

1 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**
2 **MEETING HELD THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2020 AT 9:00 A.M. IN THE SALT LAKE**
3 **COUNTY COMPLEX LOCATED AT 2001 SOUTH STATE STREET, SALT LAKE CITY,**
4 **UTAH**
5

6 **Present:** Chair Chris Robinson, Mayor Mike Peterson, Mayor Erin Mendenhall, Mayor
7 Jenny Wilson, Catherine Kanter/ Mike Reberg (Mayor Wilson Staff Members)
8

9 **Absent:** Laura Briefer (Mayor Mendenhall Staff Member)
10

11 **Staff:** Executive Director Ralph Becker (Ex Officio Member), Deputy Director Blake
12 Perez, Communications Director Lindsey Nielsen, Office Manager Kaye
13 Mickelson
14

15 **1. OPENING**
16

17 CWC Board of Commissioners Chair Chris Robinson called the meeting to order at approximately
18 9:00 a.m.
19

20 **2. REVIEW AND DISCUSS DRAFT AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY CENTRAL**
21 **WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) BOARD.**
22

23 The upcoming agenda and scheduling were reviewed and modified. With regard to the Budget
24 Committee, Mayor Wilson stated that one of the struggles from the previous year pertained to the
25 need to address the Community Alliance on the Budget Committee. She stated that they operate by
26 resolution on matters that are not required, which slows them down and results in additional cost.
27 CWC Executive Director, Ralph Becker stated that they are continually working on that issue. They
28 are particularly attentive because they have been sued and are routinely threatened with litigation.
29

30 Changes were recommended to the upcoming CWC agenda including rearranging items and
31 combining others.
32

33 With regard to electing vice-chairs for each committee, Mr. Perez stated that they want to have
34 balance within each committee by having three members. If the chair is unable to attend, the Vice-
35 Chair can step in. In response to a question raised by Mayor Wilson, Mr. Becker confirmed that the
36 Stakeholders Council was integrated with the three areas.
37

38 Mr. Perez reported that the Town of Brighton is in the process of preparing their application to become
39 a member of the CWC and it should be received soon. The CWC Board will need to approve it after
40 which Mayor Knopp will tentatively become a member of the Board. Before being able to vote, the
41 request would need to go to the legislative bodies of every jurisdiction. As a result, it could take one
42 or two months before the Town of Brighton is formally a member.
43

44 Mr. Becker reported that the Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) and the Metropolitan Water District are
45 on board with the Commission. The question was whether to create a new category such as for
46 ex-officio members and have them serve in that role. Mr. Becker pointed out that UTA has already
47 made a financial contribution. There was some question about the Utah Department of Transportation
48 (“UDOT”) as well. UDOT Executive Director, Carlos Braceras wants to be supportive but was

1 hesitant to have a formal role. They are waiting to deal with other issues before moving forward with
2 the Interlocal Agreement. Each time a change is made to the agreement, it is necessary to go back to
3 the legislative body of each jurisdiction for approval. Mike Reberg suggested that all of the changes
4 be packaged together. Mr. Becker stated that Mayor Knopp has been attending meetings as well.
5

6 Chair Robinson asked if it was too late to craft resolutions or present ideas on the potential for ex
7 officio members for the February meeting. Mr. Becker stated that it was probably too late to be
8 included on the agenda but that action could be taken now.
9

10 **3. CWC COMMITTEE UPDATE AND DISCUSSION.**

11
12 Chair Robinson reported that he, Mayor Wilson, and staff met a few days earlier and as a group, and
13 made a decision to put a hold this year on the federal legislation. They discussed the elements of the
14 federal bill and identified the barriers and opportunities moving forward. After a rigorous discussion
15 about the Alta situation, the decision was made to pause on some of the sticky issues. The value may
16 be to use this year's timeline to reach out to the various partners and resorts and look at a different
17 method to address valuation and critical lands issues. The goal was to reach a compromise. There
18 was uncertainty as to whether the resorts would be interested in pursuing a unique model.
19

20 Chair Robinson explained that the intent is not to negotiate with Alta or work on those elements of
21 the federal legislation. They want to determine whether adjustments in land tenure and ownership
22 are important. If they are, the next step would be to brainstorm ways to fix that. Dave Whittekiend
23 came up with an idea to have the federal legislation authorize the sale and purchase of certain lands
24 whereby the resorts would be able to pay for fair market value base lands. In exchange, they may be
25 required to sell side hill lands that would satisfy the conservation community. The proceeds would
26 remain in the Central Wasatch and not go to the Treasury to be reinvested in other lands. The result
27 would be to create a fund for the purchase of lands. The question was whether the resorts have an
28 appetite for that. It was suggested that a meeting of the Land Tenure and Legislative Committee be
29 held to raise that question.
30

31 Chair Robinson stressed the importance of discussing at the meeting the importance of land tenure
32 adjustments and alternatives to the exchanges. Mayor Wilson stated that if they leave a meeting and
33 the answer is "no", they do not have a bill since a conservation bill alone goes nowhere with the
34 federal delegation that they have.
35

36 Mr. Becker stated that Cardiff is the most contentious in terms of private landowners. When he, Chair
37 Robinson, and Mayor Silvestrini met with the Cardiff Canyon Property Owners Association they
38 asked if there were any property owners who would sell if they were paid fair market value. The
39 response was that some would.
40

41 Chair Robinson commented that some of the criticisms of Mountain Accord were from citizens who
42 allege that the CWC hasn't given them a seat at the table and lack of representation. The purpose of
43 the committee would be to look at land tenure, not just in the legislation, but how they might deal
44 with private land.
45

46 Mayor Wilson stated that there had been discussion about communicating with the federal legislation.
47 Mr. Becker stated that it would be sent in the next few days. Mayor Wilson suggested they also
48 determine what the message is. The Lobbyists were identified as Casey Hill, Ron Dean, and Bill

1 Simmons whose contracts were renegotiated because the federal legislation was paused. Mr. Becker
2 also met with the Lobbyists for each of the jurisdictions, which has been very helpful and resulted in
3 a coordinated effort.

4
5 With respect to the Mountain Transportation System Meeting, Chair Robinson stated that he and
6 Messrs. Becker and Perez had a good meeting with John Thomas from UDOT and Vince Izzo from
7 HDR, the consultant working on the Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) for Little Cottonwood
8 Canyon. Mr. Becker stated that HDR is an international planning and engineering firm that does a
9 lot of transportation work.

10
11 Chair Robinson explained that with the Transportation Committee and transportation, in general, they
12 have been trying to come up with a Mountain Transportation System Plan. The EIS is flawed in the
13 sense that it is not holistic enough to take in the whole reach. The idea was that they are going to rely
14 on vendors. They have also met with UDOT and UTA. The intent was to come up with a plan that
15 could then go through the NEPA process. He stated that it should be a plan that builds a consensus.

16
17 Mayor Wilson worried that if they decide to move forward with one of the options, they are not
18 allowing that particular vendor to compete with an RFP for a major State project. Chair Robinson
19 clarified that the CWC is not a contracting entity and they are not in a NEPA process. As a result,
20 they can still compete. He explained that UDOT’s plan is to complete the process in about one year
21 after which they will begin a 150-day appeal period. During that time, the matter could be litigated.
22 Assuming there is no litigation, in about 18 months they will be able to move forward.
23 Messrs. Thomas and Izzo were informed that a lot of comments were coming back, many of which
24 relate to the scope being too narrow and that they may be subjecting themselves to litigation during
25 the 150-day period. One added value of the CWC was for them to build a consensus around an idea
26 that would then nullify much of the opposition.

27
28 Chair Robinson stated that they have little money and a lot of other studies that need to be conducted.
29 They also have technical memos coming out of the Little Cottonwood Canyon (“LCC”) EIS that will
30 be coming forward. They are utilizing two local providers who have solved these types of mountain
31 transportation systems elsewhere. UTA always wants to help. With the support of Mr. Braceras, they
32 will also have the help of UDOT. They need to organize and look at what a system might look like.
33 Mr. Reberg stated that at some point they will need to create an alternative that they like. Staff had
34 written to UDOT and agreed to provide the same type of information that Doppelmayer provided on
35 aerial systems. They agreed to do it for the region if desired.

36
37 Mayor Peterson commented that because the City of Cottonwood Heights is situated between the two
38 canyons, anything that is done will impact them tremendously. They have been working with UDOT
39 for the past two years and created, through the Wasatch Front Regional Council, their own Wasatch
40 Boulevard Master Plan, which has been verbally approved by UDOT. As a result, UDOT has
41 accepted that it is not just another highway they are building. They understand that it is unique and
42 needs to be more of a boulevard because of the residential impacts. Mayor Peterson explained that
43 they can no longer put as many cars up the canyons. The alternative is to provide transportation hubs
44 outside of the canyons with an incentive to get people out of cars and onto mass transit. Preliminarily,
45 that needs to be UTA in buses. The corridor has to have some type of flex lane to allow the buses to
46 get up the canyons. The current challenge is having thousands of cars trying to travel up the canyon
47 on a snow day and not enough parking to accommodate them.

1 Mayor Peterson struggled with the notion of adding value to what is already there. He suggested they
2 identify a more regional plan and look at aerial transportation and potential impacts. Mr. Becker
3 explained that the UDOT timing in the EIS is 2050 for their decision making. It was Mayor Peterson's
4 understanding that some items will be implemented soon. Mayor Peterson stated that the CWC needs
5 to have an impact and be relevant. Chair Robinson agreed and stated that they have a short time
6 frame to demonstrate that. They know that UDOT is working on transportation with the EIS, which
7 will generate valuable information.

8
9 Chair Robinson believed this was a good time because the problems have been exacerbated and
10 acknowledged. Mayor Peterson stated that unlike many of the studies that have been conducted in
11 the past, there is now money to begin making improvements. Mayor Wilson explained that there are
12 some options that are potentially substantial to the County involving major transit-related
13 infrastructure, which is critical. They are exploring where and how to utilize those options. Progress
14 being made with respect to mass transit was discussed.

15
16 Chair Robinson commented on the opportunity cost and stated that regardless of what UDOT decides
17 to do with the LCC EIS, it may be mutually exclusive to other things. For that reason, he thought it
18 was important for the CWC to come up with ideas to put forward to UDOT. He also stressed the
19 importance of those involved educating themselves. Mayor Peterson stated that the LCC EIS includes
20 the entire corridor along Wasatch Boulevard to 6200 South.

21
22 Mr. Becker reported that the Legislature has already appropriated \$80 to \$100 million for the project.
23 Whatever UDOT comes up with will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. Once the investment is
24 made, it will set the course for the entire region in terms of mountain transportation. Mayor Wilson
25 commented that she continues to have an issue with capacity because they cannot spend huge amounts
26 of taxpayer money on it and it not serve the public. She also questioned who will pay for it. The
27 results of a recent survey showed that the canyon ranked the lowest throughout the County in terms
28 of importance. She suggested that user fees be considered. Chair Robinson identified paid parking
29 and tolling as possible options. Mayor Peterson reported that UDOT is also considering tolling.

30
31 Mr. Becker explained that since the Stakeholders Council was established, the capacity and visitor
32 capacity issues have been reformulated. Mayor Peterson remarked that defining the scope of
33 transportation is one of the first issues the CWC should agree on moving forward. Mike Reberg
34 mentioned that there is good language in Mountain Accord as well.

35
36 Chair Robinson commented on the Short-Term Projects Committee chaired by Jim Bradley and stated
37 that they will meet on January 29. They had an initial meeting and there was a draft list for potential
38 opportunities for funding. There is also an Outdoor Recreation Grant they are also interested in
39 pursuing.

40
41 Chair Robinson explained that when the Budget Committee met, they discussed coming up with a
42 base budget of around \$600,000. Special projects would be in addition to that. They currently there
43 is \$1.2 million in reserves. It was anticipated that there would be an operating reserve equal to one
44 year's costs. The additional amount would be earmarked for special projects. They may come up
45 with an annual budget in excess of the \$600,000 that will go into the Special Projects Fund. The
46 intent would not be to reduce what they ask their constituent members to contribute which is around
47 \$840,000.

1 Catherine Kanter asked how they plan to pay for the Master Transportation System planning. Chair
2 Robinson that they are not and may recruit planners from the respective jurisdictions. Mayor Wilson
3 stated that it is an offset of this committee to work through that. Mr. Becker explained that to date
4 they have not budgeted anything in addition to staff time.

5
6 **4. ENVIRONMENTAL DASHBOARD UPDATE.**

7
8 Mr. Becker reported that the CWC is committed to \$100,000 for the Environmental Dashboard for
9 this year. They are ending the Data Collection Phase and moving into the Analysis and Public
10 Engagement phase.

11
12 **5. CWC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN.**

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14 Mr. Becker reported that Communications Director, Lindsey Nielsen has prepared a Communications
15 Plan for the year focusing on the transportation system work of the Board.

16
17 **6. STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL UPDATE/MEMBERSHIP.**

18
19 Mr. Perez reported that going forward the Stakeholders Council will meet quarterly. At the last
20 Stakeholders Council Meeting, they broke into three groups to address Millcreek, Trails and
21 Trailheads, and Visitor Management. With regard to Visitor Management, the Board was invited to
22 provide questions and feedback.

23
24 Mr. Perez stated that they have not yet held the first Transportation Committee Meeting and suggested
25 that be done after the February meeting once Mayor Knopp is on board.

26
27 Mayor Wilson asked about the status of the gravel pit property in Cottonwood Heights. Mayor
28 Peterson described the ownership of the property and stated that the 22 acres on the north side are no
29 longer being mined and are being developed. Granite Construction is leasing the other 90% of the
30 property and have four to six years remaining. They are familiar with the \$13 million the Legislature
31 allocated. It was noted that the Old Mill is an iconic structure and there have been efforts to protect it.

32
33 **7. ADJOURNMENT.**

34
35 The Central Wasatch Commission Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:24 a.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Executive Committee Meeting held Thursday, January 23, 2020.*

3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____