

Douglas County Planning Commission Report

Meeting Date: June 10, 2025

Meeting Overview

On June 10, 2025, the Douglas County Planning Commission convened a public meeting at 1:00 PM in the Historic Courthouse. The meeting, attended by all seven commissioners.

The April 8, 2025 minutes were approved. No public comment was presented.

The Planning Commission heard its sole public hearing item: Special Use Permit (SUP) DP 25-0079, a request to expand the Mormon Station State Historic Park's boundary to include the Historic Kinsey House, located at 196 Genoa Lane in the SFR-1 (Single-Family Residential, one-acre minimum parcel size) zoning district in Genoa, identified by APN 1319-09-710-003. The applicant and owner, Gavin Kakol of The Conservation Fund, was represented, with Senior Planner Lucille Rao presenting the staff's analysis.

Lucille Rao outlined the proposal, emphasizing support from both county staff and the Town of Genoa. The Kinsey House, a 2,862-square-foot brick structure built in 1856 by Stephen and Sarah Kinsey, sits adjacent to Mormon Station State Historic Park. The project aims to integrate the property into the park to preserve its historical significance and facilitate public use. Rao clarified that the parcel would retain its SFR-1 zoning, with no immediate request to rezone to Public Facilities, though such a change could be considered during the upcoming Master Plan update. The Genoa Lakes Homeowners Association (HOA) supports the project, agreeing to remove the parcel from its Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) and impose two deed restrictions to prevent incompatible uses, such as private development or commercial activities. A trip generation report confirmed that existing parking on Genoa Lane and Jackson Valley Drive is sufficient, as the addition of the Kinsey House is not expected to significantly increase visitor numbers. Rao noted that no public comments were received prior to the meeting, and staff recommended approval, with findings detailed on Packet Page 26 and conditions of approval starting on Packet Page 28. She then introduced Gavin Kakol to elaborate on the proposal.

Gavin Kakol, representing The Conservation Fund, provided an overview of the project's historical and operational aspects. He disclosed that the Kinsey House, constructed by Stephen Kinsey, nephew of Mormon Station founder John Reese, served as a social hub in Genoa during the 19th and early 20th centuries, hosting parties and community events. The Conservation Fund acquired the property on December 31, 2024, using funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Nevada Conservation and Recreation Fund. The plan is to transfer the property to Nevada State Parks once the SUP is approved and the HOA removal is finalized. Kakol explained that the house would function as a historic interpretive center, with a caretaker unit renovated to serve as a park office and ranger station. The site would feature walking trails connecting to Mormon Station, picnic tables, trash receptacles, educational signage, and preserved trees, including remnants of the original orchard. The park's hours would align with Mormon Station's day-use schedule, and no new access points would be created from the adjacent residential neighborhood to the north. A trip study confirmed that existing parking is adequate, and perimeter fencing would be installed to ensure privacy for neighboring residents. Kakol presented concept renderings from Nevada State

Parks, illustrating the trails, signage, and maintained lawn, with an entryway designed to guide visitors chronologically from the Mormon Fort to the Kinsey House.

Chris Johnson, Park and Recreation Program Manager with Nevada State Parks, supplemented Kakol's presentation, noting his five-year involvement with Mormon Station projects. He confirmed that grant funding includes resources beyond acquisition for initial site development, such as trails and signage, to ensure public access within three years, as mandated by the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Long-term plans involve restoring the house as a historic house museum with limited public tours, though full funding for improvements like sewer and water connections is not yet secured and will be phased in as resources become available.

Commissioner Paul disclosed a personal connection, noting that his father-in-law, a 29-year Genoa resident, frequently discusses the town's historical significance, often mentioning Paul's role on the Commission. He assured the panel that this would not influence his impartiality. Commissioners then posed several questions. Plans for house tours was questioned, to which Kakol responded that Nevada State Parks would offer limited tours after the property transfer. Funding for improvements, such as sewer and water connections were a point of concern. Johnson clarified that while initial development funds are available, comprehensive improvements would depend on future funding. Commissioner The hope that the project would increase visitation to Mormon Station, particularly as an interpretive center, was tempered by concerns regarding parking capacity which could prevent hazardous conditions, aligning with the SUP findings on Packet Page 26. He cited personal observations that parking on Genoa Lane and Jackson Valley Drive rarely reaches capacity, supporting the trip generation report's conclusions.

Planning Commissioner Lile sought clarification on the HOA removal process, which Kakol confirmed was progressing well, with an executed agreement contingent on SUP approval. Planning Commissioner Walder raised concerns about jurisdictional oversight, referencing the Town of Genoa Advisory Board's approval and a condition requiring Genoa Historic District Commission review for exterior changes. The Deputy District Attorney clarified that the Historic District Commission has no authority over residentially zoned parcels like the Kinsey House, and the Planning Commission cannot grant such authority through an SUP condition. However, Hames noted that conditioning the SUP to require Town of Genoa review for exterior changes is permissible, given the Town's advisory role in the SUP process. Rao added that rezoning to Public Facilities during the Master Plan update could align the parcel with Mormon Station's zoning, but the SUP currently allows the proposed use without a zoning change.

During public comment, Dan Ainsworth, a Genoa Lakes resident and frequent collaborator with Johnson, expressed strong support for the project, praising the Kinsey House's historical value. He sought clarification on the Town's future oversight, agreeing with Hames that the Historic District Commission lacks jurisdiction over residential properties. Ainsworth questioned why the Town would have future authority, given its current advisory capacity, and urged the Commission to consider this. No other speakers came forward, and public comment was closed.

Planning Commissioner Walder proposed a motion to approve SUP DP 25-0079, incorporating staff's recommended conditions, granting the Town of Genoa authority to review exterior changes, and explicitly excluding the Genoa Historic District Commission's oversight due to its lack of jurisdiction. He amended the motion to include the Commission's ability to make required findings,

addressing a procedural oversight. Planning Commissioner Bruno seconded the motion and requested that the property's weeds be mowed to reduce fire hazards and improve its appearance pending the transfer to Nevada State Parks. The amended motion passed unanimously.

No closing public comment was presented. The meeting was adjourned.