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Ohio Power Sitting Board
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215-3793

Jeffry D. Justus
11518 Five Point Rd.
Perrysburg, Ohio 43551

February 12, 2014

Case No. 14-0228-GA-BLN

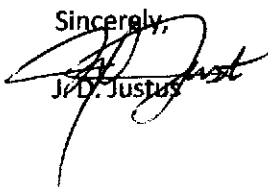
Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing in reference to the above captioned case. As required by the rules of the Ohio Power Sitting Board, please consider this correspondence as being compliant within the 10 day required period of time following public notification of Case No. 14-0228-GA-BLN, "Notice of Proposed Major Utility Facility."

I am filing a "Motion to Intervene" in this matter as an affected party(s) after reviewing published plans. As a sitting board member of the Perrysburg Area Historic Museum which is an adjacent property, as well as being a local historian and citizen of our area, I believe my motion should be well taken.

This proposed "Maumee River Crossing Project", consisting of a 20" pipe running easterly to the southwest corner of State Route 65 (W. River Road) and Fort Meigs Road, will run directly through the "Spafford Family Cemetery", the founding fathers of Perrysburg. Not only are the Spafford's buried at this location, but many first families of Perrysburg and commanding officers of the War of 1812 at Fort Meigs. A land grant was issued to Amos Spafford by the United States Congress and President Monroe at this location and the cemetery is on the south and north sides of these two intersecting roads. The cemetery and human remains have been disturbed at this location several times, causing great expense to all parties involved and grief and despair for living relatives in Maumee and across the United States. I have newspaper articles, quarterly magazines, police reports and other published accounts of this cemetery's location and previous decimating of grave sites by utility projects of the past. If this particular project should move forward, it will have a profound unwanted environmental impact. Affecting this site will not best serve the public interest when a movement is "in the works" to establish a marker/plaque denoting the grave sites of our founding fathers. I implore you to reconsider the authorization of this proposed project in its current form and respectfully request an alternate path for "Columbia" to design/implement, thereby not disturbing those that have been in their resting place as far back as 1810.

Sincerely,



J.D. Justus

Cc: Mayor Olmstead

State Rep. Tim Brown

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WHERE ARE THE GRAVES OF OUR FOUNDING FATHER, HIS WIFE AND OFFICERS OF THE WAR OF 1812?

As a police officer for the city of Perrysburg I had dealt with many types of police calls over the years, but was not ready for the police radio call I received in the summer of 2001. I was told to respond to the extension of Fort Meigs Road, the part that runs north from Rt.65 (West River Road) to the reconstructed Fort Meigs. The police dispatcher advised that a construction crew had unearthed human remains while they were installing an underground sewer line for the new visitor's center at the fort. I arrived and climbed down a ladder about 10' underground. I could see the square end of an old coffin. The wood had denigrated to give the appearance of "dark dirt", darker than the surrounding soil. It had blacksmith nails every so often, in line with the meeting of the dark wood outlines. Several body remains were also visible in another part of the deep hole, giving the initial alarm to the construction crew. I contacted the Service Safety Director and my mother Judy Justus, a local historian. The county coroner's office was also contacted at the same time, not knowing the age of the remains or if my deductions were correct that this was probably an old family cemetery. My mother's response on the phone, prior to her arrival, was that she was sure this was the old "Spafford Family Cemetery." She knew the founder of Perrysburg (h), Amos Spafford, was granted a 160 acre land grant from Congress at that location and had situated the cemetery on "the high bluff" overlooking the river and the old town of "Orleans" just west of Fort Meigs. The remains were sent to The Ohio State University for age analysis and possible identification of the numbers of individuals unearthed. They were subsequently returned to the City of Perrysburg 1 year later. D.N.A. testing was not done on the remains due to the extremely high costs for such testing in 2001 as well as costs associated with locating living relatives from across the United States. The remains consisted of bones from 8 different persons, with 2 or 3 being children and were reinterred at Fort Meigs Union Cemetery with Witzler Shank Funeral Homes providing a period casket from 1870 and the tombstone, the city purchasing the grave plot and Historic Perrysburg providing lunch for Spafford relatives that traveled near and far for the ceremony. The event was co-chaired by my mother and Doug Bahnsen, members of the sponsoring Perrysburg, Ohio Bicentennial Committee. I remembered being at the ceremony and wondering, "Is the founder of our town, Amos Spafford, really being interned here in Fort Meigs Cemetery, or are possibly all his remains still under that paved asphalt road?" I did not breath a word of my thoughts as his descendants present were not very happy the remains had been unearthed and kept at Ohio State for a year in the first place of such a prominent man, but were extremely happy for the re-internment and fanfare all involved put forward.

FAST FORWARD TO FEBRUARY 2014.

I happened to be reading the book "The Spafford's in Wood County", written by my mother Judy Justus. I was also researching newspaper articles reference the Spafford's due to my involvement with the remodeling of the Aurora Spafford house, Amos' son's home on West River Road. I found an article that peaked my interest that read "PIONEER GRAVE FOUND BY PIPELINE CREW", dated 1940. The Ohio Fuel Gas Company was digging to install a 12" gas pipe near River Road, just off of Fort Meigs near Ditch Road, the same location as the 2001 discovery. In 1940, Sheriff Isch was called to the scene and requested someone go get Charles Mills, a pioneer of that section of land and local hardware merchant. Charles' father, George Mills lived to the age of 97, and educated his son well on local history. Charles told the Sheriff that it was the Spafford Family cemetery and the graveyard dated to around the 1815 era. Charles

also told the Sheriff that the graves were marked with stones and small markers, but had fallen over in later years. He stated a grave at that location was also unearthed around 1905 when the road was "changed a bit" running through Fort Meigs. A walnut casket, leg bones and a skull were found in 1940 and reinterred in that part of the grave that was not in the pipeline trench.

BESIDES OUR FOUNDING FATHER, WHO ELSE IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN BURIED IN THE SPAFFORD CEMETERY?

Research from viewing death records, family letters, and comparisons of Fort Meigs Union Cemetery records, internet searches and newspaper articles suggests that Amos Spafford has extended family members buried at this site, amongst others. Lieutenant Almon Gibbs (veteran of the war of 1812's siege on Fort Meigs) is purported to be buried here as well as some members of the Hull, Hawley and Charter families, some of which were also veterans of the war.

There are possibly more undocumented burials here. This is one of the first family cemeteries (Spafford's were the first permanent pioneer residents of the county) in the area and those living in log cabins at "Port Miami of Lake Erie" (Orleans as the locals called it, and later named Perrysburg (h)) in low areas knew of the river ice and flooding that was prominent and non-conducive to a burial site. In 2001 The Ohio State University identified remains from 8 individuals, 2 or 3 of which were children. At a minimum there are 15 well established burials at this site. More are purported, but not substantiated with a preponderance of evidence at this point.

DO WE HAVE A CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY?

The probability is great that some members of the Spafford family were reinterred at Fort Meigs Union Cemetery on May 10th, 2003. But, there is statistically also a less than 50% chance that Amos Spafford, our founding father, was among them. This cemetery of great importance to the City of Perrysburg, Perrysburg Township and Wood County has been disturbed a total of three times over the years for "construction projects" for the furtherance of Perrysburg and State of Ohio infrastructure projects. Some of the veterans who were buried there, and our founding father Amos Spafford, are directly responsible for the security of the Northwest Territory and the naming of our city and township. Today, the purported boundaries of this resting place are located partially within the City of Perrysburg, property of The State of Ohio and private property. It is my belief that this area should be "marked" with a bronze pole marker/stone bronze plaque in honor of our founding father and veterans. Time passes, memories fade and records are lost. I feel it is time we stop digging up our past in the worst form and remember those of great importance that came before us, in a dignified and respectful manner.

J.D. Justus