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NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

BOARD AGENDA MEMO

MEETING DATE: August 6, 2024

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jeffrey Thorsby, Chief of Staff/Clerk of the Board

SUBJECT: Resolution designating the Nevada City Sanitarium, located at former 424 Coyote Street in Nevada City which was demolished for Highway 49, with a landmark plaque to be located at 425 Coyote Street in Nevada City, as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 24-06

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached resolution.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND: On June 21, 2024, the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission (NCHLC) voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to designate the Nevada City Sanitarium, located at former 424 Coyote Street in Nevada City which was demolished for Highway 49, with a landmark plaque to be located at 425 Coyote Street in Nevada City, as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 24-06. Specifically on June 15, 2024, the NCHLC, with approval of the current owner of the property on which the proposed plaque for the landmark will be located, Carolyn Ivey-Cone, submitted an application requesting the site of the Sanitarium be considered and designated as a county historical landmark. The Sanitarium was located at 424 Coyote Street and was demolished to make way for the Highway 49 freeway. As such, the plaque will be installed across the street at 425 Coyote Street with the consent of the property owner, Carolyn Ivey-Cone, who has a personal connection to the Sanitarium.

As outlined in the attached supporting documents, in March 1910, Nurses Elizabeth McDonald Watson and Laura M Peterson, at the request of local doctors, established the City of Nevada's first hospital in a cottage at what was formerly 424 Coyote Street. Watson had received her diploma from the Chautauqua School of Nursing in Jamestown, New York. At some point during her education, she met another nursing student, Laura M. Peterson, with whom she would lease the building and open the Sanitarium. Originally a prospector's cabin, the cottage was located on a half-acre of land on the banks of Manzanita Creek and was described as being "laid out with flowers, lawns and trees;... a restful, picturesque spot, ideal for a sanitarium. Initially it contained eight patient rooms."

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A particular claim to the Sanitarium's fame is its record of delivering around 3,000 babies. The Sanitarium also had an excellent reputation for handling victims of mining and automobile accidents. "In 1918, during the Spanish flu epidemic following World War I, the sanitarium did not lose a single patient. The hospital was taxed to the limit with beds in the hallways; no one was turned away." As noted by the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission, the Sanitarium operated as a hospital until 1946, when it was converted to a rest home. The rest home closed in 1953. The founders continued to live there with Peterson taking care of Watson until Watson died at age 90 on January 3, 1957. The Sanitarium was demolished in 1964 with the construction of the Highway 49 freeway.

As such, there is no doubt that the Nevada City Sanitarium site is a historical landmark. Therefore, the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission recommends the Board of Supervisors adopt the attached Resolution designating the Nevada City Sanitarium, located at former 424 Coyote Street in Nevada City which was demolished for Highway 49, with a landmark plaque to be located at 425 Coyote Street in Nevada City, as Nevada County Historical Landmark NEV 24-06.

Initiated: Carissa Cyr, Administrative Analyst II

Approved: Jeffrey Thorsby, Chief of Staff/Clerk of the Board

Submittal Date: July 25, 2024