

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building  
On Wednesday, May 10, 2023**

The Chairman, Matt Smith, called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

**Roll Call**

Members: Present –Vice Chairman Ralph White; Cynthia Murnyack-Czarnecki; Chairman Matt Smith  
Absent - Clint Gault

**Correspondence**

Mr. White said that he met with Mike Milano of Milano Monuments but he would save what he has to say for Item 6 on this agenda, “Update on Center Cemetery.”

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki said that she would like to update the Commission on our research that has been ongoing about William Pease and John Bowman. We now know, thanks to Brenda Guggenbiller, the Wakeman Branch Manager, that the WLP’s service was indeed a funeral service. As we recall on the grave marker for Mr. Bowman, at the bottom was printed “WLP’s Service”. Ms. Guggenbiller has clarified for us that Bill Pease provided funeral services from his home for many years. Mr. Pease then separated his home from his business and transitioned his business into a separate facility, a funeral home on the corner of Cooper Street and Main Street in Wakeman.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki noted that David Graves, who was the co-author of a book about the history of the area, commented regarding Mr. Pease’s passing in the late 1930’s which validates that we have indeed located the correct individual. It also connects that information with what was previously located in Huron County, Ohio, Cemetery inscriptions by Huron County Chapter of Ohio Geneological Society, the 1997 edition about Mr. Pease’s death which stated that his name was William L. Pease, he was born on March 12, 1885, and he died April 4, 1938. All of this information further identifies him, and clarifies what was inscribed on Mr. Bowman’s grave marker where below Mr. Bowman’s name was inscribed W. L. Pease. We can now state that the W. L. Pease funeral service was provided by the W. L Pease Funeral Home which was owned and operated by Mr. Pease.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated that we also know that Mr. Bowman’s service in 1936 was conducted two years before Mr. Pease’s passing in 1938. Mr. Graves’ comments, which he relayed to Ms. Guggenbiller, established the transition of funeral services provided in Wakeman, meaning that the W. L. Pease Funeral Home on the corner of Cooper and Main Streets, upon Mr. Peases’ passing then became Gerber’s Funeral Home, Gerber’s then transitioned to the Morman Funeral Home, and finally to the Toft Funeral Home, Wakeman Chapel, which is currently located at 16 Cooper Street in Wakeman. She said that we can now move forward with trying to uncover Mr. Bowman’s connection to Avon as well as how and why it happened that Mr. Bowman was buried in Avon. We are very grateful for Ms. Guggenbiller’s service to the Landmarks Preservation Commission and we thank her greatly for her assistance. We now move forward in continuing our research.

Mr. Smith asked if it would be possible for Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki to email that document to him and to Mr. White and Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki said that those were just her notes from what Ms. Guggenbiller emailed her but she could certainly send them to Mr. Smith and Mr. White.

Mr. White asked about the location of the funeral home again and Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki said that it was on the corner of Cooper and Main Streets in Wakeman. That has transitioned to this day to be the Toft Funeral Home, Wakeman Chapel, located at 16 Cooper Street in Wakeman. Mr. Smith stated that that is something that it is still in existence. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki said, yes, and she attempted to call Toft's to find out if they knew this history because on their website where they talk about their history, they have none of this information. Mr. Smith stated that might be a pleasant surprise for them to get this information.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki said that she also has the letter that they planned to send to Mr. and Mrs. Sam Holbrook who live at 4063 Center Road, Avon, regarding their beautiful historical home circa 1900. She passed out two copies of the letter to Mr. White, one copy to be sent and one copy for his files, and everyone signed the letter. Mr. White noted that Mr. Gault was not present so he would call Mr. Gault this week to see when he is available and will go over and see him for his signature.

Mr. White mentioned that he did personally deliver the letter of thanks to Dave Morahan for the new post for John Bowman's plot. Mr. White said that Mr. Morahan was not there so he left the letter on the steps. He had talked to Mr. Morahan earlier so he knew the letter was going to be there. Mr. White added that Mr. Morahan was willing to meet with him about mounting the Bowman marker and Mr. Smith and Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki both said they would like to be there for that meeting as well.

#### **Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission Held Wednesday, April 12, 2023**

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission held Wednesday, April 12, 2023, and approve said minutes as published. The vote was all ayes and the Chairman declared the motion passed.

#### **Update on Center Cemetery, John Bowman – Ralph White**

Mr. White stated that he met with Mike Milano of Milano Monuments and he showed him exactly where the Bowman plaque was found and they discussed the Phase 2 work at the Cemetery. They did not iron out an exact date of when it is going to start but Mr. White would imagine that it would be soon. They walked and looked at some of the stones that have toppled and are in need of attention to make it not only more sightly but better for the landscapers to cut the grass. Mr. White showed him a few other ones, and they talked about a couple different ideas on the very far east end of the Cemetery where the mower decks have hit the stones and knocked them out or moved them. Mr. Milano talked about the work he would do there and he may do that first. He also talked about instead of Phase 2 going up the hill from the west, it would start from the east and work to the center. Mr. White does not know exactly what he is going to do but they did look at a couple different stones that Mr. Milano agreed should be done sooner than later.

Mr. White said that Mr. Milano showed him exactly where the plaque for John Bowman was found. Mr. White had photographs and said, as they could see, the plaque is actually sitting here in the snow. Mr. White showed the LPC other photographs, maps, and lists and there was discussion and speculation about the location of Mr. Bowman's gravesite. Mr. White stated that they need to go up the Cemetery and use the lists and maps and photographs and try and determine exactly where that plot is.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked Mr. White if he knew if plot sizes were the same then as they are now and Mr. White said they were probably a little smaller. There were no vaults back then so he imagined the grave site size would have accommodated a casket and that probably would have been all there was. So it could be pretty much a narrow grave

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki then asked Mr. White if in the places that he was thinking that this gravesite is, if he had looked for any relationship between John Bowman and the families buried in those areas. Mr. White said that he did not investigate that but he did not think there was any connection. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki said she was just curious because the Wakeman research has now come full circle. We found as much out from them as we can. Now she thinks to investigate further the connection with Avon, we are going to have to start here once we establish this grave. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked if we had any technology that we can use that will just let us stand on the surface and look down to tell us where this grave is when we have hit it. Mr. White said there was probably nothing left. If it was a wood casket, it would be disintegrated; if it was metal it would probably be rusted. Mr. Smith said if we use something like that ground-penetrating radar.....Mr. White stated that he did not know anything about that. Mr. Smith said that he could try to find out from somebody. He knows that they used that up at Johnson's Island for the Civil War prison camp up there and they located a lot of the graves using that type of radar.

Mr. White said that he was thinking that when they cut the grass through the years, they took the plaque and just tossed it and that is possibly where it landed because it has been buried for a long time. But it still would have to be in this vicinity. And the original post was in three pieces; the gravesite could possibly be where he was thinking it could be even though it would be narrow. But this map would show plots if we could follow it and kind of figure it out because we could go back, north, and count the sites. He thought it would be possible for them to locate it if they looked at it together.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked Mr. White if, as he said, there would be nothing left as the casket would be disintegrated, what happens in that space of earth where it was? Does the land just sink down? Mr. White said that normally it would but it has been so long that it would have been filled but he does not know. Years ago, he went to the Cemetery and there were some sinkholes but they have been fixed, so anything that would have been sunk in the past, has probably been taken care of by the City. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki said that she is feeling that we still have people visiting the Cemetery and these graves because she was sitting in traffic and saw flowers on one of them. Mr. White said, yes, he knows that in the 1990's, there were a couple burials, always on the northeast corner. So we can work on this and he thinks even in a worst case scenario, we can put the Bowman marker in a general area. The family did contact the City about eight years ago, wanting to know where John Bowman was buried and they could not find it. So there is some interest in the family. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked if the City keeps the log of calls and inquiries that they receive? Mr. White said he does not know but they probably do. He knows that Michelle Morahan in the Service Dept. had a contact information from one of Bowman's grandchildren. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki said that she would call Rose Seighman, the Mayor's Assistant, and ask her and report back at the next meeting.

### **Cahoon House; Rose Senior Living Tour – Matt Smith**

Mr. Smith stated that Sheri Seroka was contacted by the Rose Senior Living facility here in Avon and the residents wanted to have a tour of the Cahoon House so he, Mr. White, and Ms. Seroka met there last Thursday to give the tour. About 20 residents went on the tour and had a very enjoyable time. Some of them could not go up or down stairs so we presented as much as we could on the first floor. We loaded

them on the bus and had the driver take them down to the basement door so they could get in that way so that worked out really well and he took a contingent upstairs and they really enjoyed that too. In talking with Ms. Seroka they noted that there are obviously other senior living facilities in Avon and the surrounding area that we should contact as they may not be aware that we are willing to give tours so he and Mr. White, and Ms. Seroka are going to work on that to get more information out.

### **Landmark Letters of Recognition**

Mr. Smith said that they all signed the letter tonight but we have to get Mr. Gault's signature also. Mr. White said again that he would call him this week. And in regard to future letters, there are some that he has in mind and he and Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki could work on that in the months ahead as she does a good job of researching the names, etc.

### **Member Comments**

There were no comments from the members of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

### **Audience Comments**

John Traxler asked what hours the Cahoon House was open on Sundays for the tours and Mr. Smith said it is open on Sundays, 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. and on Wednesdays, 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Shannon Laurenzi stated that they were talking about contacting the senior centers and she would recommend that they ask to speak with the Director of the Activities Department as they are the ones that do all that planning, etc. in those facilities. Mr. Smith said, yes, he and Mr. White got to meet the Activities Director for the Rose Senior Living facility and she was really nice and really enjoyed the tour. He added that they just want to make the tours available; he does not think enough people know about it. Ms. Laurenzi felt that the senior centers are looking for things to do where they can control contact with other people because of COVID and all that, so being able to have a tour of a landmark like the Cahoon House would probably be very appealing.

Rick Varga stated that he was talking with Mayor Jensen and they are going to try and put together an herb garden at the Cahoon House with explanations about how people used herbs historically.

### **Next Meeting**

Mr. Smith stated that the next meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission would be held on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, in the Council Chambers of Avon City Hall at 7:00 P.M.

### **Adjourn**

Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The vote was all ayes and the Chairman declared the motion passed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council