

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation
Commission Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, August 14, 2024**

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

Roll Call

Members:

Present- David Morahan; Theresa Szippel; 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, July 10, 2024

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Morahan to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission held Wednesday, July 10, 2024, and approve said minutes as published. The vote was: Mr. Morahan, "yes"; Ms. Szippel, "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.

Center Cemetery – Restoration

Mr. White

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised there may be some concerns that need to be discussed regarding how the improvements coming to SR 83 and SR 254 will affect the cemetery. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated they will reach out to the Mayor to inquire if he has any further information. Mr. White stated he has some concerns about how far the construction will go in and what they plan to do. He advised that he has not spoken to the Mayor about it but he did see an overhead picture; however, he did not study it or measure anything. He added there is room to go in but he is unsure what the construction crews plan to do. Mr. White stated nothing could be changed at this point, but they can at least be more aware of this project. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated she will reach out to the Mayor to inquire further about the project.

Mr. White advised the last round of restoration work by Kate and Jane of Gravestone Restoration Services by Kate and Jane is complete for this year. He stated they will not be doing any more work until next year when more funds are available. He advised they did two phases this summer and it worked out really well. Mr. White added Ron of Gravestone Restoration Services by Kate and Jane advised they had restored 130 headstones since this project begun. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki inquired of Mr. White if this would be the second year that they have utilized this company. Mr. White confirmed that is correct and it might even

be the third year. He indicated previous phases of the restoration were completed by Milano Monuments in 2023 and in prior years.

Mr. White remarked that Mr. Morahan made new stainless-steel posts for the Grand Army of the Republic stars for the Civil War markers. Mr. White added he installed them all except for two that he was unsure of. He added he did some research on GAR and learned that not every Civil War veteran is a GAR member. The original GAR markers have been replaced. He noted there were a few stones that were questionable, but they still have stars on them although they may need to be removed. Mr. White stated there is one more stone he would like to put on the northside right along the edge, but he is waiting to see what the street improvement project involves as it is very close to the edge of the cemetery. Mr. White added there is a star there now, but it is not secured and could potentially be pulled out so he wants to replace it with a more permanent stainless-steel post from Mr. Morahan.

Mr. White advised that Jane of Gravestone Restoration Services by Kate and Jane informed him of a website www.billiongraves.com, and it appears to be a good site that enables you to pull up and find graves no matter your location in the world. He added considering that there are ancestors to those buried at the Mound Cemetery who do not live in Avon and likely do not know grave location and detailed information, they could locate their ancestors' graves using this website. Mr. White stated that the use of this website is an idea, and the Commission can discuss if further down the road. He noted that Ms. Szimpl advised him there is a fee of \$60/year in using this website, which he did not notice previously.

Mr. White stated that Jane advised that she would do all the photographs as she has done many on previous occasions. He added she likes the website and has worked with it before. He thought utilizing this website would be something to discuss further with the Avon Historical Society to see if they would be interested in splitting the cost of \$60/year. The cost would be split possibly between the Avon Historical Society and the City, but the Avon Historical Society and the City can figure that out in the months ahead.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised that showing on the screen is the quote from Gravestone Restoration Services by Kate and Jane dated July 16, 2024, Quote Number: 2421, and it gives a brief description of the work as well as the estimated total of \$5,250. Mr. White advised that amount is for the last phase and there was another phase before that one which he has records of, but what they are now looking at is the last phase for the 30 stones on the screen. He added this also gives Mr. Morahan and Ms. Szimpl an idea of what Kate, Jane, and Ron do. He added with the pictures of the repairs, they do such a great job with their final report detail.

Mr. White stated that what is being showed on the screens are before the cleanup repairs. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki apologized and advised this is the only one she had to provide for the Clerk, so it was her error. Mr. White advised this is the original estimate so these photos show what the stones looked like, not the after photos. He advised Gravestone Restoration Services by Kate and Jane provided details of the before and after what Gravestone Restorations Services by Kate and Jane planned to do and what they charged for them and that is all you would be able to see on this overhead picture.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised this overhead shows the quote for 2421 for Fall 2024 of 30 gravestones that are going to be repaired and to what degree they are going to be repaired. Mr. White advised Gravestone Restoration Services by Kate and Jane are very thorough in what they do, and they do a great job with explaining everything as well as noting things that they are going to do and they complete it. Mr. White stated they did a great job and on a couple rows where they lined the stones up better by a few

inches to even possibly a foot. He advised when stones are in the ground that long they start to move and the ground moves as well. Gravestone Restoration Services by Kate and Jane found a lot of the footstones they mounted that were buried and they mounted them behind the marker rather than at the foot of the grave which is where footstones were traditionally located, and it is better for cutting grass and landscaping as well as for the footstone itself. He advised for all the ones that had footstones, they all got moved.

Mr. White noted that everything has been cleaned so the ones that are being viewed on the screen show them dirty and in their original state. He advised some of them were broken and were not repaired properly in the past. For example, Abraham Moon on #16 was in very bad shape and that one was raised up and cleaned. He noted that Gravestone Restoration Services by Kate and Jane used a material on it to help preserve the stone. Mr. White commented that some of these stones have bases, and some do not. The tablet types usually have a base, and it sinks very far down and that is what you are seeing. He added some of the bases were broken, and they have a key where the tablet goes into the base of the stone where the key has been broken which is why some are leaning such as #9 Samuel Kyes, which is also very dirty, but it is going to look nice in a couple of weeks. He added maybe at the meeting next month we'll have the final after pictures available to view and it may have been his error in not sending the after photos. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised they will address this topic again at next month's meeting.

Center Cemetery – Gravestone Cleaning Project

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki & Mr. White

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised the Avon Boy Scout Troop 333 Leader Matthew Wendling and Assistant Troop Leader Paul Minnillo were emailed on July 15, 2024, asking if the boy scouts would be interested in participating in another gravestone cleaning session. She stated they offered the three Saturdays in August (10th, 17th, and 24th); however, they did not offer August 3rd because they noted from the Troop's online calendar that they had scheduled a white-water rafting trip from August 1st to August 4th at the Ohiopyle State Park. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised they have not received a response from the Troop Leader or Assistant Troop Leader as far as the boy scouts working another two-hour session.

Mr. White advised they will probably have to follow through on their own and do a couple headstones at a time. He added now that the 30 are done that cuts the work down a bit. Mr. White noted that there are a few at the Center Cemetery that are still quite bad with a lot of moss on them which need to be cleaned, but they can work on them a little at a time and maybe they can get some volunteers like they did previously.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated in the Fall when school resumes, she will reach out to the Avon Leo Club and ask the faculty advisor if she is interested in the students volunteering on a Saturday morning in the Fall. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki inquired if there are stones that are so dirty that even though they were cleaned once they need to be re-addressed? Mr. White responded he did not believe so as the D-2 when sprayed works for up to a year so it may take six months before they need to do anything. He noted that usually you would see a difference in a couple of weeks and every time you come back to look at it, it looks a bit better. Mr. White advised there are a few at the top of the mound and coming down a little bit on both sides that have not been addressed. He added any Leo Club volunteers could work on those stones, and there are not that many more to clean now. The City has provided Mr. White with another 5 gallons of D-2 cleaning solution. He noted there is still a sufficient amount of supplies so he would try to get a couple volunteers even if the volunteers have to work over a couple different days.

Mr. White commented that they had some great weather where they could have been working on it. He stated with the storm last week, he went up on the mound to check the area. He advised that he did not want to see any trees down and was surprised that none of the trees came down by the cemetery. He noted that some of the trees are questionable as well, but it is good that no trees fell.

Center Cemetery- Wreaths Across America

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki & Mr. White

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised that the National Wreaths Across America is on Saturday, December 14, 2024, and they attempted to locate the graves of the Civil War veterans during the collaborative cleaning session with the boy scouts on Saturday, June 15, 2024, but their attempt was met with challenges and little success. She added on July 30, 2024, she was at the Cleveland Grays Armory Museum for a lecture on three generals who became president which included: George Washington, Ulysses Grant, and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated that she met a gentleman from the Cleveland Civil War Round Table and she shared with him their challenges to identify the graves of the Civil War veterans that are in the Center Cemetery. She added that he indicated to her that he may have some documents that could help them. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised she will reach out to him again to ask and get back to the Commission members at the next meeting. She added Mr. White was kind enough to share information with the Commission about the www.billiongraves.com website. She noted that on that website, they have a service project listed and asked if it would be beneficial for them to get involved with that service project because then every single stone that is in their cemetery will be photographed. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated she will send out a link to the members that talks about the service projects, and they can discuss it at the next meeting.

Mr. White stated Jane of Gravestone Restoration Services by Kate and Jane advised she would do the photographs as she has done the photographs before and is quite good at it. He added she mentioned there may be some work other people would have to do, but the photographs would at least be taken. He added a good photo has to be readable too. He noted that sometimes light has to hit a certain way because those marble markers are hard to read. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki agreed and added because the surface has worn off and you can no longer see the depth of the engraving. Mr. White advised the good thing with being involved with this project is that once they make note then all will be accounted for as far as names, and photographs, going forward and it will not be so hard to figure out who's graves wreaths need to be placed and where those graves are located. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki agreed saying that would help them with the Wreaths Across America this coming Fall.

Center Cemetery- Ohio Historical Marker Application

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised there are no further updates at this time and the project will continue as they work towards making an application to have an Ohio Historical Marker for the Center Cemetery.

Avon Historical Landmarks Plaques

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki & Mr. White

Mr. White stated they were supposed to have a discussion regarding the historical landmark plaques last month and it got overlooked. He advised that he only has two plaques available to hand out for historical properties. Mr. White contacted the company that did the original plaques, who are based in Pennsylvania, and he thought they should stay with the same basic plaque. Avon Lake has one that is a little different. He added what they have right now is the bronze and black so they will keep that style so they can be kept

uniform. Mr. White commented he thinks the discussion should be how many we need to order. He remarked in being realistic with the cost, the plaques are not getting any cheaper and if we wait they will cost more and they have already gone up from the first time the plaques were ordered. He advised in the past few months he handed out three, that is more than normally distributed in that amount of time.

Mr. White advised that of the three that were handed out this year, two of them were on the list but never got a plaque. He noted there was one on the list but did not have a plaque. Another one should have been on the list and it now has a plaque and is on the list. The third one was the Lois Shinko house which is on the list but never had a plaque. Mr. White remarked he does not know why the Shinko House did not have a plaque especially as Ms. Shinko was previously on the Commission. He stated he gave one to her daughter Ann-Marie Shinko-Brown and they were to put it on the house, but he thinks that they left it in the house for the future owner.

Mr. White inquired about how many plaques we think we will need before we present to the Mayor's office. He stated that they are \$258 a piece and it is a 10" x 7" rectangular plaque with a bell curve, bronze, with a single line border and a pebble texture that states, "Avon Historic Landmark." He noted that if we buy just one for example, they are \$258, but for every one we buy above that it would be \$206. He believes that \$206 sounds better but inquired what quantity do we want to order, 10, 20? Originally, the Commission ordered a number sufficient to cover the buildings on the historical registry list and now Mr. White has only has two plaques remaining.

Mr. White stated he does not want to be without any plaques. Mr. White inquired from the Commission members if there are any thoughts as to how many they should order so they can present to the Mayor's office? Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked if the potential exists that some homeowners may return them to the Commission? Mr. White responded that he has been looking into that and some people will hand it in, and others will not, and sometimes the ones that say they will they do not, and he has had that happen. He advised he thinks it is fair and there is one out there that he gave to a landmark house (Stickney) where the owner sold the property and never had it mounted on the house, so they probably still have it at home, and he would like to get it back. He noted it should remain with the house. He does not have a phone number but knows where the owner lives. He figures if the property is sold or someone wants to be removed from the list the plaque would come back in order to repurpose it. Sometimes the way people install them they will put the screws in and it scrapes the paint, then starts to corrode and sometimes gets under the powder coat which does not look good. Mr. White supposed it could be repaired, but they do not want to give someone a plaque that looks bad. He noted other than that they seem to hold up.

Ms. Szimpl believes they need to do a good review of the list as it was created quite some time ago. She has a copy of the list that Mr. White provided to her and there are missing houses that should be on the list. Ms. Szimpl stated so they need to determine if the owner at the time said they wanted to be off the list. She added it is not a combined list and believes they should have a combined list that says this is everyone on the list, whether they asked to be off, or they are still on the list. She believes one of the most recent recipient was because the owner had just purchased the house and they wanted the plaque, but the previous owner said they did not want the plaque. She believes they need to have a complete comprehensive list that says this house would be able to be on the list and did they accept the plaque. She added that she thinks they need to do a good inventory and they could probably get a half dozen plaques to have them on hand and then they can have a fairly good idea of how many more they would need to order in the future based on a revised and updated comprehensive list.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki inquired how they would go about making a comprehensive list? Ms. Szimpl advised she believes it is in a Word document which is not very manageable as it should really be in an Excel file. Ms. Szimpl stated to say that someone is already on the list, already has the plaque, has to be on the list, then sort it further to say they are on or off and if these individuals ever were contacted and the Commission may need to contact them again. In addition, she noted to have the correct owners listed and tell them about this program and find out if they do or do not want to be on it. Szimpl asked how many years since the list was created and Mr. White responded approximately 2004 and Ms. Szimpl added it is about 20 years ago when that list was created. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki noted that changing the application will also help with searchability. Ms. Szimpl confirmed that it would and noted it is kind of befuddling presently so she believes it might be a good winter project for them as a group and they would just need to hear back from the City to see what they have for documentation and as far as converting it over in an Excel file.

Mr. White stated he is not sure that the Landmarks Preservation Commission recorded the properties that asked to be removed. He added to keep in mind that he was not on the Commission in 2004, 2005, or 2006, but he came to the meetings back then. He stated they spent two years removing properties from the list. The way they went about creating the list was by having previous Commission members drive around Avon to evaluate and determine which properties/homes were landmarks, made a list of the landmarks, and sent letters. He advised that there were plenty of people that did not want their properties/homes to be on that list and those properties/ homes are still on that list. He added there were also people that never received a plaque and a number of people on the list that did not get a plaque because they did not pick it up. They had the plaques at the Old Town Hall, they posted in the newspaper, they sent letters that the plaques would be at the Old Town Hall for distribution and the recipients needed to pick them up but that didn't work very well.

Mr. White mentioned during that timeframe of 2004-2006, members of the Avon Historical Society and the Landmarks Preservation Commission went out and knocked on doors and gave the plaques so a lot of times if people were not home, they would go once or twice and that was the end of it. He commented that is kind of what happened so that is probably why they are seeing a lot of houses that are not on the list. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked if the resource books that the Clerk of Council has in her office if that would be of value because sometimes homes were crossed off, left in the book but crossed off. Mr. White confirmed yes and those were the people whose homes were either demolished or those people who wanted off the list. He added sometimes it was a sales situation where they wanted to sell the property, repurpose the land or be demolished and they were let off the list and given a demolition permit, but their name and address are still on the list with the line drawn across it so when you see that, that is what it is.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki advised that may be of help as they are trying to combine lists and compile an accurate current list.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki felt they should order a half dozen plaques. Mr. White stated he believes they should order more, maybe about twenty as that should hold for quite a while as he indicated earlier the cost is not going down. He added at one time they had fifty available and through the years those dwindled down and in recent years only two so they go quick when you start handing them out. Mr. White commented it is not a bad thing to have as people do not like the idea of being told what to do then they were afraid of rules and regulations and what they can or cannot do with their historical properties, which was never the case. He added originally, they were going to do a certified local government where that

would be the case with the State of Ohio, but the Commission chose not to do that. He added they followed through with some of the application process, but he did not want to follow through with it personally because they did not want to put any hardship on homeowners with the type of wood siding, slate shingles, and wood windows they would be restricted to use. He continued that they were all in agreement that they do not want to dictate materials used on the house, but just to save it, keep it preserved and vinyl windows, vinyl siding, aluminum siding, asphalt shingles have all been acceptable with this Commission and that is the way it has been and he believes it is user-friendly that way and hopefully more people would not mind having a plaque. He added most people display it proudly. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki agreed. Mr. White advised he will speak with the Mayor and they will work from there regarding the purchasing of twenty plaques.

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Morahan for the Commission to purchase twenty historical plaques 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.

Member Comments:

There were no further comments.

Audience Comments:

There were no audience comments.

Adjourn: 7:32 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, September 11, 2024, at 7:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Rachel Markovitz, Assistant Clerk of Council