

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Held in the Caucus Room of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, December 9, 2015**

The Chairman, Joe Richvalsky, called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Roll Call:

Members: Present – Chairman, Joe Richvalsky; Vice Chairman, Ralph White; Clint Gault
Lois Shinko arrived later in the meeting

Guest: Matt Smith

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of November 11, 2015

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Gault to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the meeting of November 11, 2015, and approve said minutes as published, and the vote was: Mr. White, “yes”; Mr. Gault, “yes”; Mr. Richvalsky, “yes”.

LPC Project Committees

History Walk Committee Report

Mr. Richvalsky stated that he, Mr. Gault, and Ms. Czup met a few weeks ago and basically set up who was going to do what. He asked Mr. Smith if he was still interested in being part of the committee and Mr. Smith said, yes, and thought that his role could be to research information for the others as requested.

Mr. Richvalsky said that would be perfect and then explained what the other committee members would be doing. He said that Ms. Czup would continue to get the financials in order, inquire about grants, and be the liaison with the Mayor. Mr. Gault would act as a manager to help us meet deadlines and goals, and Mr. Richvalsky was calling himself the art director. He would gather information, lay out the boards and as each one gets to a point for critique or review, he would bring them to this meeting. Mr. Gault noted that they are going to see a lot more things being done as they have more of a support system now.

Mr. White stated that he can provide photographs when it comes time for that and Mr. Smith added that he can be the intermediary for that. Mr. Richvalsky added that Jim Strauss was also on this committee and he had someone that he was going to be talking to. What is so wonderful is this is a way to involve the community.

Mr. Richvalsky said, so that is pretty much the report of what they got done. Mr. Smith stated again, that his role would be that when someone wants something, he will research that topic, gather information and they could use what they want. Mr. Richvalsky noted that they have a great set of resources. There is Jack Smith’s website, photographs, and several publications. It will be the pulling out of information and consolidating it into another updated generation of Avon’s history.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Richvalsky if there were a couple areas where he could start getting information for him. Mr. Richvalsky said that he was going to set up 14 folders and just start putting things in the

different folders. Mr. Smith asked what he would like for him to physically hand him. Mr. Gault felt that it would be helpful to sit down together and visually see the information all kind of working together. So he suggested that Mr. Smith could also put whatever he has into 14 folders and they could look at things all together.

Mr. Richvalsky asked Mr. Smith how he pulled all the information together for the plaque of Dr. Norton Townshend. Mr. Smith answered that the text was all his father's (Jack Smith), his father also had pictures of Dr. Townshend on his website, and his brother took photos of the tiles at the Old Town Hall. Matt Smith then just took all of that, got it together electronically, sent it to Paneer Graphics, and they put it together. Mr. Richvalsky thought that that would be a good approach for their project. Mr. Smith said, yes, he needs to put the information he finds on a flash drive but he could print out hard copies to lay in folders. As for the photos, he asked Mr. White about providing those and Mr. White said that he would make copies of his originals. Mr. Richvalsky suggested that Mr. Smith start pulling things together, either electronically or with hard copies and they could meet to discuss a game plan.

Committee for Acknowledgement to Landmark Owners

Mr. White handed out a copy of the acknowledgement letter that he had written, and Mr. Richvalsky read it as follows: "Dear Homeowner: This letter comes to you on behalf of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission and Avon Historical Society in recognition of your efforts to maintain and preserve your historical landmark home. Your pride in ownership is evident in the care you are taking of one of our community's valued assets. Avon is fortunate to have a variety of architectural style built in this. They are all equally important, whether it is one of Avon's five pre Civil War stone houses, a Greek Revival, Italianate, Craftsman, Colonial, or even the common old farmhouse and barn. Let's not forget the number of active businesses that have utilized the historic structure as a contemporary means of commerce. We have lost so many historical homes and structures in years past through neglect and it is important to the City of Avon to keep Avon's small town charm and character by preserving the past. The investment and time necessary for the upkeep of a historic home can be considerable and your endeavor set a fine example for others to follow. As the current caretaker of such a home your responsibility to future Avon generations is greatly appreciated. With sincere gratitude". And then he listed the names of the four members of the Landmarks Preservation Commission on the bottom of the letter.

Everyone agreed that it was an excellent, well-written letter. Mr. White noted that this example was a generic type of letter but it could be personalized.

Ms. Shinko arrived at the meeting at this time.

A couple minor changes were suggested for the letter. Mr. Gault felt that adding the "representation" of each member of the LPC (Mr. Richvalsky – Mayoral Appointee; Mr. White – Historical Society Appointee; Mr. Gault – French Creek Foundation Appointee; Ms. Shinko – Garden Club Appointee) would emphasize that there are multiple groups in the City all recognizing the homeowner's care of a landmark property. Mr. Smith added that it would also educate the homeowner that these groups exist; many times they do not know.

Mr. Gault thought that maybe information should be included about when the LPC meets or how the homeowner might get involved if they chose to do that. He said that someone who has a historical home might be an ideal candidate for getting involved for these types of causes. Mr. White felt that

that should be a separate letter and Mr. Richvalsky agreed. It was decided that all four members of the LPC would sign the acknowledgment letter.

The other small change for the letter was suggested by Mr. Richvalsky. He said that "LPC" should be put in with parentheses right after "Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission", so that when they look at the bottom of the letter, they are going to know what that means.

Mr. Richvalsky stated, so the next step is for Mr. White to choose some properties, write them up, bring them to the meeting and we will sign them all. At each meeting we could ask for nominations for letters. Mr. White said that he knew all the ones that he wanted to do initially. He said that he would get the final letter drawn up with the changes and a place for the address and will do a couple. Mr. Richvalsky said that he would leave that up to Mr. White because he is the Chairman of his committee. Mr. Gault stated that they need to keep track of who gets letters and Mr. White said that he would have a record of that in his book.

New Committees

Mr. Gault stated that one of the things that he and Mr. Richvalsky and Ms. Czup talked about is the need for an overall plan for preserving the historical records of Avon which are kept by individuals. It would be a travesty to the City if they were ever lost because the only records we really have are what individuals have.

Mr. White explained that for the records of the Historical Society that are kept at his house, he has plastic totes to keep things dry and clean and acid-free folders and organizers for historical photos so they do not deteriorate; other things are in filing cabinets. The Historical Society pays for the folders, etc. Mr. Gault thought that the City would be supportive of assisting in the cost of cataloging and preserving information. Mr. White asked if he meant electronically and Mr. Gault said that Mr. White might have a recommendation for how it should best be done; it might be somebody going to Mr. White's house and scanning the photos, etc. It is in the City's best interests that all of these artifacts are preserved for the future and we have the support of the Mayor behind us in terms of preserving these things. Can you imagine if something happened like a fire or a tornado and all of those things that Mr. White has at his house were destroyed? That would be a tragedy to Avon.

Mr. White said that he also has things other than paper records; he has a solid walnut piece of railing from the Avon Hotel and Ms. Shinko stated that she has a ton of things as well. Mr. Gault said that maybe they could use the City buildings to store certain things. Mr. White said that he has always wanted to have an Avon History Museum; we do not really have enough items now, but we could start collecting.

Mr. Gault said that the reason he brought up this subject is because he thinks we would have the City's support on a project like this. We just need to figure out what we want and the best way to do it. If it could be a joint venture with the City, the key is figuring out what we have to preserve, and it might encourage other people who are preserving things in their own ways to think about giving their things to the City-supported project.

Mr. Richvalsky stated, so the idea of a museum is down the road but the first is a back-up system for preserving what we already have. An idea is to scan the records at Mr. White's house and keep the disk stored elsewhere. That could be done gradually so we could create a committee for that piece, just to start. Mr. White agreed to the idea of having someone come and scan the records but the originals would remain at his house.

Mr. Gault noted that this project fits right in with the purpose of the LPC, which is to preserve and protect the history of Avon. This project is preserving and protecting our history beyond our lives for the generations to come.

Additional Comments

Mr. White stated that he would make the changes to the acknowledgment letter and bring it to the next meeting.

Date of Next Meeting

Mr. Richvalsky stated that the next meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission would be held on Wednesday, January 13, 2016, at 7:00 P.M. in the Caucus Room of Avon City Hall.

Adjourn

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

Transcribed by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council

