



State of Nevada
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Joe Lombardo, *Governor*
James A. Settelmeyer, *Director*
Robin K. Reed, Acting Administrator / Deputy SHPO
Joseph Curtis, *Chair*

MINUTES OF THE COMSTOCK HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

DATE: Tuesday, October 01, 2024

PLACE: Comstock Historic District Commission Office, 20 N. E Street, Virginia City, Nevada

WORKSHOP MEETING: None

REGULAR MEETING TIME: 5:00 PM

DRAFT

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The pledge was recited

COMMISSIONER ROLL CALL: Quorum achieved

Calvin Dillon – present

David Bates – present

Joe Curtis – present

Nancy Cleaves – present

Clay Mitchell – present

Tammy Hendrix - present

(Deputy Attorney General Nicole N. Ting also present)

AGENDA ITEM 3, APPROVAL OF October 01, 2024 AGENDA (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Calvin Dillon moved to approve the October 01, 2024 agenda as written, and Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the October 01, 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* – Chair Joe Curtis said that there currently isn't a state office SHPO staff historical architect. He, with the help of Mike Sprinkle, has been trying to keep up with the inquiries for COAs and other questions that have come in. Joe has logged approximately 21 hours with emails, personal visits, position interviews (*with Mike Sprinkle helping*), meeting with an architect twice, contractors twice, two fencing projects, a house painting project up on A street and one signage project. As well as the associated paperwork.

Regarding Agenda item 9, the sign project at Crazy Calamities. Joe spoke to the owner and inquired as to how she got his name to talk to him about the project. Joe wants to make sure no one involved in the CHDC refers the owner to him, in order to prevent a conflict of interest with his personal sign business.

Joe and Mike interviewed candidates for the temporary admin assistant position. Kimberly was hired and is doing fine. She will fill in until a permanent admin is hired.

Interviews have been scheduled for the permanent full time admin assistant position.

The State is accepting applications for a Comstock Preservation and History Officer. The position requires the person to be an architectural historian. There isn't a timeline for how long the search will take.

Mike Sprinkle said the extension of the Donovan Mill COA was approved by Joe Curtis. Joe approved a fencing project for the new childcare facility at the community chest, on the south end of town. The fence is at the south side of the structure and will be rod iron. Joe met with the architect for the Chollar Mansion about the porch and decking and signed off on the design.

b. Staff Report – None

c. Commissioner Comments – David Bates said that on the July 10 agenda, John Cassinelli is listed as being present. He was not. The agenda should be corrected by taking John Cassinelli's name off and adding David Bates to the attendees. Tammy Hendrix thanked Joe Curtis for all his work keeping things going. Calvin Dillon said that the next two weekends' "Voices of the Past" show will be presented at the cemetery. Clay Mitchell said an art exhibit called "breaking ground" at the Donovan Mill this weekend for those interested.

d. Correspondence (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION) – Joe Curtis received correspondence from the Federal EPA regarding the superfund site project, which involves the mercury that flowed downhill from the Comstock through Six Mile Canyon and through Gold Canyon into the Carson River. The EPA asked if the Comstock Historic Commission has any oversight on them doing ground testing. In the event they encounter artifacts, the commission will have some involvement. The commission will be dealing and talking with them as they move along with their testing. No comments. No action taken.

AGENDA ITEM 6, APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JULY 10, 2024 MEETING (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Clay Mitchell moved to approve the July 10, 2024 minutes with the correction of removing John Cassinelli's name and adding David Bates to the attendance. David Bates seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 7, APPROVAL OF NAC 384 MINUES (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Clay Mitchell moved to approve minutes of the NAC 384 adoption hearing July 10, 2024 with the correction of removing John Cassinelli's name and adding David Bates to the attendance. Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEM 8, BUILDING ALTERATION, SIDING AND PAINT 30 NORTH D STREET, VIRGINIA CITY, NV (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Owner Debra Dannenfelter proposes to repair/replace and paint existing soffit, fascia, window/door trim and covered entrance on three sides of the building (as needed) and install new six-inch “ship lap” style vinyl siding. The proposed finish colors are Greystone siding with white soffit and trim.

Joe Curtis states that the guidebook (construction standards) says, exterior siding material of steel aluminum and vinyl siding is not appropriate for an historic building. The structure was built in the 1980’s and isn’t a contributing historical structure. However, it is within the core historic area of the community facing east on D Street and a visual factor of a building within that area is of concern.

Calvin Dillon said that since it’s not historic, the overall effect won’t be distracting to the eye, he thought it would work.

The siding sample was passed around and the proposed colors were observed.

David Bates shared the opinion that from a construction standpoint, the vinyl siding will be on the sunny side of the building and will take a lot of abuse. What he’s seen in the past is that vinyl siding after years will look like the building does now. David also said the technological advances in vinyl siding have improved in the last 20 years. His other concern is for the porch. The rest of the building will be improved but the porch may not. There is further inspection of the description of work and it is determined that the porch will be painted.

Joe Curtis asked David Bates to compare Vinyl to aluminum or steel siding. David said steel has a lot more heat transfer. Vinyl, with the solid core, will add insulation value and would probably seal the house from drafts better. He said he doesn’t have enough experience with the material to give an expert opinion.

Joe Curtis asked the commission if they felt vinyl siding is appropriate for this situation versus restoration of the existing wood. David Bates asked if the building next door has wood siding. Joe Curtis said the neighboring building is wood sided.

Tammy Hendrix asked if the neighbors were notified concerning the project. She also wants to know if the vinyl can be painted for future maintenance. David Bates said the siding is pre painted and shouldn’t need to be repainted. Tammy Hendrix said that vinyl siding has been previously approved for an historic building, the Lynch House in God Hill.

First motion – Tammy Hendrix moves to continue the item until the next meeting and notify all the neighbors. Mike Sprinkle says that the neighbors were notified and there have been no responses.

Additional discussion – Joe Curtis said he has a problem with vinyl siding in the historic district even though it’s not an historic structure. He asked if the board thinks there is sufficient information to decide or if the owner may need to be present at the meeting to provide more information. Tammy Hendrix will agree with whatever the board decides.

Clay Mitchell said he thinks the board has enough information and that it's more of a judgement that needs to be made. He doesn't think having the owner present is going to help find out something they don't have now. The building is noncontributing and on the back side of the main street, not particularly gussied up. In the past the board has accepted vinyl and vinyl window trims with guidance. He says he doesn't always agree with Mercedes de la Garza, but she is always advocating for the mission of this body which is the preservation piece. In his mind, as a politician, trying to figure out solutions and balance out competing needs, how do we not put undue burden on the owners especially when it's not an historic building. He conceded that if the owner were to do this, it would certainly look better than it does now. He compared this project with the Tesla solar roof, saying one of the deciding factors was that it was not highly visible from the main tourist corridor. He said it comes down to how strict the board wants to be on something that's not right in the line of sight or a contributing structure.

Nancy Cleaves agreed that what Clay is saying is an important issue. She added that in Gold Hill, vinyl windows were approved in a noncontributing building, which is a precedent.

Second Motion - Nancy Cleaves moves to approve the project at 30 N D Street as it is presented. Tammy Hendrix seconds the motion.

Public comment – Member of the public, Jean-Guy Dube, read page 28 of the Comstock Historical District standards regarding exterior siding types on new construction, emphasizing that siding should reflect the prevailing style of the neighborhood.

Additional discussion – Joe Curtis pointed out that the prevailing style in the immediate neighborhood is flat board or T&G style. He asked if there is any guideline that says you can't absolutely use vinyl siding?

DAG Nicole Ting asked if the standard only refers to new construction not alteration of an existing structure. The board answered yes.

DAG Nicole Ting asked if new construction is defined. Clay Mitchell said, for the purpose of guidance, it's not new construction, restoration or replacement of like kind being proposed, its new materials, so in looking for guidance, the guidelines for historic materials don't apply. To him, the guidelines for new construction is the closest we have.

DAG Nicole Ting asked if guidelines for additional features on page 39 apply. No conclusion was drawn.

Clay Mitchell asked, from a distance, which is where most people will be seeing this, how visibly different will it be from a wood product of the same kind? The conclusion was that it looks like ship lap. Joe Curtis says the ship lap style is permissible type of material for construction.

To Clay Mitchell, the most important thing is the style. Because under the guidelines for exterior siding material, the guide says it needs to be compatible with the historic style present. The materials seem to be a little less sensitive. But authentic materials such as wood, ship lap and composite siding are strongly encouraged.

The second motion is brought up for a vote.

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

AGENDA ITEM 9, SIGN ALTERATION, SIGNS, 420 B STREET, VIRGINIA CITY, NV (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Owner proposes the approval of new signing for Crazy Calamities at 420 South B Street.

Joe Curtis met with the owners, and they had a significant amount of discussion regarding the signage and what they wanted to do. They agreed with redeveloping the signage as they weren't happy with what is existing. They were in a hurry to open and realize the signs didn't quite meet appropriateness or appearance of what historical signage should be. They are working on redoing the signage.

Joe Curtis proposes consideration of a motion to do a certificate of appropriateness, tentative, based upon final approval of signage appearance. He is consulting with the owner and assures the commission that the signs will meet guidelines.

Calvin Dillon asked if the board does a continuance, will the certificate of appropriateness be needed? Joe Curtis said the COA will be needed down the road and that the design is just getting started.

Clay Mitchell said his thought is that since there isn't anything specific to consider, he doesn't think a vote is appropriate. He would like to workshop the idea since it is an agenda item, and just take the temperature of what they intend to do to make sure we are headed down the right track. In the past, signage didn't need to come before the board. He isn't sure the COA will need to come in front of the board for approval. He said the board has the option to empower the chair, within the guidelines, to go ahead and approve the COA when they get to that point. That way, the owners aren't left hanging to dry waiting on a decision. It won't have to come before the board for another meeting. The board wouldn't necessarily be signing off on something they haven't seen. Joe Curtis agrees, it's the same kind of thing we've done in the past.

Clay Mitchell asked the owner to talk through the signs a little bit to help understand the direction.

Lesley Lutz (business owner) describes the signs shown in the application packet, she says the vinyl banner was ordered online. Mr. Findley, the building owner, built the existing pink sign that is on the street. The sign out on at the end of town was also constructed by Mr. Findley. They are still learning and want better looking more historical signage. Joe Curtis discussed the proposed signage with Lesley and pointed out what information is most important. Lesley was unaware that the vinyl banner could only be up for six weeks. Clay Mitchell offered to point Lesley to the county sign ordinance for reference in addition to the Historic District Guidelines. He cited the sandwich board county ordinance which says, one sandwich board is allowed per principal building. He also said there is guidance for appearance, size and placement. Joe Curtis said he will email a copy of the county ordinance to the owner. The board said they feel comfortable empowering Joe as a chair to approve the COA. Joe Curtis said as a chair, he would abstain from any vote to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest. Clay Mitchell asked if another person should be assigned to review the COA for checks and balances. Joe Curtis said that another member of the board could be assigned vice chair to review and sign the COA with him. Since the COA requires the signature of the chair.

First motion – Clay Mitchell moved to authorize the chair to sign the certificate of appropriateness after review and concurrence by the vice chair, that the signs proposed, meet the guidelines. Nancy Cleaves seconded the motion.

Additional discussion – Joe Curtis asked if the DAG Nichole Ting, has any concerns about the process for the approval of the project. Nichole said she has no concerns. She said if you want signs to come before the board, make sure that every sign comes before the board. Clay Mitchell cleared up where the conflict of interest may be perceived and why this project was brought to the board. Joe Curtis is working on the project in a private capacity because the applicants asked for his help with the design of the signs. Clay says Joe didn't want to assume he could wear both hats and that is what makes this different. Joe explained that he has a sign making business and that is why he has a concern about conflict of interest. Nichole said since Joe has disclosed his interest, she recommended that he recuse himself and delegate signing and approval authority to someone else.

Second motion – Clay Mitchell moved to retract the first motion.

Third motion – Clay Mitchell moved that we as a board authorize the vice chair of the commission to review and issue the COA with the understanding that the chair delegated the authority to do so, on this project, when final designs are presented. Joe Curtis hereby delegated his authority to Clay Mitchell to take votes on the motion. Clay Mitchell moves to modify the motion to authorize the acting chair, for this item, to review and approve in accordance with the guidelines. Tammy Hendrix seconded the motion.

Vote – A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously, with Joe Curtis abstaining.

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

AGENDA ITEM 11, ADJOURNMENT (FOR POSSIBLE ACTION):

Nancy Cleaves moved to adjourn the meeting. A vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.