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**MEMORANDUM**

Date: 26 July 2013

To: Benjamin Himes, Chief Administrative Officer, Village of Chagrin Falls,  
Ohio

Subject: 103 East Washington Street, Chagrin Falls, Ohio

At the Village's request, as provided in Section 1146.03 (a) (2) paragraphs A and C of Ordinance 2007-19 (as amended), I have conducted research on the property at 103 East Washington Street to determine its historical significance and reviewed the proposed plans for changes to it with respect to the potential impact that these changes would have upon the historical significance of this property and the immediate neighborhood in which it stands.

Sources Consulted: a) Cuyahoga County Auditor Property Information, online; b) Ohio Historic Inventory (OHI) listings; c) Gray & Pape Photographic Survey; d) *Chagrin Falls: An Ohio Village History*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Printing, 2005; and e) architectural drawings A-1, A-4 through A-6 prepared by Henry Piper Architect and provided by the Village Building and Zoning Department. A site visit was made on Tuesday, 23 July 2013.

The Issue: The owner desires to add a breakfast room and wood deck to the north (rear) side of the house; and a pair of french doors and a chimney on the west side of the house.

Findings:

- 103 East Washington Street is located on the north side of the street, three lots west of Philomethian Street, in an R1-60 Residential District.
  
- This two-story Craftsman-Bungalow house, with its broad front porch and prominent dormer above, is known as the Martha Ober House and dates to ca. 1912 according to OHI form CUY737826 prepared by Gray & Pape in 2005. It is not recorded in the Gray & Pape Photographic Survey, although its two neighbors to the east, 109 and 115 East Washington Street are included. The source of the ca. 1912 date is an article in the *Chagrin Falls Exponent* of 4 April 1912 that notes that the firm of Rowe & Giles had contracted to build a new residence for Mrs. George Ober on this recently-purchased lot. The detached two-car garage to the northeast of the house was built in 1968,

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according to the Cuyahoga County Auditor Property Information, online. This property abuts a large parking lot to the north but is visually screened from it by a tall wood, vertical-board fence.

- The Ober Family is important in Chagrin Falls' commercial and industrial history. The *Chagrin Falls* book (pages 95 - 98) note that the brothers George and John Ober had started a wood-turning business in South Newbury in 1860 and moved it to Chagrin Falls in 1873 and expanded the operation to include a sawmill on Front (then Bell) Street and later a foundry and machine shop. George Ober seems to have been a talented mechanic who held seven patents including high-quality lathes that were successfully marketed world wide. He died in 1903. It is his apparently his widow, Martha, who had this house built ca. 1912.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** The house at 103 East Washington Street meets the standards of Historical Significance as defined in Ordinance 2007-19 (as amended), Section 1146.05 because: a) it is more than 50 years old; b) it is a good example of the Craftsman-Bungalow style popular in this country during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century; and c) it is associated with persons significant in Village history.

- The proposed changes are compatible with the architectural style of the house and would not have an adverse effect upon its historical significance.
- The proposed changes to the west wall of this house would be visible from the west along East Washington Street, but would not be obtrusive. They would not be visible from the parking lot to the north nor from Philomethian Street nor from the east along East Washington Street. The proposed changes would not have an adverse effect upon proximate historically-significant properties.

**End of Report**

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