

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Held in the Caucus Room of the Municipal Building
On Wednesday, June 8, 2016**

The Chairman, Joe Richvalsky, called the meeting to order at 7:16 P.M.

Roll Call:

Members: Present – Chairman, Joe Richvalsky; Vice Chairman, Ralph White; Lois Shinko; Clint Gault

Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, May 11, 2016

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Shinko to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, May 11, 2016, and approve said minutes as published, and the vote was all ayes.

LPC Project Committees

Landmarks Awards Committee

Mr. White stated that he did not do any award letters for this month as the two that he was going to do were kind of involved; he needs to change the format and make the letters more personal so he did not get to it this month.

History Walk Committee

Mr. Richvalsky reported that the History Walk Committee was not able to schedule a meeting so no action has occurred. Mr. White stated that he was e-mailed some of the text for the plaques written by the high school students and it looked good. Mr. Richvalsky added that he was very impressed with the text, and he thought it was very interesting to see what the students thought was important for Avon history. Mr. Gault said that they did a great job. He read the summaries and the reports that they did and he was proud of our Avon school system. Mr. White said that he talked to Matt Smith about the photos that were scanned and about a third of them did not turn out good. It was mostly the bigger photos that had to be taped. Mr. Smith is willing to do some more and maybe work with Scott Seighman at the High School and see if he wants to scan them with something better. He is trying to schedule a meeting with Mr. Seighman.

Mr. Richvalsky and Mr. Gault set a meeting date for the History Walk Committee for Thursday, June 23rd, at 6:00 P.M. at Mr. Gault's office. Mr. Gault said that he would contact Matt Smith and Terri Czup about the meeting.

Landmark Nominations

Mr. Richvalsky asked if anyone would care to take on the project of nominating the Dairy Treat for landmark status. Ms. Shinko said that she still has to call on the two previously suggested nominations. Mr. Richvalsky then asked Ms. Shinko to see if she could make a few calls on those that we have already talked about and maybe his schedule will free up and he can focus on the Dairy Treat and get it done. He said that he was even thinking we could create a nominating committee but Mr. White felt another committee is not really necessary for that purpose. We have so much going on now with committees

and there are just not that many worthwhile places to nominate for landmark status. Most of them are already on the list. He does not really see creating a committee where it is a monthly thing for an extended period of time.

Ms. Shinko said that she might work on the Dairy Treat nomination. Mr. White suggested that she just go there and tell Mr. Reynolds that the LPC has talked about nominating it and ask if he would support it and if he would like a plaque to display on the building. There is an application and she would have to ask him some questions because we do not have all the facts. Mr. Richvalsky said she could also ask if he had any historic photos that we could copy. Mr. White said he was sure that they do have photos and he would like copies for himself.

Mr. Richvalsky asked Ms. Shinko what the other two landmark nominations were that she was going to work on and Ms. Shinko responded the one was the green barn that Ron Krystowski moved from Sheffield to Avon and the second was a house a couple houses away from Veterans Park.

Mr. White stated that the yellow house that is just west of the driveway for Veterans Park is a nice house and he will be sending a recognition letter to the owner. He just bought that house and is doing a great job fixing it up. Ms. Shinko asked if the house that was owned by Mr. Cummings has been nominated yet and Mr. White said that was on his list. There is also a Craftsman house on Nagel Road, two houses from Cherry Street, that is very nice and well kept and that owner will get a letter.

Mr. Richvalsky said that this is what he likes about the committees; members are personally taking responsibility for getting things done at their own pace. He said that his mind is on the History Walk and so he kind of puts other things on the side.

Mr. White stated that he thought that the History Walk is a good backburner job for the Commission when there is nobody coming in wanting demolition permits or wanting landmarks plaques, etc. But that really is not our focus. He said that there was a misunderstanding with the couple that came in earlier tonight in regard to a demolition permit. If that happens again, we have to make sure that they know what they have to do or even when the time comes up, a call should be made to ask if they want to be on the agenda. Or we could have voted on it tonight if he had had the form. Mr. Richvalsky said that he needed to check with Ms. Czup as she was going to get all those forms on the website.

Mr. White said that the website is fine but we need to have hard copies of the forms at our grasp; when we need them, we need them and sometimes you cannot navigate the website. Mr. Gault said that it would be nice to have a binder with all the forms in it and have it right here so we have access to it every month and so when we have a meeting, if somebody shows up or comes in we have a form that we need if we choose to do something. Mr. White said that he felt really bad for that couple that was here; it is not our fault but yet it is because somehow along the line information got misconstrued. Mr. Richvalsky stated that Mr. White had a good point - we could have followed up. He agreed with Mr. White's comments. Mr. White said that we were caught offguard with it but he thought right away, what could we do? We could have followed through and gotten the form for him to sign and he would be on his way; he would be happy. We could have voted on it. Mr. Richvalsky said, they are set now. They know what they need to do and we will address it next month and we will be more cognizant of this kind of issue as we go along.

Additional Reports and Comments

Mr. Gault stated that the \$50.00 penalty that a person would pay if they skipped the procedure of doing the demolition application through the Commission seems irrelevant. If you are going to tear down a building the costs are very expensive. It would cost several times the \$50. to have an employee go through the whole process, their time and the wages that you are paying them, to go through it all and come to the Commission, fill out the forms, come back again and get the approvals and so on. It makes a lot more sense from a cost standpoint just to pay the few bucks and move on from it. So if the penalty is a few dollars and the goal is to encourage people to go through the process, then it should be something more material, say more like \$5,000. Mr. Gault said that he would call the Law Director for his thoughts on this.

Mr. Richvalsky said that the other thing we need to consider is increasing the length of time for the six-month moratorium on demolition, and he asked Mr. Gault if he would also like to talk to the Law Director about that and Mr. Gault said that he would. Mr. White said that he feels the moratorium should be increased to a year and Mr. Gault said that a year is certainly a step in the right direction. A six-month moratorium does not prevent a demolition; it is more like a nuisance. And the \$50. penalty certainly does not prevent it. If it is a moratorium of a year then it is a more material time period and the fine should be something that has more merit to it.

There was discussion about the couple who had come in tonight in regard to a demolition permit before the meeting started. They had misunderstood what they were required to do and believed they would be getting the permit tonight. Since they had come to the meeting last month and the LPC had looked at pictures of the house they want to demolish and had talked about it, Mr. Gault and Mr. White felt it could have been voted on tonight and kept the good will of the applicants since they had the best intentions and seemed to support historic preservation.

Mr. Richvalsky was against making exceptions as he wants the LPC to be respected as a Commission that follows the rules and he wants to be fair to the City of Avon. Also, for the property in question, he feels there are reasons to consider its historical value. He needs to complete some research on it before he is prepared to vote. He said we need to be a Commission which really thinks things through. We are reviewing properties on their historic merit and there are many qualities that make a property historic. We cannot fall into the trap that it is a beauty contest. Historical importance is more than just the physical quality of it. Also, we cannot make important decisions and run our procedures based on assumptions about an applicant's character and intentions.

Mr. White noted that we know that no one of historical importance lived in this particular house; it is just an old bungalow. A real landmark is a different story; you fight to the end for those. But you cannot save every house and people do not want to. They own the property, they pay the taxes, and they can get off the landmark list if they want. He just does not understand holding somebody accountable and saying they have to do something a certain way when they own the house, pay the taxes, and have other plans.

Mr. Richvalsky said this is why we are a Commission - to have these conversations and decide what is important. The debate process is important.

In closing, Mr. Richvalsky said that he could not remember the photos from last month and he wants more information about the house. He just cannot remember and discuss and vote tonight, but he does

not want to make this seem that he is the road block. Anyone can make a motion. Mr. White said that we will just let it go and wait until next month, but in the future we need to make sure this does not happen again.

Date of Next Meeting

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

Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Gault and seconded by Ms. Shinko to adjourn the meeting and the vote was all ayes.

Transcribed by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council