

**State Board of Review Meeting  
National Register of Historic Places  
South Carolina Department of Archives and History  
State Historic Preservation Office**

*Minutes of the November 15, 2024, Meeting*

The State Board of Review meeting was held in the Wachovia room of the South Carolina Archives and History Center, 8301 Parklane Road, in Columbia, South Carolina.

**Members Present**

Dr. J. Edward Lee (Chair), Mr. Phillip D. Smith (Vice Chair), Mr. J.R. Fennell, Ms. J. Haley Milner, and Dr. Rhondda Robinson Thomas.

**Members Absent**

Dr. Carolyn Dillian, Dr. A. V. Huff, Jr., Ms. Amy Moore, and Ms. Stacey Young.

**Call to Order**

Dr. Lee called the meeting to order at 10:38 A.M. and welcomed everyone in attendance.

**Introduction of Board Members**

At Dr. Lee's invitation, each of the board members introduced themselves, stating their names and professional affiliations.

**Remarks**

Dr. Lee invited Dr. W. Eric Emerson, director of the Department of Archives and History and State Historic Preservation Officer, to offer remarks. Dr. Emerson welcomed attendees to the South Carolina Archives and History Center and thanked them for being present at the meeting. He explained some of the functions of the Department of Archives and History and highlighted the importance of the State Review Board's work. He specifically welcomed those attending in support of the nomination for Finley High School from the S.L. Finley Restoration Association (SLFRA) and congratulated the group on the recent unveiling of the 2,000<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Historical Marker. Dr. Emerson also welcomed Dr. Louis Venters from Francis Marion University who was in attendance with students from his public history class. Dr. Lee then invited Ms. Elizabeth M. Johnson, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, to offer remarks. Ms. Johnson welcomed attendees and acknowledged the National Register Staff, including Mr. Brad Sauls, Supervisor of Registration, Grant, and Local Government Programs, and National Register co-coordinators Ms. Virginia Harness and Dr. Edwin Breeden. Ms. Johnson also noted other SHPO staff members in attendance, including Ms. Amanda Lee, Historic Architecture Consultant, and Ms. Mary Sherrer, Review Coordinator for Transportation Projects. Dr. Lee then also welcomed Dr. Venters's class and asked Dr. Venters to share more about the public history program at Francis Marion.

## **Approval of Minutes**

The members received the minutes of the July 26, 2024, meeting by mail (or e-mail) in the packets prior to the meeting. Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Mr. Fennell. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Explanation of Procedure**

Dr. Lee outlined the procedure that would follow for considering each of the nominations, explaining presenters' time limits for each nomination, which would be followed by comments from visitors; questions from board members; uninterrupted board discussion; and a board decision.

## **Consideration of Nominations**

Beginning at 10:45, the following nominations were considered:

1. **Commercial Hotel (Aiken, Aiken County)** was presented by the co-preparer, Ms. Linda Johnson of Historic Aiken Foundation. During the public comments, co-preparer Mr. Kristopher King spoke on the property's influence on the broader architectural development of downtown Aiken during the period of significance. Ms. Johnson added that the Aiken city manager had planned to attend but had been called away to a meeting. Ms. Milner asked Ms. Johnson to explain some of the recent issues with the building that had been in the news. Ms. Johnson said that the City had purchased the building after an abandoned renovation effort and initially found a developer who planned to demolish the building and redevelop the site, however the City had since reversed plans and was marketing the building for rehabilitation to new developers. She added that any rehabilitation effort would be dependent on the financial incentives that would be opened by its National Register listing. Mr. Smith asked if future plans for the building were still unclear in that case, and Ms. Johnson said it would hopefully be redeveloped as a hotel but that it might also be apartments. She added that all the City's marketing plans require that the exterior of the building be preserved whatever its eventual use. Ms. Milner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, for approval of the nomination at the local level of significance. The Board approved the motion unanimously.
2. **Finley High School (Chester vicinity, Chester County)** was presented by the preparer, Ms. Lauren Fowler-Ellis of Fowler-Ellis Preservation. Dr. Lee noted the recent unveiling of the 2,000<sup>th</sup> state historical marker at Finley and congratulated the Finley alumni group on the success of the ceremony. During the public comments, Chester Mayor Carlos Williams thanked the SLFRA for working to bringing attention to the school's importance. He said that he grew up near the school and said how most residents of Chester had at some point attended the campus, either as the high school or in later years as a junior high school. Mr. James Wright of the SLFRA and 1963 graduate of Finley spoke and thanked Ms. Fowler-Ellis for her work on the nomination, and the State Review for their consideration. He then asked the other members of SLFRA to stand and said they hoped to restore it for

community use, noting the surrounding area's long importance to African American education in Chester and East Chester specifically. Dr. Lee added that he once taught at Finley when it was a junior high school and also coached the football team. Mr. Fennell made a motion, seconded by Dr. Thomas, for approval of the nomination at the local level of significance. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

3. **Ruffin High and Elementary School (Ruffin, Colleton County)** was presented by the preparer, Mr. Kalen McNabb of Meadors, Inc. During the public comments, Ms. Octavia Lewis spoke and said she has owned the property since 2023 and hoped to use it to provide community services that were currently lacking in the Ruffin area. She emphasized the campus's potential value for alumni as well as current Ruffin residents. Mr. Fennell noted that his father attended the school in the early 1970s and had good memories of his time there. Ms. Milner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fennell, for approval at the local level of significance. The Board approved the motion unanimously.
4. **Green's Funeral Home and Ambulance Service (Lake City, Florence County)** was presented by the preparer, Ms. Staci Richey of Access Preservation. Ms. Richey noted that the owner, Dr. Terrie Gaskins-Bryant, was unable to attend but had called to offer her full support. Ms. Milner asked about future plans for the property, and Ms. Richey said the owner's long-range hopes were to turn it into a museum. Mr. Smith asked if Luther Green's residence was owned by the same person, and Ms. Richey said it was owned by Mr. Green's children. Mr. Smith asked if any thought had been given to listing the properties together, and Ms. Richey said she did not believe so given the differing ownership. Dr. Thomas asked if there was much local knowledge of Green's significance, and Ms. Richey said she was unsure but believed Dr. Gaskins-Bryant was trying to bring more awareness to his importance. Dr. Thomas said it was a fascinating story and that there were many similar ones across South Carolina that deserved such recognition. Mr. Smith added that many people were not aware of the dual funerary-ambulance services that Black-owned funeral homes offered during segregation and mentioned family members recalling how they were once not allowed to use County ambulance services. Dr. Thomas made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, for approval of the nomination at the local level of significance. The Board approved the motion unanimously.
5. **Edgewood School (Ninety Six, Greenwood County)** was presented by Dr. Edwin Breeden of the SHPO, on behalf of the preparer Mr. John Sherrer of Vintage Palmetto Preservation SC, who was unable to attend. Edgewood School alumni Mr. James Hill, Jr., and Ms. Sarah Hill-Foster, spoke in support of the nomination. Ms. Milner made a motion to approve the nomination at the local level of significance, seconded by Mr. Smith. The Board approved the motion unanimously.
6. **Atlantic Beach Historic District (Atlantic Beach, Horry County)** was presented by the co-preparer, Mr. Dean Baker of Chronicle Heritage. During the public comments, Mr. Rajiv Myana, Principal Planner for Horry County, spoke in support of the nomination and said that a number of Atlantic Beach residents were in attendance. Ms. Patricia Mallett, vice chair of the Horry County Historic

Preservation Commission, spoke in support of the nomination and acknowledged Ms. Linda Cheatham, interim Atlantic Beach town manager, who also holds an extensive collection of historical materials related to the beach; Mr. Dennis Gibson; and Atlantic Beach Mayor Pro-Tem Mr. John David. Ms. Cheatham spoke and shared a personal story in support of the nomination. Ms. Alice Graham spoke in support of the nomination and said she had lived at Atlantic Beach since 1968 and emphasized the importance of the town having been able to remain Black-owned and Black-governed. She invited all in attendance to come visit and expressed pride that the nomination was going forward. Ms. Cheatham also noted that in attendance was Dr. Rosa Rucker Lightfoot, daughter of the Beach's first mayor. Ms. Harness read the names of nearly two dozen people who had sent letters of support for the nomination. Dr. Thomas said she was glad to see this nomination come forward and Atlantic Beach's importance to South Carolina history being acknowledged. Mr. Fennell made a motion to approve the nomination at the state level of significance, seconded by Dr. Thomas. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

7. **Bellevue-Newman's Field-Gracelynn Terrace Historic District (Additional Documentation & Boundary Increase) (Columbia, Richland County)** was presented by the preparer, Ms. Staci Richey of Access Preservation. During public comments, Ms. Denise Wellman, president of the Cottontown neighborhood association, said there was widespread support for the nomination in the neighborhood and that residents understood the importance of National Register recognition. Ms. Harness noted that two official objections to the nomination had been received, as well as one unofficial objection letter and a phone call. Mr. Smith made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fennell, for approval of the nomination at the local level of significance. The Board approved the motion unanimously.
8. **Bob Russell Realty Building (Columbia, Richland County)** was presented by the preparer, Ms. Janie Campbell of Rogers Lewis Group. Mr. Smith asked Ms. Campbell to clarify the definition of New Formalist Modernism. Ms. Campbell said the style was defined by abstracted Classical elements, in which materials and production technologies typically associated with the Modern movement were used to offer new interpretations of Classical influences. Dr. Thomas asked what kind of clientele the realty firm served, and Ms. Campbell said it was her understanding they were largely white homebuyers and noted she had come across a number of racially restrictive covenants placed on properties sold by the firm. Dr. Thomas noted the nomination mentioned urban renewal and the clearing of local African American neighborhoods, and she asked if the business had worked on any such projects. Ms. Campbell said she was unsure but did know that much of the area around the office building had been cleared through urban renewal. Mr. Smith commented on the growing number of Modern buildings that were aging into historical status and how it would become increasingly difficult to determine which such properties were truly significant to their respective contexts. Ms. Milner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Smith, for approval of the nomination at the local level of significance. The Board approved the motion unanimously.

Dr. Lee then explained the procedure by which the approved nominations would be submitted for the review of the National Park Service.

### **Other Business**

Dr. Lee announced the following upcoming Review Board meeting dates:

The spring 2025 meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 21, 2025.

The summer 2025 meeting is scheduled for Friday, July 25, 2025.

The fall 2025 meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 21, 2025.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Dr. Lee asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Fennell made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Dr. Thomas. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 12:06 P.M.