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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BOARD AGENDA MEMO

MEETING DATE: April 22, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jeffrey Thorsby, Chief of Staff

SUBJECT: Resolution designating the Grass Valley Elks Lodge No. 538, located at 109 South School Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945 (APN 008-344-001), as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 25-04

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: On January 17, 2025, the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission (NCHLC) voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to designate the Grass Valley Elks Lodge No. 538, located at 109 South School Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945 (APN 008-344-001), as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 25-04. Specifically on November 14, 2024, the current owner of the building, Auburn-Grass Valley Elks, B.P.O.E., No. 538, a fraternal organization, and signed by Kathy Madeiros applied to the NCHLC requesting the site of the Grass Valley Elks Lodge No. 538 be considered and designated as a County historical landmark.

As outlined in the attached supporting documents, the building was designed in the Neo-Gothic/English Tudor style. The two-story Elks Lodge building sits prominently at the corner of South School and West Main Streets. It opened in 1912, following a 12-year effort to fund, design, and erect what is one of Grass Valley's most architecturally distinctive buildings. It has even received fame throughout northern California for its distinctive architecture. Many influential citizens of Grass Valley have been members. One such member was John Kidder, owner of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad who was the first "exalted ruler," also known as the E.R., or the President and Executive Officer of the Lodge. The Grass Valley Elks Lodge No. 538 was recognized as historically significant January 23, 2018, in a proclamation of the City of Grass Valley.

Over the years, the building underwent considerable renovations and repairs to maintain its safety and usefulness. In the 1980s, the Lodge held many events such as bingo, dances, and fundraiser dinners. By the mid-1990s, membership began to see incremental declines. The COVID pandemic in 2020 ultimately necessitated shutting the

building down for over a year. After its reopening, members failed to return, and the Lodge experienced difficulty filling officer positions. In 2022, it was decided to merge with Auburn Lodge No. 1691, in an effort to save the building. The Lodge is now officially Auburn-Grass Valley Lodge No. 538. Throughout the years, the building has remained a centerpiece of Grass Valley, hosting many events, both inside and outside the building and has served as a vital piece of the community.

As such, there is no doubt that the Grass Valley Elks Lodge No. 538 is a historical landmark. Therefore, the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission recommends the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached Resolution designating the Grass Valley Elks Lodge No. 538, located at 109 South School Street, Grass Valley, CA 95945 (APN 008-344-001), as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 25-04.

Initiated: Carissa Cyr, Senior Management Analyst

Approved: Jeffrey Thorsby, Chief of Staff

Submittal Date: April 9, 2025