

**LO Minutes of the Meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
Held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building  
On Wednesday, November 8, 2023**

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

**Roll Call**

Members:

Present – Chair Cynthia Murnyack-Czarnecki; David Morahan, Vice-Chair Ralph White

Absent – Clint Gault

**Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission Held Wednesday, October 11, 2023**

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Morahan to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission held Wednesday, October 11, 2023, and approve said minutes as published. The vote was all ayes and the Chair declared the motion passed.

**Correspondence/Reports**

Mr. White stated that today he and Kerry Barvincak, Commander of the Avon VFW Post 7035, replaced the Civil War GAR stars at the Cemetery. The old ones have been removed and the VFW is going to take them and display them at the VFW Post on Mills Road. Mr. White said that he asked Mr. Barvincak if, in the future the VFW decides they no longer want the stars, to make sure that the Avon Historical Society gets them and he said he would. Also, the big rock that was at the Mound Cemetery with the plaque of veterans' names fastened to it, has been moved to the Veterans Memorial near the Aquatic Center and Mr. White said that he and Mr. Barvincak and his son are going to clean it tomorrow at 10:00 A.M.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki said that she received a phone call on October 29<sup>th</sup> from one of our citizens, Linda Heiden, and she wanted to express to the Landmarks Preservation Commission and to the City that she has noticed how lovely the Cemetery is looking. She commented that it is so much improved and that the efforts are really noticeable.

**Update on Center Cemetery Restorations – Ralph White**

Mr. White stated that K & J Gravestone Restoration Service is done for the season but we do plan on getting them back in the spring to start some more restoration work. Mr. White said that on October 28<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 A.M.–1:00 P.M., we had 11 Avon High School students meet and clean headstones. Kerry Barvincak stopped by to see how things were going and he gave Commander coins to all the students. Dave Morahan made a really nice post for the star for the soldier of the War of 1812 as we did not have a post for that and then he and Mr. Morahan put that in on that Saturday also. Mr. White said that he did not think we are going to do any more cleaning because the weather is just too iffy so everything has been stored at Old Town Hall. He is going to stop by there tomorrow and pick up a few things to take to the Veterans Memorial to clean the rock. There will be decent weather for that and that will probably be it for the season.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki added that as a point of clarification, the 11 students were from the Leo Club at Avon High School and their faculty advisor, Cameron Walters, accompanied them for part of the time.

### **Landmarks Letters of Recognition – Ralph White**

Mr. White stated that he did not have any letters at this time.

### **Member Comments**

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki noted that they were given a flyer from Linda Heiden regarding the City of Shaker Heights Warrensville West Cemetery and they discussed that at a previous meeting. The website [www.shakeronline.com/788/Warrensville-West-Cemetery](http://www.shakeronline.com/788/Warrensville-West-Cemetery), will be shown during this meeting. The City of Shaker Heights Warrensville West Cemetery is owned and maintained by the City of Shaker Heights and is just over one acre in size. She asked Mr. White to comment on the size of our Center Cemetery and Mr. White responded that he is not really sure what the size is but it is at least an acre and he would say more than an acre but he is not sure how much more. He added that we could probably get the information from the City.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki noted, so just for comparison's sake, our Cemetery is a similar size to what Shaker Heights has. Their first burial took place in 1811 and our first burial took place in 1814. The Shaker Heights Cemetery was designated as a local landmark in 1976 and is a contributing site to the Shaker Village National Register Historic District. The City of Shaker Heights, the Shaker Heights Historical Society and the Shaker Heights Library collaborated on developing a Historic Preservation Master Plan in 2021 and 2022. The Master Plan provides a framework to preserve, protect, and maintain the burial grounds' historical, archaeological, architectural, and cultural value. It will increase the site's attractiveness and will assure that maintenance and security are properly guided. In 2022, the City began to establish a meadow with mowed paths as recommended in the Master Plan. Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki then showed a short video which is on the Shaker Heights website, showing the transformation of the Shaker Heights Cemetery.

At the conclusion of the video, Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated, while she is not proposing at this time that we prepare a Master Plan, or that we advocate or endorse the meadow concept at the Shaker Heights Cemetery, their Master Plan does provide an organized step by step guide as to how things will move forward there. What is key is for us to take note of the following:

1. Shaker Heights' tombstone interpretation tour map which is the concept of interpreting gravestone markings. Sharing information with our community members what the symbols on the gravestones mean is valuable because as the generations have gone by, the meaning of the symbols has, in most cases, been lost. So the Shaker Heights Historical Society has developed this guide for people that want to know what the symbols mean. K & J Gravestone Restoration Services did an outstanding job in their presentation to the Avon Historical Society at their October 5<sup>th</sup> meeting when they discussed the symbols on the gravestones because they used actual pictures of the symbols on the gravestones rather than artists' renditions. Should we move forward with a Center Cemetery gravestone interpretation map, the Avon Landmarks Commission might consider collaborating with K & J in preparing it.
2. Another guidance piece that is very interesting that Shaker Heights did, was to prepare a scavenger hunt that people can print offline and then go to the Cemetery and look for people,

look for their first names, their family names, etc. This is a very interesting and enticing way to get people to visit.

3. Their development of a Veterans Day tour. We have a lot of veterans buried in our Cemetery and that is a wonderful way to continue to honor them.
4. They also developed a self-guided tour. They present Cemetery information, give history, and then pictures and have people learn about these individuals and their past.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated that it is the concept of these four guides that is key for the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission to consider. These maps or guides not only bring awareness to and spark interest in the Cemetery, but they also get people to really see this cherished space and not just drive by it. They get the community to look back appreciatively and respectfully at the generations that came before and they get people to visit the treasure that is their Cemetery. It is these concepts of awareness, interest, appreciation, respect and visitation that we as the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission need to keep in mind as we move forward in our collaborations with the various community partners on the Center Cemetery restoration project and develop possibly our own maps and our own guides for the benefit of our community.

#### **Audience Comments**

Rick Varga, City of Avon Arborist, 33676 Reserve Way, stated that he has been working with Mr. White regarding the trees at the Center Cemetery and also with The Sweat Brothers Tree Company. He said that he just now received a text from Sweat Brothers with a quote, which is as follows: to remove 7 cedar trees, 4 locust trees, 1 spruce, and trim the other locust trees, pine, and 2 cedars is \$7,500. Mr. Varga said that he would take the quote to the Street Dept. Supt. and to the Mayor and hopefully we will move forward with the work.

Mr. White stated to Mr. Varga, so someone from Sweat Brothers met with him at the Cemetery and they are aware that they would probably need cranes and things to protect the markers because some of them are really close? Mr. Varga said, yes, and actually he indicated that they have worked at two other cemeteries and how they had to be very judicious about removing the trees and being careful about the headstones, etc. so he is very much aware of all that. Mr. White said that was good.

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki asked Mr. Varga when he thought that the project will actually move forward to start doing the removal and trimming and Mr. Varga said that it could be in the month of November yet. Mr. White said he thought they might split the work up and do it in two or three sections. Mr. Varga said if there is snow on the ground, we can always do the trees along the street without a problem. We do not want to go on the hill and use cranes if the weather conditions are not favorable enough so Mr. White is correct. We could do partial and then work on the other part later depending on the weather conditions. Mr. White noted that he is not sure if the trees on the Mound itself that are dead or dying are ready to fall over. Mr. Varga said that is his concern, especially during the winter with heavy snow. Mr. White felt those trees should be the priority. Mr. Varga stated that when he meets with the tree company, he will indicate to them that we want to do those trees first because we can always do the ones along the street even if the weather conditions are not as favorable.

**Date of Next Meeting**

Ms. Murnyack-Czarnecki stated that the next Regular Meeting of the Avon Landmarks Preservation Commission will be held on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, in the Council Chambers of Avon City Hall at 7:00 P.M.

**Adjourn**

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

Respectfully submitted by Gail Hayden, Assistant Clerk of Council