

HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: March 14, 2013

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: F-6

APPLICANT: Roger Moellendorf, Parks and Recreation Director
Vern L. Krahn, Park Planner

REQUEST: **For Possible Action:** To recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of a resolution dated January 25, 2013, requesting the State of Nevada to preserve the decommissioned Nevada State Prison as an historic place without obligating Carson City to any financial commitments for this effort until the State of Nevada and its community partners have developed a comprehensive plan, including projected costs for the prison's historic preservation and its future uses.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

The Nevada State Prison Preservation Society (NSPPS) has asked Assemblyman Pete Livermore to sponsor a resolution in the 77th Nevada State Legislative session to support the preservation of the decommissioned Nevada State Prison. According to the resolution (Refer to Exhibit A), the NSPPS is requesting the State of Nevada preserve the Nevada State Prison (NSP) for the education of Nevada's citizens, for its rich geologic, Paleozoic, anthropologic, architectural and social history, for its significant value as a tourist attraction and destination, and for its contributions to Carson City's development. NSPPS' goal continues to be keeping alive the idea of preserving the NSP in public forums and to provide support for moving this effort forward with the State of Nevada and its community partners.

Assemblyman Livermore supports this resolution and is seeking support from the Historic Resources Commission, the Cultural Commission, and the Carson City Board of Supervisors on this resolution. City staff has reviewed the resolution and believes it is in the best interest of Carson City to cooperate with the State of Nevada, NSPPS, and other community partners for the immediate preservation of the NSP and for planning its development as an historic, educational, and scientific resource of Nevada. However, City staff believes it is premature for Carson City to make any financial commitments to this effort until a comprehensive plan with projected costs can be developed for the prison's historic preservation and its future uses.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: I move to recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of a resolution dated January 25, 2013, requesting the State of Nevada to preserve the decommissioned Nevada State Prison as an historic place without obligating Carson City to any financial commitments for this effort until the State of Nevada and its community partners have developed a comprehensive plan, including projected costs for the prison's historic preservation and its future uses.

1/25/2013

Proposed Resolution for NSP

RESOLUTION - Preserving the Nevada State Prison (NSP) for the education of Nevada's citizens, for its rich geologic, Paleozoic, anthropologic, architectural and social history, for its significant value as a tourist attraction and destination, and for its contributions to Carson City's development.

WHEREAS, the Nevada State Prison, on east Fifth Street in Carson City, was originally built in 1860 as the Warm Springs hotel with mineral springs by pioneer Abraham Curry; and,

WHEREAS, the landmark prison was established by the Territorial Legislature and administered by Abraham Curry in 1862 at the Warm Spring Hotel, and thus represents the first executive agency created in the State of Nevada; and,

WHEREAS, the sandstone quarry on the site contributed to the construction of state, city and private buildings in the early history of Nevada and Carson City, including the capitol building, the United States Mint, the Virginia and Truckee Railroad engine house, and many other public and private buildings; and,

WHEREAS, the prison is integral with the developmental history and life in Carson City and the surrounding communities; and,

WHEREAS, the lands and grounds of the prison are known to contain unique specimens of extinct species and the legend of *Homo nevadensis*; and,

WHEREAS, the first gas chamber in the world was designed and implemented at the prison and is currently active as Nevada's only execution site; and,

WHEREAS, the prison has a well established and colorful history as a maximum security facility, replete with riots, escapes, executions, musicians, gambling and Hollywood filming, all of intriguing historic value; and,

WHEREAS, the history of the manufacture of Nevada's artistic license plates are integral to the prison; and,

WHEREAS, the Nevada State Prison was decommissioned in May 2012 and may fall into a state of disrepair without continued maintenance and upkeep; and,

WHEREAS, efforts are underway to establish the historic sections of the prison as a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and,

WHEREAS, community partners, including the Department of Corrections, the University of Nevada (Desert Research Institute, Geology, Paleontology and Criminal Justice), The Department of Tourism & Cultural Affairs (State Museums and Nevada Films Commission), Department of Transportation, Carson City (Chamber of Commerce, Historic Resources Commission and Convention & Visitors Bureau) and the Nevada State Prison Preservation Society support the preservation of the Nevada State Prison.

{Proposed}

RESOLVED, that the Nevada State Prison shall be preserved as an historic place; and,

RESOLVED, that the State, Carson City, and non-profit community organizations are urged to cooperate for the immediate preservation of the Nevada State Prison and for planning its development as an historic, educational, and scientific resource of Nevada.