Dear Friends of Monroe Street Cemetery,

I am writing today to bring you up to speed on the gatehouse restoration project. After the collapse of part of the west wall in March of 2010, it seemed like the only alternative was to demolish the building and call it a day. It took a great deal of advocacy both inside City Hall and other venues from those of us who love Ohio City’s largest green space, but our voices were heard.

Mayor Frank Jackson, Councilman Joe Cimperman, Commissioner Richard Silva, Director Michael Cox and so many others have made a dream come true. The City has stepped up to the plate and has committed to restoration, not only at Monroe but also at Erie Street Cemetery, Highland Park Cemetery, Woodland Cemetery, and other City-owned cemeteries. After many years of deferred maintenance, we are now seeing replacement of deteriorated fencing, removal of dead/dying trees, planting of new trees, installation of trash cans and section markers, erection of a permanent map of each cemetery near the main entrance, as well as restoration of structures, rather than removal.

Work on the Monroe Street Gatehouse began in August 2013. The basic idea, as developed by Osborn Engineering Company, is to deconstruct and then rebuild. In other words take it all down and then put it all back. To that end, the building is now gone. However, all of the stone veneer has been carefully removed and stored on the cemetery property.

The restoration contractor, Envirocon, Inc., a Cleveland area based firm, has carefully removed and inscribed a code on each piece indicating where that particular piece of stone goes when reconstruction begins. Concrete block walls will be erected against which the stone pieces will be put back. Once rebuilt, the building will not be a useful structure since there will be no heat, lights or plumbing, though provisions are being made for future installation of certain utilities.

Details of the building, such as windows, doors, decorative metal bands, etc., will be replicated. The new roof structure will be finished with real slate roofing. The bell tower that has been missing for so many decades is going to once again lift its spire to the sky.

This all very exciting. Stay tuned!

Alan Fodor
Treasurer
Monroe Street Cemetery Foundation
March 31, 2010 a portion of the west wall of the Gatehouse collapsed.

Work began by removing the roof structure, decorative metal band, ventilation dormers and the stone dormer above the north wall.

By August 14, most of the slate roofing was gone.
The entrance arch is being cleaned, tuckpointed, and the organic growth removed.

Braces were installed to make sure the walls would not collapse as seen in this photo taken on August 22.

If you look closely you can see chalk marks on each piece of stone which indicate where in the structure that piece was located and where it will be put back.

Stone pieces once removed were arranged on the ground, or pallets, inside the cemetery grounds waiting for reinstallation.

The chalk mark was then inscribed into each piece for permanent identification.
On September 4, the belltower shaft was the last portion of the building to be taken down.

On September 6, the king and queen who once graced the north wall dormer were resting comfortably on the ground.

By September 23rd deconstruction was complete.