

Sunset Review Commission

Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board Diana Welling, State Historic Preservation Officer June 25, 2024

Chairman Wilkin, Vice-Chairman Hillyer, and members of the Commission:

I am Barbara Powers, Department Head and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for Inventory & Registration at the Ohio History Connection. Thank you for this opportunity to testify regarding the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board.

The duties and responsibilities of the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board are outlined in Section 149.301 of the Ohio Revised Code and include:

- Assisting the Ohio History Connection in its site preservation program and the promotion of historic preservation in the State of Ohio, including suggesting legislation necessary to carry out the Society's historic preservation program.
- Recommending to the State Historic Preservation Officer properties and sites which are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Advising the State Historic Preservation Officer in developing a State Historic Preservation Plan for the State of Ohio, conducting a statewide survey of historic properties, and carrying out other duties.

The advisory board meets four times a year. As described in both State and Federal statute and/or regulation (ORC Section 149.301; 16 USC 470a(b)(1)(A); 36 CFR 61), the board requires a majority of professional members such as architects, historians, planners, architectural historians, and archaeologists, and public members from around the state who have expertise in Ohio history, architecture, and archaeology. Board members must also demonstrate knowledge of and interest in historic preservation.

For Ohio to qualify to receive its annual Historic Preservation Fund matching grant from the Department of the Interior for operating a State Historic Preservation Office, Ohio's program, a division of the Ohio History Connection, must provide for a historic preservation review board

pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Section 149.301 of the ORC establishes that review board for Ohio, the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board.

The board provides valuable service in helping to list properties in the National Register of Historic Places. Ohio currently ranks third among the states in the number of listings in the National Register of Historic Places over 4200 listings that include more than 58,000 significant buildings, sites, structures, and objects. Listing properties in the National Register is often the first step in the successful preservation of properties significant in Ohio's history. The National Register program in Ohio is a valuable tool for tourism, reinvestment in historic neighborhoods, and economic development and growth of traditional downtowns. The National Register builds stronger awareness and appreciation of Ohio's history through its historic places.

A major motivation for National Register listing and probably the most visible is the benefit of economic development opportunities for income-producing National Register-listed buildings through the Historic Tax Credit program. In Ohio, the Federal Historic Tax Credit is often paired with the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit affording property owners of historic buildings – big and small – a total of a 45% tax credit on qualified rehabilitation expenses. That's a sizeable incentive to choose rehabilitation over neglect or demolition. Since the beginning of the federal program in 1977, Ohio has benefitted from 7.8 Billion with a b in investment.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you have for me.