

Questions and concerns regarding approval of Historical Designation of Truckee's Chinatowns

From: Jean Fournier Jean@trailsandvistas.org

To: BOS.PublicComment@nevadacountyca.gov

To: Nevada County Board of Supervisors,

I read the article, [here](#), regarding the Nevada County Supervisors upcoming approval of a plaque recognizing the contributions of Truckee's Chinatowns' community members.

As a Nevada County resident since the 1980's and educator in the Tahoe Truckee School District for over three decades I am concerned about Truckee's current and future historical plaques that are not in line with modern day knowledge and thinking.

While I strongly agree with the need to recognize and honor Truckee's Chinese communities I would like to know the BOS answers to these questions:

- 1.) Should the BOS begin the acknowledgement of Chinese community members with a public apology for the historical systematic genocide of the Chinese residence by "whites" in Truckee using a method known nationwide as The Truckee Method for its extreme brutality?
- 2.) What is the goal that the placement of the plaque will accomplish? Is the point of the plaque to teach, to heal, and/or to honor?
- 3.) Will there be a dedication ceremony that includes any sort of healing apology, acknowledgement of understanding on the part of the BOS of what diversity, equity and inclusion really mean in today's world? If so who will be invited? Who will decide aspects such as whom should speak, sing, read poetry, or play music?
- 4.) Most importantly, I'd like to know who will approve the text of the plaque. Will it mention that there were not just "fires" in the two Chinese communities in Truckee but that they were fires intentionally set by "whites" to force the Chinese out of dwellings where they were then shot on site?

This systematic removal of Chinese became known as The Truckee Method which was known nationwide as a successful way to murder entire races of people within communities. This was done with the sole purpose of running Chinese merchants out of town so "whites" could increase their business profits. Will it mention the non-Chinese merchants discrimination of Chinese community members who were not allowed to shop in "white" businesses?

You might research The Equal Justice initiative's works to learn how plaques that tell hard truths are necessary.

I'm also concerned that the article mentions Chinese prostitution and hope this does not mean this will be mentioned in the plaque's text, because while there is a plaque on Jibboom street recognizing the history of the sex workers at brothels in Truckee, is it relevant to consider only one race's contribution to sex workers when there were "white" prostitutes as well?

- 5.) Will the plaque include any artwork or images the Town of Truckee Public Art Commission will be approving the art so it is not racist like some of the other plaques in town.

6) Should the Town of Truckee and Nevada County supervisors begin first (or in addition) examine the First Peoples since the town is located on the unceded land of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California?

7.) Should the BOS learn ways to acknowledge, listen to members of the Washoe Tribe, learn from them, and ask what the Town and residents can do now to heal and honor?

You might consider contacting Truckee artist Nancy Lopez, at [REDACTED] to learn how she's built personal relationships with members of the Washoe Tribe, how this takes time, and ask if you can learn about her artwork collaboration with Sue Coleman, member of the Washo Nation and master basket weaver.

I believe The Historical Landmarks Commission should not work in isolation to complete this plaque, but work with other organizations to assure the Historical Landmark Commission is not just "checking a box" of trying to look like they are honoring the historical Chinese Communities of Truckee.

For further example, currently there is a plaque in the Regional Park that supposedly honors Chief Trokay, but the image is not of him, but of another man. It would be great to rectify errors such as this, and to assure whomever leads these projects does so with an increased amount of sensitivity and knowledge.

As a founding member of the town of Truckee's Public Art Commission, I created an inventory of all Public Art within the town, and I do feel strongly there should be art (not just a historical plaque) honoring the historical Chinese Communities of Truckee. Art can heal in ways a plaque cannot.

I look forward to your responses.

Jean
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Jean Fournier

President, Board of Directors, Administrative Coordinator
(she/her/hers) [what is this?](#)

Trails & Vistas

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