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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BOARD AGENDA MEMO

MEETING DATE: April 25, 2023

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jeffrey Thorsby, Senior Management Analyst

SUBJECT: Resolution designating The Rome Power House, located at 19700 Purdon Road, Nevada City, CA 95959 (APN 032-450-004-000) as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 23-01

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: On March 17, 2023 the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission (NCHLC) voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to designate the the Rome Power House as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 23-01. Specifically, on February 3, 2023, the property owner, Michael Funk, submitted an application to the NCHLC requesting the site of the Rome Power House be considered and designated as a Nevada County Historical Landmark.

As outlined in the attached supporting documents, the Rome Power House, also referred to as the Nevada Powerhouse, was first built and put into service on February 5, 1896, as the first and only hydroelectric generating plant built on the South Yuba River. Specifically, planning for the plant began in 1892. It entered service in 1896, initially serving mines in the area. It eventually led to the electrification of Nevada City, one of the early pioneering systems in California. Eugene J. de Sable and John Martin, went on to help found Pacific Gas and Electric and were known as the ‘fathers of P.G. & E.’. Furthermore, the article entitled The Nevada “Rome” Power House – the Birthplace of PG&E by A. Dale Johnson (2008) describes the moment the lights first turned on as described by The Daily Transcript:

“...The electric lights of the Nevada County Electric Power Company were turned on at 6 o'clock last evening for the first time and attracted considerable attention. The lights were quite brilliant and the office of the company on Pine St. received many visitors. The lights were burned in Lane's livery stable, the Morgan House at Grass Valley and the company's office, these being the only places wired and connected thus far, but in a few days many other

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business places and residences will be connected and lights furnished them. The officials of the company felt very pleased over the excellent beginning made promises that it will not be long that power, as well as lights can be furnished to all who desire it.”

As such, the Nevada County Historic Landmarks Commission recommends the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached Resolution designating the Rome Power House as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 23-01.

Item Initiated: April 11, 2023

Approved: Julie Patterson Hunter

Submittal Date: April 11, 2023