

CULTURAL COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: March 19, 2013

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 3C

APPLICANT: Assemblyman Pete Livermore
Tom Porada, Nevada State Prison Preservation Society
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's goal is keep alive the idea of preserving the NSP in public forums and to provide support for moving this effort forward with the State of Nevada, non-profit community organizations, and other interested stakeholders.

Assemblyman Livermore is seeking support from the Cultural Commission, the Historic Resources 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, non-profit community organizations, and other interested stakeholders to cooperatively develop plans for the preservation, development and use of the Nevada State Prison as an historic, educational, and scientific resource of Nevada. However, 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.

Exhibit A

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 by pioneer Abraham Curry as the Warm Springs hotel with mineral springs; 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 an integral part of the history of Nevada and of Carson City and the surrounding communities in particular; 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 execution chamber in the world was designed and implemented at the prison and is currently active; and,

WHEREAS, the prison has a well established and colorful history as a maximum security facility, replete with riots, escapes, gangs, 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 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..

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 and other interested stakeholders are urged to cooperatively develop plans for the preservation, development and use of the Nevada State Prison as an historic, educational, and scientific resource of Nevada.

1/25/13

Updated: February, 2013

FYI

More info sought to make NSP historic site

BY GEOFF DORNAN

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12-18-12

The governor, secretary of state and attorney general say they all support the idea of declaring the old Nevada State Prison a national historic site.

But Gov. Brian Sandoval and Secretary of State Ross Miller in particular say they first want to make sure there are no unintended consequences that might commit the state financially or otherwise.

The request for backing from the board of Prison Commissioners came from former Director of Corrections Glen Whorton, who heads the Nevada State Prison Preservation Society. He said the plan isn't in conflict with Assemblyman Pete Livermore's proposed legislation to turn the 5th Street prison over to a nonprofit to develop and wouldn't

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DETAILS

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restrict the potential uses of the prison.

He said those sorts of restrictions only come into play if federal money is used in restoring or developing the prison.

Whorton said in part because the prison operated continuously since before Nevada became a state in 1864, it has unique historic value. There also are archaeological finds ranging from American Indian artifacts to mammoth tracks on the site.

But Sandoval said he wants the state lands division, university archaeological and paleontological and historic preservation along

with other parties with a stake in the historic prison to weigh in and sign off on the plan.

"We want to make sure we've nailed down what the consequences are of doing this," Sandoval said.

He also said he wants lawmakers to be involved, so that there are no issues of different groups fighting about what to do with the prison.

Whorton cautioned the commission not to take too long to decide because that might end up costing the project a full year.

He said if the commission can move forward at its next meeting in March, there still would be time for the federal government to list the prison as an historic site next year.

Agenda Item 3C

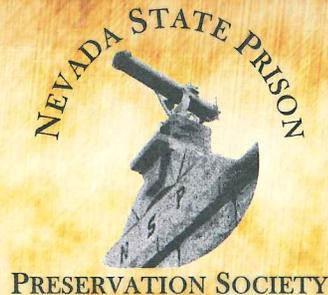
Nevada State Prison Preservation Society

Carson City Cultural Commission
March 19, 2013

Agenda Item 3C

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FYI!

Why is NSPPS here today?

Simple

To gain city-wide support for preserving the NSP



Goals

- Preservation of NSP – first/foremost
 - Carson City treasure to protect

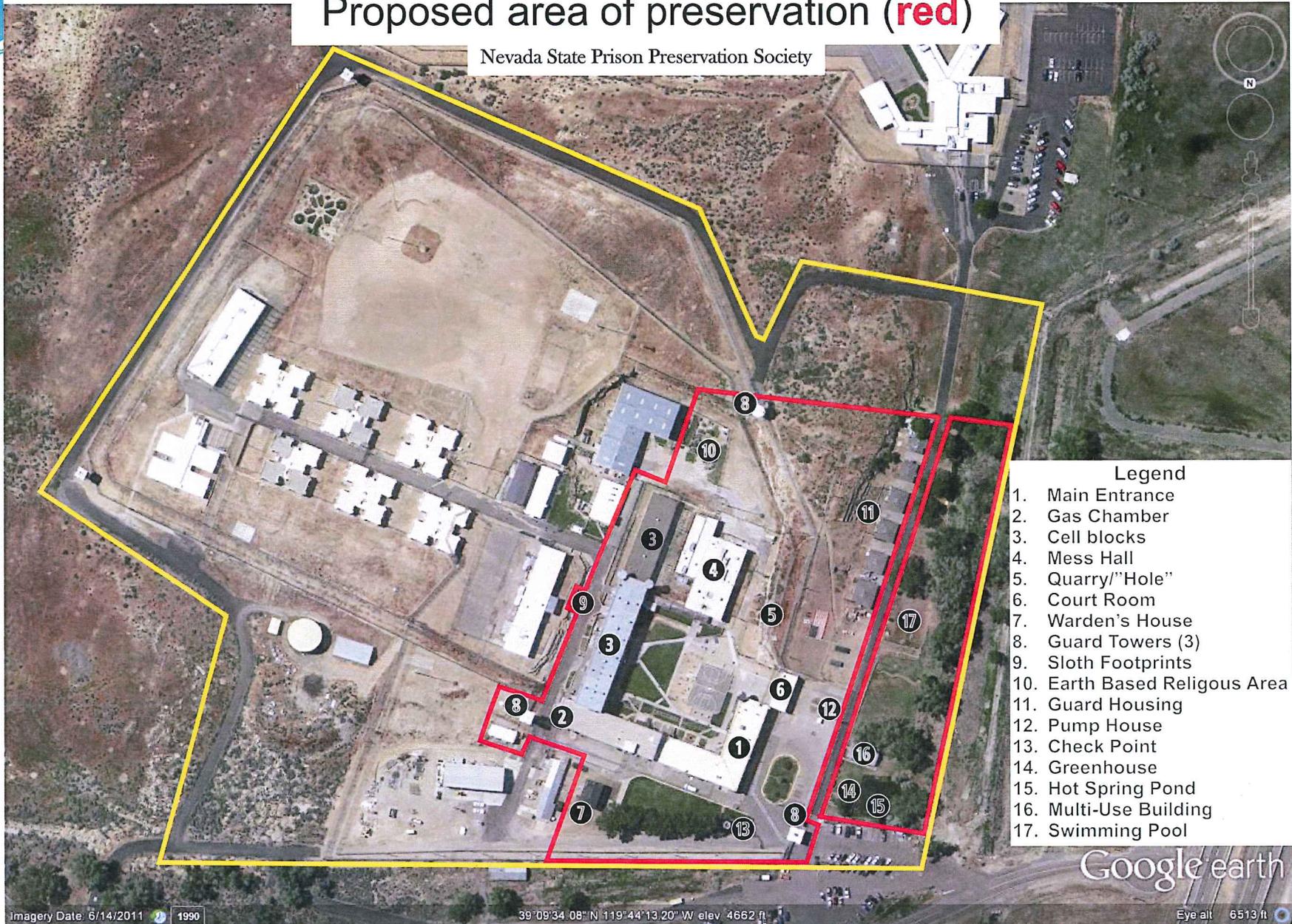
History Education Tourism

- **WE should not** let NSP:
 - Fall into disrepair
 - Become a place for vandalism/vagrancy
 - Be torn down
- Create a place for public enjoyment - future



Nevada State Prison (yellow) Proposed area of preservation (red)

Nevada State Prison Preservation Society



Legend

1. Main Entrance
2. Gas Chamber
3. Cell blocks
4. Mess Hall
5. Quarry/"Hole"
6. Court Room
7. Warden's House
8. Guard Towers (3)
9. Sloth Footprints
10. Earth Based Religious Area
11. Guard Housing
12. Pump House
13. Check Point
14. Greenhouse
15. Hot Spring Pond
16. Multi-Use Building
17. Swimming Pool

Imagery Date: 6/14/2011 1990

39°09'34.08"N 119°44'13.20"W elev. 4662 ft

Eye alt: 6513 ft

3/14/2013

Main Thrusts

- Bill/Resolution – AB/BDR493
- Register of Historic Places

Timeline

- Q4 2011

- Myron Carpenter starts asking questions
- MC talks up preservation & potential museum
- Many conversations
- Attracts followers
- Coins name **Preserve Our Prison – POP**

- Q1 2012

- Tours prison w/8 or 9 others
- Captures imaginations
- Contacts Boise & Montana State prison museums



Timeline (cont.)

- Q2 2012
 - MC established leadership body
 - Applies for NV non-profit corporation
 - Nevada **State Prison Preservation Society** begins
 - *NSP decommissioned*
- Q3 2012
 - NSPPS corporate status achieved
 - Membership recruitment begins
 - Website goes up www.nspps.org
 - Member/supporter meetings begin
 - Bill drafted for Assemblyman Livermore
 - Register of Historic Places



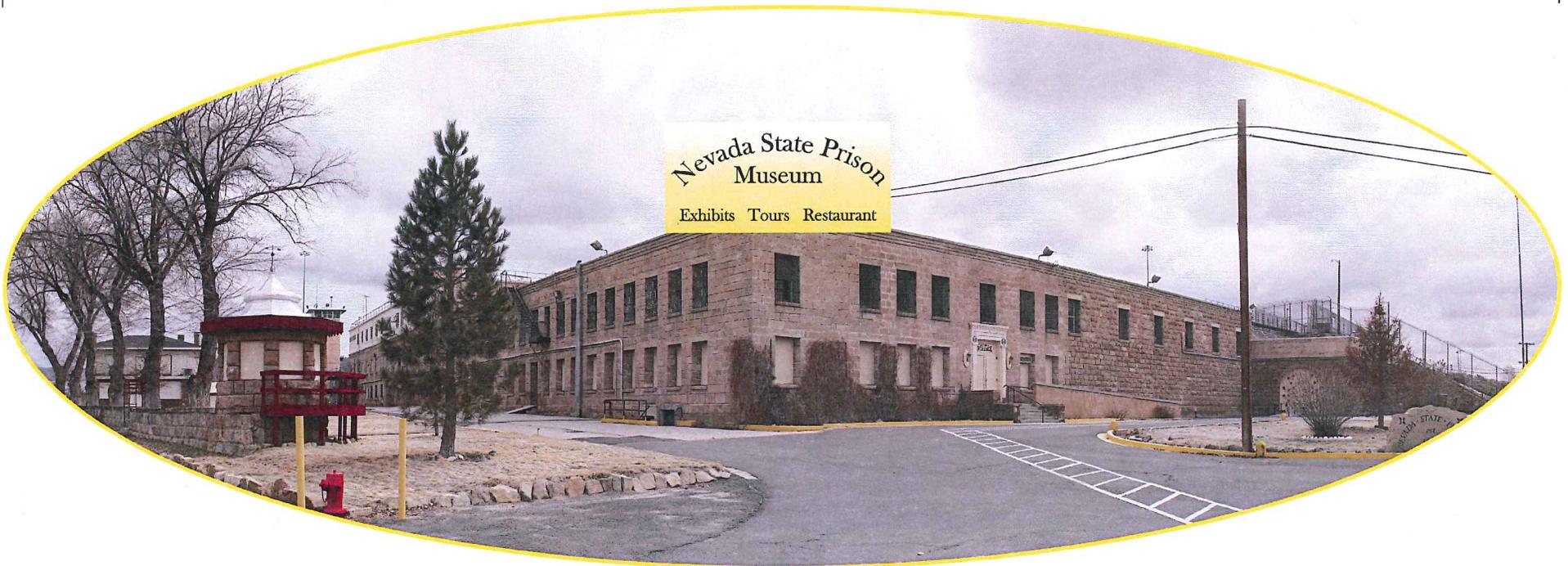
Timeline (cont.)

- Q1 2013
 - 501(c)3 application filed
 - Resolution drafted
 - “Talk on the Yard” newsletter
- “120 days” begins
 - Legislature committee supporters sought
- AB125 first read
 - AB/BDR493 first read
 - Prison Board meeting 3/19/2013
 - Support for historic designation
 - Cultural Commission 4/19/2013

Timeline (cont.)

- Q2 2013
 - Legislature committee review
 - Government Affairs (?)
 - Bill/Resolution passed
 - NSPPS 501(c)3 in hand
 - Historic Places application submitted
- Q3/Q4 2013
 - Sit at the table with stakeholders
 - Begin 0 - 5 year plan for NSP
 - Understand issues with:
 - Execution chamber
 - License plate factory
 - Coexist w/interests of other parties

...and The Future



3/14/2013

