

CARSON CITY HISTORIC RESOURCES COMMISSION

Minutes of the November 10, 2005 Meeting

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A regular meeting of the Carson City Historic Resources Commission was scheduled for 5:30 p.m., on Thursday, November 10, 2005 in the Community Center Sierra Room, 851 East William Street, Carson City, Nevada.

PRESENT: Chairperson Michael Drews
Vice Chairperson Mark Lopiccolo
Robert Darney
Rebecca Ossa
Peter Smith
Louann Speulda

STAFF: Walter Sullivan, Planning and Community Development Director
Jennifer Pruitt, Senior Planner
Heidi Eskew-Hermann, Assistant Planner
Kathleen King, Recording Secretary

NOTE: A tape recording of these proceedings is on file in the Clerk-Recorder's Office, and is available for review during regular business hours.

A. CALL TO ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM (1-0013) - Chairperson Drews called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Roll was called; a quorum was present. Commissioner Baker was absent.

B. ACTION ON APPROVAL OF MINUTES - October 13, 2005 (1-0022) - Vice Chairperson Lopiccolo moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Darney seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0-1, Commissioner Ossa abstaining.

C. MODIFICATION OF AGENDA (1-0028) - None.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS (1-0033) - Jed Block, current owner of 206 North Curry Street, provided historic information on his property, and advised he would be stripping the red tar paper siding and rehabilitating the structure. He circulated photographs among the commissioners.

E. DISCLOSURES (1-0059) - Commissioner Darney advised he would abstain from action on item F-1.

F. PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ITEMS:

F-1. HRC-05-209 ACTION REGARDING AN APPLICATION FROM ROBERT DARNEY (PROPERTY OWNER: SC & GV PROPERTIES LLC) TO ALLOW DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES AND REPLACEMENT WITH A TWO-UNIT RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE (DUPLEX), ON PROPERTY ZONED SINGLE FAMILY 6,000 (SF6), LOCATED AT 711 WEST WASHINGTON STREET, APN 003-272-01 (1-0066) - Chairperson Drews introduced this item. Ms. Eskew-Herrmann advised that, following several meetings with the applicant, this item would be addressed as "discussion only." She described the location of the subject parcel and the on-site improvements. She advised that original construction was done in 1885 and, since that time, the structure

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has been rebuilt, added onto, and structurally reinforced many times. She further advised that the applicant had informed staff the structures had deteriorated to the point rehabilitation was no longer possible. She requested input from the commissioners regarding demolition of the existing structures as well as architectural design of the proposed structure.

Chairperson Drews noted that Commissioner Darney's presence was appropriate in that this item was for discussion only. He requested that Commissioner Darney be represented at the time the project is presented to the commission for action.

Commissioner Darney advised of his representation of the property owners. (1-0106) Gigi Valenti introduced herself for the record and advised of having owned the property since approximately 1987. Commissioner Darney advised that the house has been added onto several times with "less than standard construction." Each add on "in its own right has deteriorated the house even more. Some are so substandard that they're actually scary." Commissioner Darney advised that the garage is rotted, and tilting or lifting in many different ways. He explained that one of the reasons for continuing action on this item was to allow time for analysis and a recommendation letter by a structural engineer. He advised that the foundation "is non-existing in most cases and the places that there is a foundation, it's substandard." He advised of a few foundation failure areas and that the floors are warped, twisted, buckling, and rotted. Ms. Valenti advised of a previous attempt to straighten the roof structure, which revealed construction on 36-inch centers. When one portion of the roof was jacked up, another portion of the house started to "go down." Commissioner Darney referred to a photograph which depicted an addition extending to the property line. He described the addition as having been "poorly done" and that the floors slope and buckle in the location. He advised of small step downs and awkward floor differences throughout the house. He explained that Ms. Valenti is in the position to have to do something with the house.

In response to a question, Commissioner Darney pointed out the original 1885 structure. Ms. Valenti advised of having been informed that the original structure was moved to the current location from Virginia City. She acknowledged that the house next door was an original railroad house. Commissioner Darney narrated a photograph of the garage.

Commissioner Darney provided background information on the subject site, including that it is substandard in a SF6,000 zone at 3,700 square feet. He discussed conceptual development of the project proposal, and advised that a variance will most likely be needed. He advised that the proposed duplex is conditional upon a special use permit. He explained the reasons for not considering a single-family residence. He discussed Planning staff's suggestion to consider common access, the route for which he pointed out on a displayed photograph. He described the proposed parking configuration and advised that a special use permit will most likely be needed. He advised that the proposed plan meets all other zoning and engineering requirements. The proposed architecture exceeds maximum height of the zoning district by approximately ten feet due the Victorian style. Commissioner Darney advised of having "always questioned" a 26-foot height restriction in the historic district, and that a waiver will be requested. He requested input of the commissioners.

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Chairperson Drews opened this item to public comment. (1-0304) Debbie Daly advised that the next door neighbor has expressed an interest in “something different next door to her to improve her property value. She has no objections to the plans or the setbacks. We’ve already surveyed the lot and looked at it and we think it would be a general improvement to the neighborhood.” With regard to the proposed height and massing, Ms. Daly acknowledged that the neighbor is “fine with everything.”

Chairperson Drews called for additional public comment and, when none was forthcoming, entertained commissioner comments and questions. Commissioner Smith advised of having toured the house in 1987 and of forming the “distinct impression at that time that it was beyond repair.” He reviewed the house’s history, and distinctly recalled “light coming through the exterior walls” and “the floors being pretty cattywampus here and there.” He suggested that the proposal represents a very modern house constructed in a Victorian style. He advised of never having seen any Victorian houses that look anything like the proposed design. He expressed a preference for keeping some of the lines of the existing house. Commissioner Darney responded to questions regarding the proposed footprint, and described the proposed roof line design.

Commissioner Ossa expressed an interest in reviewing the structural engineer’s report, together with photographic supplements. She suggested that the proposed architectural style may be more appropriate to “the other end of the historic district.” She noted the modern materials proposed, including vinyl, the synthetic rock / stone veneer, etc. She expressed an interest in comparing the height of the proposed structure with the height of the building next door. In response to a question, Ms. Pruitt advised that the existing setbacks would remain if the buildings were to be rehabilitated. Commissioner Ossa inquired as to whether the applicant had considered rehabilitation. She discussed tax credits available, and reviewed rehabilitation program criteria.

In response to a question, Ms. Valenti pointed out additions to the original structure on a displayed photograph. She reiterated that the house was moved to the location. She described the house next door as “very elaborate,” and noted its proximity to the Bliss Mansion. With regard to building materials, she expressed a willingness to “stay with the old-time materials.” She expressed the opinion that the house would have to be torn down and reconstructed in order to rehabilitate it. She advised that the wiring is non-functional, there is no heating system, gaps in the walls, etc. She suggested there would be no way to rehabilitate the garage. She offered to simplify the architectural design of the proposed structure.

Commissioner Darney referred to a photograph of a structure to the south of the subject property. He suggested that the height of said structure slightly exceeds the 26-foot maximum. He advised that the structure is in the same context, as to scale, as the proposed structure. He noted that the subject property is on the corner of a major intersection, the north side of which will most likely remain office or residential zoned. He suggested that the “house, as it sits now, is out of scale to its surroundings.” He expressed a willingness to somewhat “tone down” the proposal, and advised that he had used the term “Victorian” loosely in that the proposal “only represents a Victorian-type of look.” He advised of a great deal of rot in the existing structure, which he described as unsound. He further advised that the subject structure was “substandard to begin with ... only meant to last ... twenty years at best, and we’ve stretched it to a hundred and twenty.”

Vice Chairperson Lopiccolo advised he is working with Mel Green on another project, and that he is visiting the area regularly. He suggested requesting Mr. Green to conduct the structural analysis. He

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expressed support for the proposed drawing, without the rock. He offered to provide suggestions to slightly reduce the height. He expressed reluctance to demolish an old building, but advised of having watched the structure deteriorate over the last ten years. As a builder, he didn't see any reason to attempt to rehabilitate the building. Commissioner Darney advised that Ms. Valenti has made "gallant" attempts to rehabilitate the building over the years; however, it's gotten to the point that the "band-aids" keep falling off.

Commissioner Speulda noted that the house is more of a "working man's cottage," and suggested a similar design. She advised that a cottage design would be more in keeping with the style of the streetscape. She discussed the commissioners' reluctance to demolish historic buildings, and advised of rehab projects which seemed impossible at the start. She suggested that some of the windows appeared to be salvageable. She expressed concern over the proposed height of the building, and reiterated the suggestion that, in keeping with the existing scale and the streetscape, the applicant consider reducing it. She noted that changing the function from single-family to duplex is a zoning issue. She inquired as to the possibility that the properties would be sold and the new property owners would not be interested in sharing a driveway. Commissioner Darney advised that these matters would be included in a written agreement which would be recorded with the deed. Commissioner Speulda expressed concern over the proposed materials, and a preference for a smaller house constructed with wood and materials that fit the historic district character.

Chairperson Drews expressed concern over the mass and scale of the proposed structure. He advised there are only two houses left on the street which represent what the neighborhood looked like. He expressed a preference for saving the original structure, but understanding over the associated issues. He noted that the house next door is approximately the same height, and that the proposed structure is more ornate. He discussed structures which scale is lower, and suggested toning down the proposed structure. He expressed concern that "by letting this one go and turning it into something else, we're signing a death warrant for the one next door." He recalled a previous proposal in which both structures were to be demolished.

Ms. Valenti advised of her intent to rehabilitate the next-door structure. She advised that a former tenant's dog "chewed out all the insides of the windows." Commissioner Darney pointed out an adjacent three-plex development, and advised that there are many two-story residential structures within two to three blocks of the subject property. He advised that the proposed structure is in context with the scale of the houses. Chairperson Drews expressed a preference for a more transitional design. Commissioner Darney discussed attempts at designing a single-family home for the location.

Commissioner Ossa discussed the historic significance of the house being moved to the location, and the benefits of rehabilitation. She agreed that the corner represents a transition point between more modern development and the historic district. She expressed reluctance to see the building demolished. Commissioner Darney acknowledged having received sufficient direction.

Chairperson Drews thanked Commissioner Darney and Ms. Valenti for presenting the project as a discussion item. He discussed the importance of the structural analysis and report. He recessed the meeting at 6:15 p.m. and reconvened at 6:21 p.m.

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F-2. HRC-05-020 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING APPLICANT(S) FOR THE POSITION OF BUILDING / DESIGN PROFESSIONAL AND ACTION TO RECOMMEND TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS APPOINTMENT OF APPLICANT (1-0778)

- Chairperson Drews introduced this item. Ms. Pruitt provided a staff report and an overview of the interview process. Vice Chairperson Lopiccolo left the meeting room; a quorum was still present.

(1-0791) John C. Nelson introduced himself for the record, and advised he is a Nevada State registered engineer. He further advised of being a sixth generation Nevadan, and that his family settled Nelson, Nevada. He provided background information on his residence in Reno and Carson City, on his work experience, and present employment responsibilities. He expressed an intense interest in Carson City and in preserving the historic value of the community. In response to a question, he discussed his employment affiliation with the State Historic Preservation Office ("SHPO"). In response to a further question, he reviewed the various licenses he holds. He responded to questions regarding Nelson's Landing, Nevada, and his involvement with the Boy Scouts of America. Chairperson Drews posed the following hypothetical situation: Suppose a relatively modern building, 48 to 49 years old, the first of its kind or perhaps the last of a generation of buildings. He inquired as to the method by which Mr. Nelson would evaluate the building for historic significance and how he would frame his arguments. Mr. Nelson advised he would consider how the structure fit with surrounding structures, not just as the structure itself. "If it doesn't add to the community, then that weighs in on other historic buildings around it. If you have old buildings around it that are a hundred years old and that's a fifty-year-old building, that definitely impacts how I'd look at that building as being historically significant. However, if it's significant in that it's old but the other buildings around it are new, does it blend in well with the new buildings plays an important part as well." Mr. Nelson expressed a preference to preserve an historic building and try to make it blend as a transition with surrounding areas. Chairperson Drews inquired as to whether Mr. Nelson's decision would be impacted by an historically significant person having owned the building. Mr. Nelson advised that this would not affect his decision. He clarified that if some historically significant event had taken place at the location, "maybe that would weigh in." Chairperson Drews thanked Mr. Nelson, and advised he would be informed of the commission's decision.

In response to a question, Ms. Pruitt advised the interviews were for one available position. In response to a further question, she advised that Vice Chairperson Lopiccolo had submitted a written request to be reappointed to the commission.

(1-0988) Mark Lopiccolo introduced himself, for the record, and advised of having been a licensed contractor in Nevada since 1978. He provided background information on his residence in Carson City, and advised of having served as a commissioner for over two terms. He discussed his love of old houses, and advised that he has worked on approximately seven houses on Mountain Street alone. He enjoys serving as a commissioner and takes the responsibility very seriously. In response to a question, Mr. Lopiccolo explained circumstances surrounding the delay in reapplying to serve as a commissioner. In response to a further question, he advised his favorite house style is craftsman. Chairperson Drews posed the same hypothetical question. Mr. Lopiccolo noted that the type of structure described by Chairperson Drews would most likely be a World War II structure, constructed with cinder block. He advised he would have to see the project in order to "make a judgment as to what to do with it." He noted that his first impression would be the 48- to 49-year-old structure wasn't yet historic. Chairperson Drews inquired as to the possibility that the structure would be significant once it reached 50 years of age. Mr. Lopiccolo advised that he would then try to work with the applicant and provide suggestions to rehabilitate the

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structure. In response to the question regarding whether the house being owned by an historically significant person would weigh into Mr. Lopiccolo's decision, he advised that it would weigh in "heavily." He commented that this would open up a whole other area to consider, including the history of the house, who lived in it, etc. He noted there are "all different forms of history. It's not just the structure itself." Chairperson Drews thanked Mr. Lopiccolo.

Following discussion regarding commission deliberations, Chairperson Drews requested staff to invite Mr. Lopiccolo back to the meeting room and determine whether or not Mr. Nelson was also still available to return. Mr. Lopiccolo returned to the meeting room. The commissioners discussed the applicants' qualifications. Commissioner Ossa advised she would recuse herself from discussion and action of this item due to Mr. Nelson's affiliation with the SHPO. Chairperson Drews entertained a motion. **Commissioner Darney moved to recommend to the Board of Supervisors the reappointment of Mark Lopiccolo to the Historic Resources Commission. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0-2, Vice Chairperson Lopiccolo and Commissioner Ossa abstaining.** Ms. Pruitt advised that the recommendation would be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors, and that elections of commission chair and vice chair would most likely be agendized for the January 2006 commission meeting. Vice Chairperson Lopiccolo rejoined the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

F-3. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING CLG GRANTS (1-1198) - Ms. Pruitt advised of having recently discussed training and grants with SHPO representatives. She further advised that the final grant paperwork for the update of the design guidelines was submitted to the SHPO approximately a week ago. Planning and Community Development staff will be working with Diana Painter to continue the east side historic survey. Ms. Pruitt advised of available training monies and recommended scheduling a training session for the commissioners and the public. Chairperson Drews requested Ms. Pruitt to include, in the December commission agenda materials, information from the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions ("NAPC") regarding available speakers. He suggested inviting representatives of neighboring CLGs and/or commissions to participate. Ms. Pruitt suggested notifying the historic district property owners as well. In response to a question, Chairperson Drews provided background information on the NAPC, and the camp training offered. Commissioner Ossa discussed camp training provided by the NAPC to historic resources commissions in Las Vegas and Reno.

G. FUTURE COMMISSION ITEMS (1-1282) - Chairperson Drews requested staff to reagendize item F-3.

H. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

H-1. COMMENTS AND STATUS REPORTS FROM STAFF (1-1286) - None.

H-2. COMMENTS AND STATUS REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS (1-1296) - With regard to training activities, Commissioner Ossa suggested having a speaker address restoration and rehabilitation of historic churches and inviting church representatives to the training sessions. She offered to provide contact information for a group which is actively involved in restoring and raising funds for historic churches across the country. She suggested making the training available regionally. Chairperson Drews inquired as to an archaeological site on Fairview Drive, and noted that the Stewart facility is an ongoing concern. He acknowledged that the City's comprehensive master plan is in the process of being updated, but noted that the State is required to provide an opportunity for commission input on many of

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their historic properties. Chairperson Drews requested the commissioners and the public to begin considering Historic Preservation Award nominations. Ms. Pruitt suggested scheduling training sessions during Historic Preservation Month.

I. ACTION ON ADJOURNMENT (1-1362) - Commissioner Ossa moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:54 p.m. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.

The Minutes of the November 10, 2005 Carson City Historic Resources Commission meeting are so approved this 12th day of January, 2006.

MICHAEL DREWS, Chair