



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: Tuesday, June 4, 2024

PLACE: Comstock Historic District Commission Office, 20 N. E 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 Cassinelli – present

Joe Curtis – present

Nancy Cleaves – present

Mercedes de la Garza – present

(Deputy Attorney General Nicole N. Ting also present)

AGENDA ITEM 3, APPROVAL OF JUNE 4, 2024 AGENDA (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

John Cassinelli moved to approve the June 4, 2024 agenda as written, and Mercedes de la Garza seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the June 4, 2024 agenda was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT, AGENDA ITEM 4 (Comment limited to 3 minutes per speaker, no action will be taken until it is properly agendized): None

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS, AGENDA ITEM 5:

a. Chair's Report – None.

b. 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. She notified the Commission that she sent a letter to the owners of the parcel in Silver City with the unapproved RV and trailers, but that the letter was returned as undeliverable. She will continue that effort. She stated that the resolution to form a committee was completed and signed by Chair Joe Curtis, as directed by the Commission during the April meeting and approved during the May meeting. Finally, the Commission received a packet from the Storey County District Attorney confirming the formal conveyance of the Commission's Real

Property pursuant to Assembly Bill 143. Chair Joe Curtis gave a brief summary of the land conveyance effort.

c. Commissioner Comments – John Cassinelli stated that his CHDC appointment expires at the end of June, and that he’s currently running unopposed for a Lyon County Commissioner seat. Since Tammy Hendrix already holds the required Lyon County Commissioner seat on the CHDC, she will continue to serve on the CHDC and Mr. Cassinelli will not be seeking reappointment to the CHDC.

d. Correspondence (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION) – Kristen Brown noted that two letters were received, both of which pertain to Agenda Item 9. DAG Nicole Ting recommended that those letters be discussed during that agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 6, APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM May 7, 2024 MEETING (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Julie Workman moved to approve the May 7, 2024 minutes as written. Mercedes de la Garza seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously, with John Cassinelli abstaining.

AGENDA ITEM 7, NEW CONSTRUCTION, HOUSE, 580 E. MILL STREET, VIRGINIA CITY (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

This item was continued from the May meeting. Kristen Brown summarized the discussion during the May meeting and the additional items the Commission requested from the owner; namely, details about the various building materials and paint colors. The requested information is now present. Owner Brandie Lincoln explained why she selected Essex Green and Tricorn Black, how she found them in historic color swatch collections, and how there are other houses in the district with details that do not meet the design guidelines. Kristen Brown explained that some historic color sample swatches include all architectural styles and eras, not just Victorian, so these colors were more likely intended for other styles, not Victorian. For example, black trim is common in Colonial Revival architecture. Mercedes de la Garza noted that dark green paint is more common in Tudor Revival buildings, and cautioned that green paint oxidizes more quickly than other colors, and that black trim fades quickly. Joe Curtis agreed, and said that reds and dark greens fade quickly on the signs he paints. Owner Brandie Lincoln stated that she is most interested in getting the design of the house approved, and that she is willing to finalize paint colors later. Discussion among Commissioners about the color of the window sash. Vinyl windows are generally white or off-white, and those would stand out brightly on a very dark-colored house. Owner Brandie Lincoln acknowledged this and said that she would verify which color options were available for her chosen window type.

Public comment – None

Motion – Mercedes de la Garza moved to approve the proposed project, with the conditions that the paint colors be determined with staff and that the owner will research a window color that complements her final trim color. John Cassinelli seconded the motion.

Vote – A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 8, NEW CONSTRUCTION, GARAGE, 246 N. D STREET, VIRGINIA CITY (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

This agenda item was continued from the May meeting. Kristen Brown summarized the discussion during the May meeting and the additional items the Commission requested from the owner; namely, details about the color and the height of the proposed garage in relation to the house. The requested information is now present, and the height of the house is confirmed to be taller than the proposed garage. Owner Ted Elswick stated that he would be willing to lower the grade at the garage slightly if necessary.

Public comment – None

Motion – Mercedes de la Garza moved to approve the proposed garage, including the grey color and the location, with the condition that the 27-foot house height was measured at the house’s natural grade, and that the same grade will be used to ensure that the garage height will be approximately six feet lower than the house, even if partial excavation is required. Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion.

Vote – A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 9, DEMOLITION AND BUILDING ADDITION, GARAGE ADDITION, 450 S. E STREET, VIRGINIA CITY (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

This agenda item was continued from the May meeting. Kristen Brown summarized the discussion during the May meeting and the additional items the Commission requested from the owner; namely, a redesign of the garage addition to reduce its massing and help it avoid “dominating” the design of the house. Kristen Brown summarized that two new options for an alternative roof shape were submitted, both of which include what is sometimes referred to as a “Dutch gable” – a gabled roof with a small hip below it. Owner Jon Dietrich noted that the garage doors were redesigned as well, to be less modern in appearance. Mercedes de la Garza stated that at the May meeting, she had asked for the garage to be redesigned to have a single-story form instead of a two-story form, and for the upper floor to have its usable space introduced by the inclusion of dormer windows. She noted that since the Dutch gable involves setting the walls further back, this new version will end up with less usable square footage than the previous design. She stated that she cannot support this redesign. Owner Jon Dietrich said that he was trying to reduce the mass of the addition and roof area as requested, and that the building owned by Highland Electric in the district has the same Dutch gable appearance.

Julie Workman said that she thinks the redesign did break up the massing compared to the previous design. Nancy Cleaves agreed and said that it looks better now, especially with the new garage door design.

Public comment – Kristen Brown noted that the two letters received were sent by member of the public David Fraley, who was present. She asked him if he would like her to read them aloud into the record, or simply summarize them, or if he would like to read or summarize them himself. Mr. Fraley summarized his concerns. He said that his concern is with the proposed demolition of the historic barn, to make way for the new addition. In years past when he applied for permission to build his own house, he was told that the barn/carriage house at that location could not be demolished as it was a historic structure. Then, when the lot in question today was purchased and a new home was built, those new owners were also told that they were not allowed to tear down the barn.

Nancy Cleaves asked if the barn is contributing to the historic district. Kristen Brown explained that the information about outbuildings in the district is not always clear.

Mercedes de la Garza stated that the reason she can't support this proposal is that it will set a precedent, and that other people will attempt to build garages or garage additions that are taller and bigger than the houses. In the future that will be detrimental to the district overall. Julie Workman stated that this is a different case than the garage discussed earlier, this is an addition, not a separate building. Mercedes de la Garza noted that the earlier garage was a separate building, an outbuilding that will be subservient to the main house in front. Julie Workman states that she will support this addition since the house is not historic. John Cassinelli asked what the height difference is between the proposed addition and the existing house. Owner Jon Dietrich answered that he was not sure. Mercedes de la Garza reiterated that the applicant did not address the Commission's specific request in this redesign, and that this will set a precedent that the Commission will need to address again and again. Discussion among several Commissioners on the need to address projects on a case-by-case basis.

Kristen Brown reminded the Commission that the correspondence and public comment pertained to the garage/barn demolition, and asked if there was any additional discussion about that. Nancy Cleaves stated that her only concern was whether the garage/barn is listed in the National Register district listing. Kristen Brown explained that the CHDC guidelines and our state statute are blind to whether a resource is contributing or non-contributing. All buildings, even vacant lots, are subject to our guidelines. Moreover, since the National Register nomination is so old, many things have changed since then, including buildings that are listed yet no longer exist, buildings that are listed that have since been altered, and buildings that are not listed that may have been fixed up and would now be considered eligible.

John Cassinelli commented that he does appreciate what Commissioner de la Garza is saying, but that he feels that this addition is not just a garage, it is also additional living area. Nancy Cleaves noted that the shape of the lot and topography limits what can be built here. Julie Workman said that the County would have approved its demolition due to its alterations. County Planner Kathy Canfield spoke up to counter this, explaining that the County does not have any official determination on this proposal yet, that it is scheduled for discussion at an upcoming Planning Commission meeting. She explained that the records state that in 2006-2007, the garage was required to remain in place and not be demolished. She is interested to know if the CHDC will approve its demolition or not, and that in her opinion, the garage looks to be altered as it now matches the house with its modern materials. She would like to know if this building still has its historical significance after the alterations. Kristen Brown confirmed that the garage appears to have new foundation, siding, roof, doors, and windows and no longer appears to be a historic building.

Motion – Nancy Cleaves moved approve the project as proposed, Julie Workman seconded the motion. John Cassinelli asked which version of the design Nancy Cleaves was moving to approve. Nancy clarified the motion to state that the Option 1 with the Dutch gable on only the front side of the building was proposed for approval. Julie Workman seconded the clarified motion.

Public comment – None.

Vote – A vote was taken and the motion passed with six Commissioners voting in favor, and Mercedes de la Garza voting against.

AGENDA ITEM 10, PUBLIC COMMENT: (Comment limited to 3 minutes per speaker, no action will be taken until it is properly agendized): None

AGENDA ITEM 11, ADJOURNMENT (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Nancy Cleaves moved to adjourn the meeting. Julie Workman seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:22 PM.