

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, September 9, 2020**

The Chairman, Matt Smith, called the meeting to order at 7:10 P.M.

Roll Call

Members: Present –Vice Chairman Ralph White; Lois Shinko; Clint Gault; Chairman Matt Smith

Guest: Paula Pitasky, City of Avon Community Liaison Consultant

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, August 12, 2020

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Gault to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, August 12, 2020, and approve said minutes as published. The vote was all ayes and the Chairman declared the motion passed.

Update on the North Ridge Scenic Byway – Paula Pitasky

Mr. Smith asked Ms. Pitasky if she had anything to report about the Byway signs and she said that they are still working on that and she would not expect anything for a little while. Her guess is that they will get a copy of the graphics to look at as the first step. Mr. Smith asked if she could text him the pictures when she gets them. He said that he knows, from our last meeting, we will work with getting the information on the City's website to make people aware of what is going on. He said that anytime Ms. Pitasky might need help to just call him. Ms. Pitasky thanked him and said that she still needs to get with ODOT to see where things stand with funding and hopefully, she will have an update on that for the next LPC meeting.

Landmarks Letter of Recognition – Ralph White

Mr. White stated that he did not have anything for this month.

Landmarks Nominations – Lois Shinko

Ms. Shinko said that she did not have any nominations.

Comments

Mr. Smith noted that at the last meeting Mr. Gault was talking about certain lighting on Detroit Road and he asked Mr. Gault to comment on that.

Mr. Gault stated that the lighting is one of the projects involved in trying to beautify different parts of the City. One of the amazing things about Avon is that it is a combination of all the growth and also of historic charm and so trying to make it quaint and beautiful is key because if we do not do it, nobody will and eventually all the old houses will just get torn down. But if we make the effort and take the steps to beautify it, that drives values up and property values up. And so the plan for the lighting was to go all down Detroit Road and especially in the French Creek District, to have these quaint, antique-looking lights in there. We have had several meetings with the City members over the last year and a half, looking at

different lights, designs, costs, etc. The idea is to make the French Creek District more charming and more walkable and light it up so if people want to do things like widen Detroit Road, it is less likely to occur because it has that charming, quaint feeling. If we do not do things like this, it is just like with an old house, if you do not fix up and repair an old house, eventually it just gets torn down. These are steps we need to make to keep different parts of the City as those charming, historic little areas just like other great cities have.

Mr. Smith asked if there was a timetable on the lighting and Ms. Pitasky responded that it kind of goes hand in hand with what you are talking about with funding from ODOT, to see if some of the money could be available to help with that lighting. Mr. Gault stated that it is amazing how things all intertwine, like how the Scenic Byway and that whole process ties in with the proposed biking/walking paths which would connect schools and different destinations in the City. He felt that they all kind of tie in together and so if we can show that we have a strategy, a plan, then we are more likely to get more funding to help that along.

Mr. Smith said that, speaking of the hike/bike paths, he believed that Council is going to have the final reading of the Ordinance this month and will vote to see if they want to get the path running down all the way along French Creek Road to the Sheffield Village border. Sheffield Village wants to connect from there and get down to French Creek Reservation and once you are there with that connection, that connects to the Black River Reservation which is gigantic. So he excited about that and hopes that it passes. There was discussion then about biking and walking within cities which promotes more physically active, healthier lifestyles and how it also promotes friendlier neighborhoods with people greeting and talking to each other as they walk the area. Mr. Smith added that he felt that the path along French Creek Road could also help promote historic preservation because it would bring people up to Detroit Road and the Scenic Byway where they would keep walking and biking and get to see the historic homes.

Ms. Pitasky asked, in regard to the lighting, if they had looked at lighting projects in other communities. She said that she grew up in Columbus and in nearby Worthington, they have beautiful, historic lighting in the area they have designated as "Old Worthington". It is a really great area for something to model after and she said she would be happy to contact their government to ask about their lighting. Mr. Smith said, yes, that would be great to get photos and information from that community and from some others as well.

Mr. Gault said that when that all first began, his model was from Marco Island and he took lots of pictures there of their quaint, charming lights. Also, at that time, he was talking about having a statue of Wilbur Cahoon or a water feature at the corner of Rt. 83 and Detroit Road, but that is not really a place where many people walk around. It is actually kind of dangerous with all the traffic there. There is not a busier hub anywhere else in the City and if you had like an awesome water feature right there, it is amazing how great that would be. From a parks standpoint, it was looked at unfavorably because of the ongoing maintenance. It is just that all of these things are funding issues, so one step at a time.

Mr. Smith said he keeps forgetting to ask the Mayor about this, but now that we have the new Veterans Memorial Park by the pool, what do we do with the memorial that is at Rt. 83? It is like we have a duality now and a possibility would be to take whatever out of the Rt. 83 site and put it over by the pool and then use the Rt. 83 site as Mr. Gault said as a focal point for the City with perhaps a fountain because it is the busiest intersection in the City. Mr. Smith said that he knows there is a big stone there at Rt. 83 with the WWI names on it and that would be nice moved over by the pool. Mr. White noted that there are a lot of WWI, WWII, and Revolutionary War veterans buried at the Rt. 83 cemetery. Mr. Smith said he was just

trying to think because we have the new memorial, we could repurpose the Rt. 83 area. It was just an idea.

Mr. Gault stated that there are so many projects that the French Creek Foundation wants to do such as fixing up the cemetery area, having a safer walkability down the French Creek District, having some sort of a way to get across Rt. 83 from say the Miller Nature Preserve over to the playground, having the lights down the French Creek District to beautify it, having more banners and flags, etc. but it is a pecking order of what do you do first, what order, and how do you work toward that. So it is an ongoing process but every little thing that we get done adds to the attraction of the French Creek District. Mr. Smith added, and one of his hopes and goals is that this Commission is to be a vehicle to help out in any of these aspects because all those things promote historic preservation. It makes people want to keep those buildings and take care of them.

Mr. White reported that the roof on the Old Town Hall is done. They have the scaffolding down and the new gutters are on the sides. The roof was in bad shape; it had to be ripped off and recovered with new wood and then there was chimney flashing. They took off the old siren which Mr. White said he has in his garage now and is going to blast and paint. Mr. White said they did a nice job on the roof. Now there is the interior ceiling that eventually needs to be repaired.

Ms. Shinko asked about the “bridge” house and Ms. Pitasky said there is a sign there for a builder. Ms. Shinko asked, so what is happening there? Mr. White said that the owner is going to build a new house in the back and then will probably tear down the one in the front. Mr. White then noted that the Stickney/Palmer House has a for rent sign instead of a for sale sign. He said that he has not talked to the owner for awhile so he does not know what the owner is going to do. If he rents it, that is a good thing which means he is going to finish the restoration. He was making good progress on the inside. All you can do is hope that he saves the house completely.

Date of Next Meeting

Mr. Smith stated that the next meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission would be held on Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at Avon City Hall at 7:00 P.M.

Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Gault to adjourn the meeting and the vote was all ayes. The Chairman declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Transcribed by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council