of 2027 and conclude its work by June.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked whether Ms. Brooks would be able to notify this Commission of the Charter Review Commission's meeting schedule once it is established. Ms. Berges confirmed that Ms. Brooks should be able to communicate that information after the organizational meeting of the Charter Review Commission.

Ms. Szippel thanked Ms. Berges for bringing this to the Commission's attention. She added a substantive suggestion for the Charter Review process: that properties located along the designated North Ridge Scenic Byway might warrant special consideration or a different standard of review, given that their historic significance has already been formally recognized by a State organization. She acknowledged that other Landmark properties are equally valuable, but suggested that Scenic Byway designation might serve as one basis to carve-out treatment in the Charter.

Adjourn: 7:25 p.m.

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Szippel 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, September 9, 2026, in the Council Chambers of Avon City Hall at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council

PASSED: _____

SIGNED BY: _____
Cynthia Murnyack-Czarnecki, Chair

ATTEST:

Anne Kish, Assistant Clerk of Council