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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, May 8, 2023

PLACE: Piper's Opera House, 12 North B Street, Virginia City, Nevada

WORKSHOP MEETING: None

REGULAR MEETING TIME: 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: 6:01 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

COMMISSIONER ROLL CALL: Quorum achieved

Calvin Dillon – present

Mercedes de la Garza – present

Clay Mitchell – present

John Cassanelli – *absent*

Joe Curtis – present

Tammy Hendrix – present

Julie Workman – present

Nancy Cleaves – present

(Deputy Attorney General Katie Armstrong on call via phone but not present)

PUBLIC COMMENT (Comment limited to 3 minutes per speaker, no action will be taken until it is properly agendaized): No public comment

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

Chair's Report – None

Staff Report – Comstock Preservation and History Officer Kristen Brown provided an update about repairs to the CHDC office building/Comstock History Center. The Capital Improvement Project for HVAC, lighting, doors, and windows is progressing on schedule. The structural and electrical repairs related to the May 1, 2023 accident at the building have not commenced. Kristen Brown is working with insurance companies and collecting repair bids from contractors. The building still lacks power and it will be many months before repairs are possible due to long lead times on electrical components.

Commissioner Comments – Clay Mitchell thanked staff for working with NV Energy to attempt to resolve the unapproved streetlight problem. Tammy Hendrix noted that she attended the Sutro Tunnel grand opening celebration and that the tunnel rehabilitation project looks good.

Correspondence – One public comment/correspondence was received via email on May 8, 2023 from Virginia City homeowner Theresa Kerr outlining her opposition to Agenda Item 7. The email is attached to these minutes. Kristen Brown read the email into the record. No Commissioner comments regarding the public comment/correspondence.

APPROVAL OF MAY 8, 2023 AGENDA:

Mercedes de la Garza moved to approve the May 8, 2023 agenda, and Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the May 8, 2023 agenda was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 10, 2023 MEETING:

Nancy Cleaves moved to approve the April 10, 2023 meeting minutes as written, and Clay Mitchell seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the April 10, 2023 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

ALTERATION APPLICATION FOR 315 E. WASHINGTON STREET, VIRGINIA CITY, AGENDA ITEM 7:

James Grimes is the owner and submitted an application to cover the existing wood siding on his non-historic house with stucco. Mr. Grimes was present at the meeting. He proposed using stucco over foam and painting it the same color as the house. The window trim could either be stuccoed foam or the existing trim removed and reinstalled.

Public Comments received in person during discussion of this agenda item:

- David Taylor – Lives across the street and has to replace his own siding soon. They knew about the design standards when moving here and they want to help preserve the historic character. Allowing stucco would open the door to more changes.
- John Thistle – Lives diagonally across the street. He is against the stucco as it is out of place in the district. He suggested “smart siding.”
- Tammy Taylor – Lives across the street. She pointed out that page 35 of the design standards does mention stucco and that there are a couple of stucco buildings within the district.
- Carl Elizondo – Suggested revising the design standards to make it more clear when stucco is appropriate and when it isn’t, to make this more clear for future building owners.

Discussion among Commissioners regarding the inappropriateness of stucco within the historic district, and that the limited stucco examples were either installed prior to the design standards being written or installed without permission. Discussion related to the design standard booklet mentioning stucco – Kristen Brown noted that certain architectural styles did use stucco historically, such as Spanish Colonial Revival; however, those styles are not common on the Comstock and they generally date to the 1920s and 1930s, not to the Victorian era.

Mercedes de la Garza moved to deny the stucco application and Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion to deny the stucco was unanimously approved.

NEW CONSTRUCTION FOR WORKSHOP/GARAGE AT 416 S. B STREET, VIRGINIA CITY, AGENDA ITEM 8:

Pat Findley is the owner and was present. Jim Collins of Collins Construction was also present as a designated representative. This item was approved at the April 10, 2023 CHDC meeting with conditions, but the owner did not agree to the conditions. Owner does not want this building to look like the other buildings at Edith Palmer's Country Inn. The Inn buildings were intentionally designed as a cohesive unit as they're related to the Inn, but this is his own garage/workshop. Owner noted that there were board & batten outbuildings at the site at one time, and others in the district, and that there are metal roofs in the district. Discussion among the Commissioners regarding the proposed design and whether it meets the design standards.

Clay Mitchell moved to approve the new building as designed, with a metal roof and board & batten siding, with the condition that the owner works with CHDC staff to select colors and appropriate garage door details. Julie Workman seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

BUILDING ALTERATION AT ST. PAUL THE PROSPECTOR, 87 S. F STREET, VIRGINIA CITY, AGENDA ITEM 9:

The building is owned by the Western Missionary Museum Corporation, a non-profit arm of the Episcopal Diocese. Mercedes de la Garza was present as their project architect and designated representative, and Paul Kvam was present representing the vestry. The foundation stabilization phase of this project was approved at the April 10, 2023 meeting, and this agenda item was to approve the building-wide rehabilitation as depicted in the entire drawing set and project manual.

Public Comments received in person during discussion of this agenda item:

- Tyler Clark – Grew up across the street. He is happy the building is being fixed up and he's ready and willing to put up with the noise and dust.
- Jeanette Hoyt – Lives at 66 G Street and shares a yard with the church. Is happy the building is being fixed up.

Nancy Cleaves moved to approve the building-wide rehabilitation with the condition that the architect work with staff for details such as paint color. Calvin Dillion seconded the motion. Commissioner Mercedes de la Garza recused herself from voting on this item based on financial interests related to this project. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW CONSTRUCTION OF BLM INTERPRETIVE KIOSK, LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED, AGENDA ITEM 10:

This was a discussion item only. The Bureau of Land Management is required to install an interpretive panel/interpretive kiosk pursuant to the *Programmatic Agreement between the Bureau of Land Management, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding the United Comstock Merger Mill at American Flat, Storey County, Nevada*. The BLM proposes to install the kiosk on BLM-managed land near Virginia City, Silver City, or the American Flat site and is seeking CHDC input on a preferred location. Discussion among the Commissioners regarding possible kiosk placement.

Numerous questions and Commissioner comments were identified during the discussion:

- Which turnout is the BLM referring to at the north end of town? Commissioners and staff didn't see any turnouts there that are on BLM-managed land.

- Can the BLM confirm that the kiosk will look like the one installed near Cabin in the Sky?
- Commissioners and staff interpret Amendment 2 of the PA to mean that the kiosks can be installed in Virginia City, Gold Hill, and Carson City, or any other location provided that the signatories agree. If a location in Virginia City cannot be identified, would the BLM agree to installation elsewhere?
- Where is the second kiosk installed? Commissioners only know of the one near Cabin in the Sky.
- Does the BLM have a time estimate for when Storey County may be able to resume working with their agency to identify a location on County property? Storey County owns a number of buildings, including sites used for interpretive/museum/public event purposes. The Commission suggested the freight depot on E Street, for example, which is County property.
- Has the BLM reached out to other land owners in the area to see if the kiosk can be placed on their land? Non-profits, privately-run museums, state land, NDOT ROW, Lyon County.
- Has the BLM explored areas near the V&T depot in Carson City?
- What about a site along Cemetery Road, near the Catholic cemetery and the water tank? (39.281386, -119.668209)
- Once the details are worked out regarding kiosk appearance and location, the CHDC will require a COA application prior to construction. If the kiosk will be seen by neighbors, we'll also need the "materially affected property owner" form to be filled out.
- The Commissioners would be happy to help review draft text and images for the kiosk. They have a lot of local expertise and knowledge about Comstock history.

The Commissioners asked staff to email the BLM with these questions and comments.

NEW CONSTRUCTION, NV ENERGY STREETLIGHTS, VARIOUS LOCATIONS, VIRGINIA CITY AND GOLD HILL, AGENDA ITEM 11:

NV Energy installed inappropriate light fixtures without consultation and the item was on previous meeting agendas so discuss a potential stop work order. Kristen Brown gave a report describing the letter sent to NV Energy as requested by the CHDC in the April 10, 2023 meeting, a subsequent meeting with NV Energy on May 2, 2023, and a letter and photos from NV Energy received via email on May 5, 2023. Copies of the letter and photos were provided during the meeting since they did not arrive in time to be included in the meeting's supporting materials Commissioner packets. The NV Energy letter described the deflector shields that the company believes will reduce glare and satisfy previous resident complaints. NV Energy indicated that they would install the shields no later than May 12, 2023. Kristen Brown also displayed the research project requested by the Commissioners that depicts streetlight types found in other historic districts. Discussion among the Commissioners regarding the precedent for that type/design of fixture at the periphery of other districts and whether the deflector shields would help the glare.

Clay Mitchell moved to continue this agenda item at the June CHDC meeting so that the installed deflector shields could be assessed. Mercedes de la Garza seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

MONTHLY MEETING DAYS, AGENDA ITEM 12:

Discussion regarding revising the regularly scheduled monthly meeting days to the first Tuesday of each month to align with NAC 384.120. NRS 384.060 allows for Commission meetings to be held “at such times and places as the Chair or a majority of the commissioners may designate, or as shall be established by the regulations adopted by the Commission.” The Administrative Code (NAC 384.120) states that “Regular meetings of the commissioners must be held at the office of the commission in Virginia City on the first Tuesday of each month.” Discussion among the Commissioners regarding meeting days. Tammy Hendrix and Clay Mitchell noted that Tuesdays would work with their other scheduled meetings. Mercedes de la Garza requested that the meetings occur earlier in the evening to avoid leaving after dark

Mercedes de la Garza moved to change the monthly CHDC meetings to the first Tuesday of each month, to change the meeting time to 5:00 PM, to begin the new day and time in July, and to allow for the potential to move the meeting time to 4:00 PM seasonally if agreed upon. Julie Workman seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

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

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 7:58 PM.