



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, July 10, 2023

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

WORKSHOP MEETING: 4:30 PM

Commissioner training – refresher on NRS 384, NAC 384, and Commissioner roles and responsibilities.

REGULAR MEETING TIME: 5:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: 5:03 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMISSIONER ROLL CALL: Quorum achieved

Calvin Dillon – *absent*

Tammy Hendrix – present

Julie Workman – present

Clay Mitchell – present

John Cassanelli – present

Joe Curtis – *absent*

Nancy Cleaves – present

Mercedes de la Garza – present

(Deputy Attorney General Nathan Holland also present)

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

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

Chair's Report – None

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. Kristen also gave an update on Vice Chair Clay Mitchell's meeting with NV Energy regarding the streetlights – they discussed why alternative light fixtures aren't available, and NV Energy staff recommended that CHDC send another letter to the NV Energy Standards Committee and NV Energy legal staff. Kristen Brown shared the draft letter that she wrote with Clay Mitchell. Nathan Holland approved the draft letter, but we have not mailed it yet pending the discussion during this July 10th meeting.

Commissioner Comments – Julie Workman noted that the staff notes being compiled monthly are helpful. She also stated that the arsonist in Dayton struck again over the July 4th weekend, and this time his bail was revoked.

Correspondence – None

APPROVAL OF JULY 10, 2023 AGENDA:

Mercedes de la Garza moved to approve the July 10, 2023 agenda as written, and John Cassanelli seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the July 10, 2023 agenda was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 12, 2023 MEETING:

Nancy Cleaves moved to approve the June 12, 2023 meeting minutes as written, and John Cassanelli seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the June 12, 2023 meeting minutes were approved.

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. In response to CHDC letters mailed to NV Energy and a meeting with NV Energy in April, NV Energy installed small shields on several new lights in an attempt to reduce their glare, but the shields did not work. Discussion among the Commissioners about the continued brightness of the lights.

Public comment – Four NV Energy staff members were present: Jeff Brigger, Mike Beckett, Nick Payne, and Harold Wade. All four spoke about the process for replacing/upgrading lights, and the fact that these lights are what is available to their customers statewide. They notified the CHDC that the lights come in “small,” “medium,” and “large,” which is not a size indicator, but rather shorthand for referring to the wattage and brightness level of each. The color of these lights is still cool, unlike the warm tones of the former sodium vapor lights. But there is a possibility of installing the “small” or “medium” versions instead of the “large” to reduce the brightness level. NV Energy will install these ASAP and notify staff when the replacements have been made so that the CHDC, the County, and local residents can inspect them and decide whether they solved the problem.

Public comment – Member of the public Terri Myers asked whether the Comstock Historic District rules would supersede the County’s decision regarding what light types to install. Deputy Attorney General Nathan Holland answered that yes, if the CHDC said to remove the lights, NV Energy would have to do it. Clay Mitchell pointed out that although that is true, it is tricky since the County did request that fixtures be maintained and since the County pays the electric bills.

Mercedes de la Garza moved to: 1) continue this item to the next scheduled meeting, 2) talk to the County to be sure they’re OK with the smaller fixtures, and 3) revise the CHDC/DAG letter to NV Energy to include the proposed compromise of the smaller light types being installed. Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

8. FUTURE DESIGN STANDARDS REVISIONS: SOLAR PANEL AND SOLAR SHINGLES GUIDANCE (FOR DISCUSSION ONLY): AGENDA ITEM 8:

Discussion among Commissioners regarding the solar policy defined in August 2021 – should it be amended, or left as is? Clay Mitchell believes that we should state an overriding philosophy or guiding statement, then have bullet points outlining X and Y (content TBD). We should make it clear that although we appreciate sustainability and energy efficiency, our priority is historic character. Several Commissioners noted their desire to revise the policy to make it as clear as possible, to more closely match the National Park Service guidance, and to outline *how* to minimize visual impact. Kristen Brown noted that in the future, we can also provide guidance to building owners regarding how to increase energy efficiency/weatherization for historic buildings using low-impact and low-cost approaches.

Public comment – Member of the public Mike Workman said it will be important to reiterate that solar panels or shingles may not be possible for all historic buildings.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Comment limited to 3 minutes per speaker, no action will be taken until it is properly agendized): Commissioner Mercedes de la Garza thanked Kristen Brown for the meeting materials.

ADJOURNMENT:

Nancy Cleaves moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mercedes de la Garza seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:23 PM.