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Letter of Transmittal

December 9, 2022

Via: Hand-Delivery.

Kyle Smith, Associate Planner
Planning Department
County of Nevada
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170
Nevada City, CA 95959
Phone: (530) 265-1222

Re: **Ranch House BOS Meeting Plans**
SCO Job # 202117

Please find the attached plans for the Board of Supervisors Meeting scheduled for Jan 10th:

- Eight (8) copies each of Civil and Architectural Plans.

Additionally, please see the notes below:

Key points about Ranch House operations for staff report:

The Ranch House is one of many homes and sites that the Nevada County Behavioral Health (NCBH) Department utilizes in our supportive housing program. Many of our clients are able to live higher quality lives in community settings if we provide needed financial subsidies and supportive services. The spectrum of housing options we provide ranges from facilities for individuals who need a lot of support with activities of daily living and so we provide on-site staff 24/7, to facilities where people are stable and able to function pretty independently, and we provide check-ins a few times a week. Our Ranch House property is somewhere in the middle of this spectrum. Individuals we place there are stable but may need daily check-ins. Staff from NCBH or Turning Point (one of our contracted providers) are on site twice every day to deliver medications and to check on residents. The current residents have lived in this home for between 5-10 years and have largely been very stable during this time.

Sometimes people with serious mental illness go through chapters in their lives where their disease gets more symptomatic. Perhaps their body chemistry has shifted and they need a different medication or different dosage. When this happens, people's behaviors can get more

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erratic. Our job at behavioral health is to monitor for these changes and to work with individuals to find a new regimen that brings them back to stability. Sometimes we need to hospitalize people for a while in these situations. What we know, though, from years of doing this work, is that while erratic behavior may be disconcerting or even frightening, it is different from violent behavior. When we pick someone for our more independent supportive housing facilities such as Ranch House, we already have worked with that individual for years and we know that they have no history of being violent and are not registered sexual offenders. We also know that they have been stable for an extended period of time and are capable of living with less support.

NCBH serves approximately 1,000 people each month. Almost all of these people live independently, safely and happily in our community in various settings and neighborhoods. Serious mental illness is a brain disease that can be treated and people can continue to live rich and fulfilling lives with the right supports and opportunities. As a society we have a great deal of stigma and fear about mental illness. But when we get past that bias, we can see people with mental illness as valued members of our community in which diversity and differences are part of the fabric of a healthy community.

NCBH Supportive Housing program by the numbers:

- Approximately 150 people housed through financial subsidies and supportive services each month
- NCBH owns, funds or operates 14 houses or sites in the community and houses over 85 people in these facilities, as well as providing intensive supportive services to another 60+ people in independent housing
- Approximately 80 people receive twice daily medication delivery and check ins to support them in their housing
- Without this type of support, all of these individuals would be at high risk for homelessness

Ranch House facts:

- Currently a permanent home for the same three individuals for more than five years
- Any resident of this facility is screened for violence; no sex offenders allowed into this program
- A recent survey of calls for service found zero calls from neighbors with complaints towards these residents
- Nevada County Facilities department ensures the building is well kept including landscaping and exterior painting etc.
- All residents have multiple options for transportation assistance if they do not drive themselves including Dial a Ride, LogistiCare (for medical appointments), rides from friends or family, and transportation by their case managers

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- Just as the current 3-bedroom facility has never housed more than 3 people, the expanded 6 unit facility is not expected to house more than 6 people

Role of NCBH in supporting the facility:

- Clearly communication between the neighborhood and NCBH had broken down over the years and neighbors did not feel clear on who to call if they had concerns or saw behaviors that were concerning
- NCBH staff have met with key neighbors and have shared critical phone numbers if there are any concerning behaviors by the residents.
- Neighbors are also being encouraged to call the police if criminal behaviors are happening by facility residents or by others people living in the area

Why this project is important:

- NCBH does not have enough beds in its network of housing for every client who needs one; this project allows us to shelter more people which leads to greater stability for that person and less homeless individuals with mental illness struggling on the streets
- NCBH received two grants for this specific project; if we do not move forward with this site we will lose those funds
- The Ranch House is an older building in need of modernization and upgrades to remain a functional site. In addition to doubling the capacity of this facility, this project allows us to ensure the building is available for many more decades to come.
- This project is allowing us to build 6 independent units. Many of our housing options are single family homes where residents live as housemates or roommates. Not all of our clients are a good fit for a shared living environment and this facility would allow for six people to live in their own separate unit.

Key points about Ranch House design elements for staff report:

Following the Planning Commission Hearing on November 10, 2022 some of the Planning Commission discussion was related to the existing wetlands onsite and the septic trench crossing to the westerly portion of the project site. A Biological Resources CEQA Review Technical Memorandum for the project was prepared by Greg Matuzak, Principal Biologist, Greg Matuzak Environmental Consulting, LLC, dated November 24, 2021. This memorandum identifies Mitigation Measures Bio-1 through 5 and if implemented would fully mitigated to a level of less than significant. Greg Matuzak will be at the upcoming Board of Supervisors hearing to describe his onsite work and memorandum and to answer any questions that might arise from his Biological assessment and work conducted onsite. Based upon some of the public comments made along with the Commissioners dialogue regarding the wetlands, the project site plan has been modified to include some additional 6' tall, chain-link fence. This additional fence located near a portion of the wetland delineation will further ensure that the wetlands will not be easily accessed from the project and will create a more contained space around the project which was a concern of some of the surrounding residents.

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During the planning commission hearing we also heard from both the commissionaires and the public that the original architectural design felt out of place for Nevada County. In response to this we have prepared an additional design utilizing horizontal siding for the main exterior finish, with additional stone accents at both ends of the building. We have also modified the central covered roof area by removing the decorative arch component and using a heavy timber structure instead.

Very truly yours,

SCO PLANNING & ENGINEERING, INC.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Martin Wood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Martin Wood, P.L.S.

Principal

Enclosure (As stated herein)

MDW/cdu