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**PLUMAS COUNTY**  
**PLANNING DIRECTOR**  
Minutes of the Meeting of January 8, 2020

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The Planning Director convenes a meeting on January 8, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. in the Permit Center Conference Room, Quincy. Planning Director, Tracey Ferguson, presiding. Assistant Planning Director, Rebecca Herrin and Associate Planner, Tim Evans, are in attendance.

**I. AGENDA**

The agenda is approved as submitted.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY**

No public comment presented.

**III. CONSIDERATION OF THE VALUE OF PUBLIC INTEREST FOR A HISTORICAL BUILDING; GENESEE VALLEY RANCH, LLC, applicant; APN 008-350-006/ T.25N/R.11E/S.17 MDM**

The application for the demolition of a single-family dwelling designated as historic by the Plumas County General Plan, located at 7205 Genesee Road, Genesee, is presented. Per Plumas County Code Section 9-2.3703(b)(3), special plan reviews for historical buildings shall be the consideration of the value of public interest prior to the approval of a building permit to demolish a historical building. Associate Planner, Tim Evans, gives a presentation as outlined in the staff report. Brian Russell, attorney for the applicant, Genesee Valley Ranch, states Genesee Valley Ranch applied for a permit for the demolition of the dwelling on September 12, 2019. Genesee Valley Ranch properly followed the process set forth by the County, and as requested by the County they hired a third party expert to do a thorough architectural analysis of the structure. Mr. Russell points out that as Associate Planner, Tim Evans, summarized, there is nothing historically significant about the house. It is an inexpensively constructed simple house built in the 1940s, whereas all the other structures in Genesee that are significant historically were constructed in the 1880s. He goes on to say the residence does not possess any individual historical significance or integrity, nor does it contribute to the historical significance of the Hosselkus Ranch or home, the Genesee Store, and the post office. Mr. Russell feels it is clear, as has been proven by staff analysis, the structure was erroneously deemed historic by the County based simply on its address. Continuing, Mr. Russell states that the Genesee Valley Ranch is dedicated to preserving historic buildings like they have with the Genesee Store and Hosselkus home, but this structure is falling apart structurally. The Genesee Valley Ranch obtained a building permit to remove the siding and re-roof the dwelling, but once they saw that the structure was falling apart and further understood it didn't have any structural integrity holding it up, they applied for a demolition permit. Because it is a dangerous building currently and it has no historical significance, the Genesee Valley Ranch is requesting the right to demolish it. Planning Director, Tracey Ferguson, questions the nature of the initial application to the Building Department. Mr. Russell replies that the initial application was for a re-siding and re-roof permit of the dwelling. Once they began work it was apparent everything was falling apart. There was a ton of dry rot in the structure and the structural integrity of everything holding it up was falling apart, so it made more sense for them, from an economic standpoint, to demolish it as opposed to basically rebuilding it because it didn't have any purpose for them in the first place. Once

they applied for a demolition permit, the County deemed the structure historic per the address, and a full historical analysis was done. Lastly, Mr. Russell feels that overall it's really clear that maybe the address is that only thing that made the structure historic; therefore, they asked for it to be demolished so they could move forward with refurbishing that Genesee area so it looks cleaner and more like it did in the 1880s.

The public hearing is opened at 10:21 a.m. Elisa Adler comments that with Associate Planner Evan's information it would be great if they could have further opportunity for public comment given the information the department has provided. Ms. Adler questions if this will be the only chance to comment or will others be able to comment on the information presented. Planning Director Ferguson states that at this time this is the public hearing to provide comment and that she has also received emails this morning. Continuing, Ms. Adler states that what was missing or confusing in Associate Planner Evan's account is that between Hosselkus and Neff there was also the Clay Ranch. So there is an era that simply wasn't addressed. The building in question was certainly not constructed under the Neff Ranch ownership, which was relatively brief. The Chuck Clay Ranch was between those two eras and may have been when the building was constructed, but she does not know. Ms. Adler thanks Evans for his work. Ms. Adler also questions how we can look at the General Plan and its goals and this building and its possible demolition in the context of the greatest good, and how we can move from thinking about the needs and desires of the Palmaz family and their particular goals towards the goals of the County and the public need. In the biggest sense, what is the greatest good for the environment and community in relation to that particular building. That particular building should be considered as part of a larger whole. And as a building located in a historic ranch, it does have significance. We can't say, as the Palmaz representative (Brian Russell) did, that it has no historical significance. It may be a dangerous building and need to be addressed as such, but that's different than saying it has no historical significance. Given that it is part of a historic place, what is the best way of addressing its potential danger for the community, for the environmental integrity of the place, and in the context of the General Plan and the Genesee Valley Special Management Area goals. The Genesee Valley Special Management Area recognizes the importance of a historic character, of a scenic corridor, and of natural resources protections. Ms. Adler wants to hear what will replace the building if the building is demolished.

Donald Aitken states that most of what he's going to say reflects what Ms. Adler said in a little more common way in the sense that the house has always been included as a historical building in his concept and for the people who drive by there and live there. Mr. Aitken thinks it's important to the community, that it's really part of that grouping of homes that represents that time period. The public would feel a loss if that building were to be taken down. Mr. Aitken shares that he has heard recently that it was a Sears package home, which makes some significance to it remaining there. Mr. Aitken thinks the loss to the community would be significant and also questions if the house across the street is on the historical record (the house next to the Hosselkus home). Assistant Planning Director, Rebecca Herrin, states she does not know if it's listed as historic. Herrin adds that the department hasn't looked into it but they could do some research. Mr. Aitken comments that the house next to the Hosselkus home could be a victim of time also. Mr. Aitken feels it would be very helpful to know that there would be a future and if we destroy that community, it's going to be a big loss to the County and the people who live out there, adding that people driving by or going to the restaurant get a sense of history by just being there. The Genesee Valley Ranch bought that property with the understanding that there was historical value to it and it's certainly not going to be a large financial crisis for the family to take care of those homes. Aitken thinks the understanding of taking care of those homes went along with the purchase, and it would be a value to the community that the Palmaz family could give us those homes for the future.

Planning Director Ferguson states for the record she received Elisa Adler's statement via email, Diane McCombs submitted some questions via email, and Tricia Aitken also submitted a public comment via email. There being no further comments, the hearing is closed at 10:28 a.m.

There is a question about the General Plan and the goals and the consideration of the property in the context of General Plan policies and such. Director Ferguson comments that in Associate Planner Tim Evans' staff report he described a section about the General Plan. Ferguson asks Evans to elaborate regarding the General Plan in the context of the applicant and building permit and demolition permit. Associate Planner Evans explains that General Plan Goal 8.2 prevents conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. One of the policies under that goal is 8.2.8 *Historic Ranches and Farms*. It states, "Encourage the maintenance, rehabilitation, and, where practical, the restoration of historic era ranches and farms in order to maintain historical character while continuing to engage in productive agricultural activities." Continuing, Evans explains that the Hosselkus home and ranch are designated as historic buildings #47 and #48 in the 2035 General Plan. The current property owners are actively involved in maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration activities on the ranch. An example is the remodel of the Genesee Store and post office, which was recently completed in about 2018 and falls in line with that General Plan policy. Prior to the application received on September 12, 2019, to demolish the 1940s single family dwelling, the applicants applied for a building permit for a re-roof and re-siding of the single family dwelling, Permit #19-412, which was issued on July 18, 2019. That building permit helps satisfy General Plan Policy 8.2.8. Therefore, it can be seen that the original intention of the property owners was to utilize the existing single family dwelling constructed in the 1940s; however, per the historical evaluation that was done, the wood frame structure has severe dry rot in several areas, the concrete foundation needs repair, and the workmanship of the original design has diminished significantly, which provides information as to the practicality of restoring the structure as provided by General Plan Policy 8.2.8, which requires the best effort, where practical, that they try to rehabilitate and maintain the structures. What they've done, Evan states, satisfies the General Plan Policy that's in the General Plan for historical ranches and farms.

There is a question about what will replace the building if it were demolished. Director Ferguson directs the question to Brian Russell (Palmar representative) and asks what is planned for that area should the building be demolished. Mr. Russell replies that there are no plans at this time, they are taking it one step at a time. They have gone through the permit process and determined the building itself doesn't have structural integrity so that's why they have asked to demolish it. Ferguson states she agrees the staff report was well written, thorough, and the historical evaluation by ECORP Consulting was also thorough. The evaluation walked through both state and national historic registers and the criteria for which buildings may or may not be listed, and so all that information is in there. The consultant's conclusions, as the staff report showed, are that the building wasn't historic per the criteria of the state or national registers. Ferguson thanks all in attendance for coming and presenting comments and reiterates that this hearing is for the consideration of the value of the public interest as the determination by the Planning Director. Ferguson states she is not prepared to make a decision today. She needs time to think about the record in totality and will delay the decision. Ferguson states she will issue a decision within 10 days to include findings. Ferguson adds that if anyone present would like to be notified of her decision to leave their name, email, or mailing address to receive the final determination.


## DECISION

***Planning Director Notation:*** Any decision made as a result of this meeting may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors within ten (10) days of the decision. If the tenth day lands on the weekend, the end of the appeal period will be the next working day. The appeal will need to be based on relevant information stated or submitted at or prior to this meeting by a commenting public member or representative, or certain County department heads as stated by County Code. There is a filing fee for the appeal. Fee information is available from Planning and Building Services.

## ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourns at 10:36 a.m.

  
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Heidi Wightman, Department Fiscal Officer II

  
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Tracey Ferguson, Planning Director