



State of Nevada
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Joe Lombardo, *Governor*
James A. Settelmeyer, *Director*
Rebecca Palmer, *Administrator*
Joseph Curtis, *Chair*

MINUTES OF THE COMSTOCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

DATE: Monday, August 1, 2023

PLACE: Storey County Courthouse Slammer Museum, 26 South B Street, Virginia City, Nevada

WORKSHOP MEETING: None

REGULAR MEETING TIME: 5:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMISSIONER ROLL CALL: Quorum achieved

Calvin Dillon – present

Tammy Hendrix – present

Julie Workman – present

Clay Mitchell – *absent*

John Cassanelli – *absent*

Joe Curtis – present

Nancy Cleaves – present

Mercedes de la Garza – present (arrived between agenda items 5 & 6)

(Chief Deputy Attorney General Greg Ott also present)

PUBLIC COMMENT (Comment limited to 3 minutes per speaker, no action will be taken until it is properly agendized): None

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

Chair's Report – Chair Joe Curtis reported several violations in the district, including trailers being lived in full time (not temporarily) and shipping containers. He has spoken to the Sheriff's office about it.

Staff Report – Comstock Preservation and History Officer Kristen Brown referred the Commissioners to her staff report that was sent to them along with the meeting materials.

Commissioner Comments – None

Correspondence – Member of the community Janet Rose called and gave verbal comment to Kristen Brown. She is concerned that Item 10 on the August agenda is not agendized properly as an action item as it doesn't contain enough information. She is also concerned about the junk and trailers across the street from the ashram in Silver City.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 1, 2023 AGENDA, AGENDA ITEM 5:

Nancy Cleaves moved to approve the August 1, 2023 agenda as written, and Calvin Dillon seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the August 1, 2023 agenda was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JULY 10, 2023 MEETING, AGENDA ITEM 6:

Mercedes de la Garza moved to approve the July 10, 2023 meeting minutes as written, and Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the July 10, 2023 meeting minutes were approved. Calvin Dillon abstained from voting.

NEW CONSTRUCTION, NV ENERGY STREETLIGHTS, VARIOUS LOCATIONS, VIRGINIA CITY AND GOLD HILL, AGENDA ITEM 7 (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

NV Energy installed inappropriate light fixtures without consultation. This item was on previous meeting agendas to discuss a potential stop work order and later to discuss potentially approving the lights. Kristen Brown gave an update on the latest letter that was mailed to NV Energy by the Attorney General’s office on July 25, 2023, and the fact that NV Energy had not yet had a chance to install the new, smaller lights for us to examine. Nancy Cleaves and Mercedes de la Garza stated that they do not feel there is an action to take at this time since the lights are not in place yet and thus no discussion or action can occur. DAG Greg Ott clarified that the Commission may postpone this item to a future meeting without needing a formal motion and vote. Joe Curtis noted that the school on D Street has fixed their lights which were previously pointed at driver’s eyes.

Public comment – Peter Lutz noted that NV Energy has bulb shields to direct light away from houses, and that lower wattages are available. He noted that none of the lights on D Street are working and that he’s called NV Energy several times about it. Kristen Brown explained that we did evaluate the bulb shields and that they weren’t found to solve the problem.

DEMO AND NEW CONSTRUCTION: GARAGE, 210 E. WASHINGTON STREET, VIRGINIA CITY, AGENDA ITEM 8 (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Discussion among Commissioners about when the garage was built. The assessor records indicate 1950, which is plausible. Joe Curtis feels it may be slightly earlier. Kristen Brown noted that the district’s Period of Significance ends at 1942, so if the garage was constructed after that, it would be a non-contributing resource. Joe Curtis asked about the garage door style and building owner Mike Ansotegui specified that they would be carriage-style doors like one of the examples in the submittal. Mercedes de la Garza noted that the rules for a contributing versus non-contributing building can be a bit different, and that if the main house is contributing, the garage should be designed carefully to not detract from the house. For example, the garage roof pitch should not match the roof pitch on the house and the trim and siding should be differentiated. Mercedes de la Garza began a motion requiring the trim to be different than that of the main house, among other conditions, but the owner asked for more information; specifically, that since the house trim is not original to the house, why should the garage trim avoid matching it? Mercedes de la Garza explained that the garage should be subservient to the house regardless.

Public comment – None

Motion – Mercedes de la Garza moved to approve the new garage at 210 E. Washington, provided that the design is subservient to that of the main house, with simpler window trim, door trim, and barge

boards to have fewer architectural details and relief ornamentation, and with the garage siding to match the siding on the non-historic house addition. Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW CONSTRUCTION: SHOP, 321 S. D STREET, VIRGINIA CITY, AGENDA ITEM 9 (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Joe Curtis confirms that the access to the proposed new structure would be on E Street. Owner Peter Lutz stated that the other outbuilding on the site is a board & batten structure built in the 1980s, and that this new structure will have no windows. Mercedes de la Garza asked for clarification that the shed roof section is the open section, and the owner confirmed that it is.

Public comment – Member of the public Lee Sterrett lives in the house to the south and he stated that he has no objection to this new construction.

Motion – Nancy Cleaves moved to approve the application as presented. Calvin Dillon seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

TRAILERS AND SHIPPING CONTAINERS, AGENDA ITEM 10 (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Joe Curtis stated that the district contains trailers, travel trailers, and motorhomes being lived in full time, as well as shipping containers on parcels long-term without approval. Kristen Brown noted that she met with Pete Renaud at the Storey County Building Department and learned of the legal process they use for “nuisance” cases, in which a series of specific letters are mailed to the property owner, with certain lengths of time in which the owner can take action after each letter, culminating in a court appearance if action isn’t taken. Joe Curtis noted that the NRS item about trailers does not differentiate between living in one and parking one. He also noted that the County can issue temporary permits for trailers while a house is being built. Calvin Dillon suggested compiling a list of “problem sites.” Nancy Cleaves asked how the RV Park is affected by this, as people live there full time. Joe Curtis said that there are signs noting “no camping/no parking” in various locations, and that he remembers that the RV Park was not originally intended for long-term living.

DAG Greg Ott said that the Commission is allowed to meet with its attorneys outside of a public meeting. He said that NRS 241 calls it a “non-meeting.” There is no need to post it publicly, and it can either have a quorum or no quorum. He suggested that staff and the Commission set up a meeting with the AG’s office to discuss this issue and some potential next steps. Kristen Brown said that she would set up such a meeting, and that staff from both Storey and Lyon Counties should be included.

Public comment – None

PUBLIC COMMENT (Comment limited to 3 minutes per speaker, no action will be taken until it is properly agendized): Building owner Peter Lutz (who received approval during agenda item 9) asked what the next steps were. Kristen Brown said that his COA can be issued tonight after the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mercedes de la Garza moved to adjourn the meeting, and Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:19 PM.