

1 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
2 **COUNCIL TRAILS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD, THURSDAY JANUARY 14, 2021,**
3 **AT 2:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM**
4

5 **Present:** John Knoblock, Chair
6 Will McCarvill
7 Barbara Cameron
8 Patrick Nelson
9 Steve Van Maren
10 Sarah Bennett

11
12 **Staff:** Ralph Becker, CWC Executive Director
13 Blake Perez, CWC Deputy Director
14 Lindsey Nielsen, Communications Director
15 Kaye Mickelson, Office Administrator
16

17 **1. Introductions.**
18

19 Chair John Knoblock called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. He welcomed those
20 present to the first meeting of the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council
21 Trails Committee.
22

23 The Legislature, pursuant to Section 52-4-207(4), required the Committee to make a
24 determination, which was as follows:
25

26 ‘I, as the Chair of the Trails Committee of the Mountain Accord Stakeholders
27 Council of the Central Wasatch Commission hereby determine that conducting
28 council meetings at any time during the next 30 days at an anchor location
29 presents a substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be present
30 at the anchor location. The World Health Organization, the President of the
31 United States, the Governor of Utah, the Salt Lake County Mayor, and the
32 Health Department have all recognized that a global pandemic exists related to
33 the new strain of the Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. Due to the state of emergency
34 caused by the global pandemic, I find that conducting a meeting at an anchor
35 location under the current state of public health emergency constitutes a
36 substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be present at the
37 location. According to the information and from State epidemiology experts,
38 Utah is currently in an acceleration phase, which has the potential to overwhelm
39 the State’s health care system.’
40

41 The agenda for the meeting was reviewed. Chair Knoblock introduced himself to the Committee
42 and explained that the Trails Committee came out of discussions of the CWC Stakeholders Council
43 Meeting about one year ago. Chair Knoblock volunteered to chair the committee. He was also
44 involved in the Bonneville Shoreline Trail Committee and Trails Utah. Other participants
45 introduced themselves, including:
46

- 1 • Barbara Cameron from the Big Cottonwood Community Council;
- 2 • Will McCarvill, present on behalf of Dennis Goreham. Mr. Goreham is the Conservation
- 3 Director of the Wasatch Mountain Club;
- 4 • CWC Deputy Director, Blake Perez;
- 5 • CWC Office Administrator, Kaye Mickelson;
- 6 • CWC Executive Director, Ralph Becker;
- 7 • CWC Communications Director, Lindsey Nielsen; and
- 8 • Sarah Bennett from Trails Utah.

9

10 **2. Review the Past Mountain Accord Trails Planning Efforts.**

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12 Chair Knoblock reported that during the Mountain Accord, there were two planning efforts related

13 to trails. The first was organized by Charlie Sturgis from the Mountain Trails Foundation. There

14 were a number of meetings related to trail projects that could be completed in the near future as

15 part of the Mountain Accord process. There had also been discussions about what an idealized

16 trail system would look like. Chair Knoblock noted that the second planning effort was led by

17 Mr. McCarvill. It further addressed what an idealized trail system would look like and how the

18 system could be mapped out in a more detailed way. Descriptions were written about the current

19 situation and potential changes for proposed trails. Chair Knoblock commented that the main

20 focus was on an interconnected trail system.

21

22 Mr. McCarvill noted that one of the areas the working group was interested in was the interface

23 between the Central Wasatch and surrounding areas. For instance, how the trail plan would work

24 with the Snyderville Basin, mountain trails on the Park City side, and trails extending north at

25 Parleys Summit. The idea was to build something that would work with the surrounding areas to

26 create a continuous trail system. Chair Knoblock added that an overview map, detailed maps, and

27 trail descriptions were provided in a packet.

28

29 There had been conversations with various groups, including ski area managers. Mr. McCarvill

30 met with them to determine how to link together with the trails on the resorts. He reported that

31 there had been a lot of input at the time. Chair Knoblock noted that for the Mountain Accord Trails

32 Plan, a decision was made to prepare a concept for interconnected trails in the Central Wasatch.

33 However, the concept did not include input from the U.S. Forest Service or Salt Lake City Public

34 Utilities due to potential pushback.

35

36 Mr. McCarvill explained that the decision was made several years ago. Since then, there had been

37 an increased number of trail users. He expressed concerns about the visitation levels. He

38 supported the Visitor Use Study and believed it would provide solid information about how to

39 protect the environment and still maintain the overall user experience. Chair Knoblock made note

40 of the increased visitation levels during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Cameron was grateful that

41 the CWC was focused on a Visitor Use Study.

42

1 **3. Discuss the U.S. Forest Service Trails Master Planning and Their Quarterly**
2 **Stakeholders Committee.**
3

4 Chair Knoblock reported that the Trails Manager for the Salt Lake Ranger District, Zinnia Wilson,
5 recently conducted a quarterly Trails Committee Meeting. There had already been discussions
6 with Ms. Wilson and Salt Lake District Ranger, Bekee Hotze about where the CWC Stakeholders
7 Council Trails Committee fits in. Chair Knoblock wanted to ensure that everyone involved is
8 receiving good communication and are in agreement with where the Committee stands.
9

10 On January 12, 2021, Ms. Wilson held a Forest Service Stakeholders Trails Committee Meeting.
11 One item that was discussed related to the trails projects that were done last year and the trails
12 projects planned for the current year. Chair Knoblock reported that there are at least a dozen
13 significant trails projects in the works. Some related to maintenance and some were focused on
14 existing trails. Ms. Cameron noted that some of the projects included Lake Blanche Trail (Mill B
15 South), the bridges at Desolation Trail, and the Ferguson Canyon connector. She stated that the
16 previous weekend in Little Cottonwood Canyon, there were approximately 5,586 vehicles. In Big
17 Cottonwood Canyon, there were approximately 6,518 vehicles. She felt that spoke to
18 Mr. McCarvill's concerns about overuse.
19

20 During the second portion of the Trails Committee Meeting, the Forest Service Trails Master Plan
21 was discussed. The Forest Service had been working to identify all of the trails in the Central
22 Wasatch. That included all of the Forest Service designated trails. Additionally, a hired worker
23 and a number of volunteers from Save Our Canyons identified all of the user-created trails. Chair
24 Knoblock pointed out that the trails within ski areas and on private property were labeled as user-
25 created trails. He added that the Executive Director of Save Our Canyons, Carl Fisher felt it was
26 important to make room for wildlife. Mr. Fisher believed that not all ground area should be
27 dedicated to trails, service roads, or ski lifts. He thought that certain areas should be designated
28 as open space for wildlife.
29

30 Chair Knoblock reported that Ms. Wilson planned to use the Forest Service Trails Master Plan to
31 determine the following:
32

- 33 • Which user-created trails could potentially become official trails;
- 34 • Which user-created trails should remain as user-created trails; and
- 35 • Which user-created trails were potentially dangerous (went through riparian zones or
36 impacted critical habitat) and in need of alteration.
37

38 There were also discussions related to transit-oriented trails and how to encourage trail users to
39 take public transportation. Ms. Bennett commented that a fair amount of time had been spent
40 talking about the use of various apps, such as AllTrails and Strava. A lot of information could
41 come out of the apps to determine how people were using the trails. There had also been
42 discussions about potentially reaching out to some of the app companies. Requests could be made
43 for those user-created trails to be removed. Ms. Bennett felt there was an opportunity to raise
44 awareness by working with some of the trail app companies.
45

1 Chair Knoblock reported that for the first time, the Forest Service had designated areas in Alta as
2 no travel zones. Essentially, visitors need to stay on the trails in those areas. In general, forested
3 areas have trails but visitors are able to walk wherever they want. In Alta, Ms. Wilson had
4 established zones where traveling off-trail was now prohibited.

5
6 **4. Discuss the Salt Lake County Trails Planning Status.**
7

8 Chair Knoblock reported that he had not heard back from Martin Jensen or Walt Gilmore from
9 Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation. However, they made it clear last summer that the County
10 wanted to be the lead agency to develop a Natural Surface Trails Master Plan for all of Salt Lake
11 County's land area. It was something that Chair Knoblock, Ms. Bennett, and Kevin Dwyer from
12 the Salt Lake Valley Trails Society had been pushing Salt Lake County to move forward with.

13
14 It was noted that Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation could only do as much as they have
15 funding for. Mr. Jensen was trying to find funding to have someone work on the Trails Master
16 Plan. Ideally, someone from Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation and someone from the Forest
17 Service would be working on the Trails Master Plan. There would then be a third-party consulting
18 company retained to put together materials and handle public outreach sessions throughout the
19 County to obtain input on the Trails Master Plan. Approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000 would be
20 needed for the County to move forward with the project.

21
22 **5. Discuss the Salt Lake City Watershed Management Plan Revision Status.**
23

24 Chair Knoblock reported that the Salt Lake City Watershed Management Plan was another
25 planning effort currently taking place. He noted that it had been 20 years since the last update to
26 the watershed plan. Mr. Becker confirmed this and commented that Salt Lake City had done
27 Watershed Management Plans in 1986 and 1999.

28
29 Patrick Nelson from Salt Lake City Public Utilities stated that it was time for the City to update
30 the policy document. Work had been conducted over the summer to look at water quality data and
31 wildfire hazards. The Watershed Management Plan would update the existing plan to look at a
32 number of threats to water quality, such as crowding, climate change, and wildfires. Ms. Bennett
33 wondered about the timeline for the data to be compiled and made available. Mr. Nelson reported
34 that the request for proposal (“RFP”) selection would be done the following week for a public
35 outreach and engagement firm. He expected that there would be a lot of public dialogue related
36 to areas such as water use and recreation.

37
38 Chair Knoblock believed it was important for Salt Lake City Public Utilities, the Forest Service,
39 Salt Lake County, and the CWC Trails Committee to work together as a coordinated team. He
40 noted that the Trails Committee could be available to provide input as needed. Ms. Cameron
41 wondered if some of the information from the Wasatch Canyons General Plan could be used.
42 Mr. Nelson believed there would be a bit of overlap but noted that the main focus of the Watershed
43 Management Plan was on water quality and quantity. Chair Knoblock asked about the budget for
44 public outreach resources. Mr. Nelson commented that the budget had not been finalized or
45 negotiated yet. He discussed the importance of a needs assessment to determine what problems
46 needed to be solved within the trails system.

1
2 **6. Review the Other Organizations Involved in Central Wasatch Trails Activity.**
3

4 Chair Knoblock opened up discussions about other organizations involved in Central Wasatch
5 trails activity. He made note of the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. Ms. Bennett believed that
6 the Utah High School Mountain Biking League would be a beneficial entity to speak to.
7 Ms. Cameron suggested the Town of Brighton Trails Committee. Chair Knoblock mentioned the
8 ski resorts, Wasatch Mountain Club, and Save Our Canyons. Mr. Becker suggested the Town of
9 Alta and Ms. Bennett made note of the Wasatch Mountain Wranglers. Mr. McCarvill commented
10 that the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance and Wasatch Backcountry Alliance could also be considered.

11
12 Mr. McCarvill posed the following question to the Trails Committee:
13

- 14 • How do we deal with the constant evolution of recreation?

15
16 He noted that electric bicycles are becoming more popular. Additionally, he believed that as the
17 quality of the trails improves, there could be changes to the ways that users recreate on the trails.
18 Chair Knoblock commented that electric bicycles are prohibited on non-motorized trails.
19

20 Ms. Bennett commented that many of the organizations could be broken down into the following
21 categories: geography, business, government, and user groups. Each group would have something
22 to say about the trails and trail use. Mr. McCarvill added that any successful program would need
23 to include:
24

- 25 • Education;
- 26 • Engineering; and
- 27 • Enforcement.

28
29 He felt there was room for improvement as it relates to education. Ms. Bennett believed the Forest
30 Service had begun to come around on the education piece. She felt it would be beneficial for the
31 Trails Committee to develop a communication and education plan.
32

33 Ms. Cameron noted that Ms. Wilson was particularly proud of the Historic Spruces Winter Trail.
34 She wondered whether historical stewardship may take place there. The Trails Committee
35 discussed the trail. Mr. Becker noted that there are no facilities in the area and the area was
36 overwhelmed with visitors. Ms. Cameron stated that there was one restroom between the first and
37 second parking lots. She expressed concerns about the Utah Department of Transportation
38 (“UDOT”) plowing the parking lots due to the use of salt. She commented that it could be hard
39 on the trees.
40

41 Ms. Bennett brought up enforcement and wondered if the Trails Committee could communicate
42 the importance of enforcement to the County. There could be a stronger presence from Canyon
43 Patrol or some additional enforcement that could close gates at trailheads and ticket visitors that
44 parked on the road. Ms. Cameron commented that the Wasatch Graffiti Busters had obtained some
45 extra money to police in Little Cottonwood Canyon and Big Cottonwood Canyon. They felt it had
46 made a difference in the amount of graffiti found in the canyons. Mr. Becker reported that the

1 CWC provided funding for a number of trail projects, including the Wasatch Graffiti Busters.
2 They were continuing to look for additional sources of funding.

3
4 **7. Discuss the Purpose, Need, and Scope of a CWC Stakeholders Trails Committee –**
5 **How Do We Fit into the Other Planning Efforts.**
6

7 Chair Knoblock opened up discussions related to the purpose, need, and scope of the Trails
8 Committee. He asked the Committee Members to brainstorm existing problems that the
9 Committee could help solve. The list of problems included:

- 10
11
- Increase in number of users on trails;
 - 12 • Lack of summer transit;
 - 13 • Lack of adequate restrooms at trailheads;
 - 14 • Loss of wilderness values in wilderness;
 - 15 • Too many user-created trails;
 - 16 • Lack of good signage;
 - 17 • Lack of interpretive signage;
 - 18 • Not enough trail user ethic education; and
 - 19 • Not enough family hikes.
- 20

21 Mr. Becker commented on the importance of developing a trail system that provides for the diverse
22 range of experiences visitors are looking for. For example, trails should cater to beginners,
23 moderate, and intermediate levels. Ms. Cameron wondered if there was a trail rating system in the
24 Wasatch. Mr. McCarvill noted that the Wasatch Mountain Club has a trail rating system in place.

25
26 Mr. McCarvill mentioned the link between recreation and transportation. He was not sure whether
27 the Forest Service and Salt Lake County were including transportation elements in their Trails
28 Master Plans. Mr. Becker noted that the CWC Mountain Transportation Work focused on year-
29 round access and access for a wide array of users. He discussed the idea of hiking from one place
30 to another with transit available to return hikers back to their original starting point.

31
32 Chair Knoblock discussed how the Trails Committee fits into the other planning efforts taking
33 place. He made note of the following:

- 34
- 35 • Salt Lake County Trails Master Plan:
 - 36 ○ Trails Committee would be able to review their work and provide input. May be
 - 37 able to provide additional credibility as their plan moves forward.
 - 38 • Salt Lake City Watershed Management Plan:
 - 39 ○ Trails Committee would be able to review their work and provide input.
 - 40 • Forest Service Trails Master Plan:
 - 41 ○ Trails Committee would be able to review their work and provide input. May be
 - 42 able to add insight to discussions about user-created trails.
- 43

1 **8. Draft Goals and Objectives for Our Trails Committee.**

2
3 **a. Long-Term.**

4
5 Chair Knoblock opened up discussions related to long-term goals and objectives. He suggested
6 that one goal may be to provide CWC representative input to the Forest Service Trails Master Plan,
7 Salt Lake County Trails Master Plan, and Salt Lake City Watershed Management Plan.
8 Ms. Bennett wondered if it would be beneficial to communicate via email some potential goals
9 and objectives. Chair Knoblock believed it was important to develop draft goals and objectives at
10 the current Trails Committee Meeting.

11
12 Mr. Perez noted that a Stakeholders Council Meeting would be held the following week. The
13 agenda and meeting materials packet would be distributed beforehand. He reported that a portion
14 of the Stakeholders Council Meeting would be dedicated to assessing the committees created one
15 year ago. The Council would look at where each committee stood and whether they should
16 continue. Mr. Perez noted that the original intention of the Trails Committee was to create a Trails
17 Master Plan. Chair Knoblock confirmed this but stated that Mr. Jensen encouraged the Trails
18 Committee not to create their own Trails Master Plan because one was already in the works.

19
20 Mr. Perez wondered whether the work of the Trails Committee needed to reconcile back to the
21 Mountain Accord work. Chair Knoblock raised the following questions to the Trails Committee
22 Members:

- 23
24
- How does the Trails Committee fit in?
 - How does the Mountain Accord Trails Plan fit in between the Salt Lake County Trails
25 Master Plan and the Forest Service Trails Master Plan?
- 26
27

28 He believed the Trails Committee was somewhere in the middle and noted that the Trails
29 Committee does not include all of Salt Lake County. The Mountain Accord area included the tri
30 canyons, all of Parleys Canyon, and all of Lambs Canyon. Chair Knoblock reported that a
31 significant piece of the previous Mountain Accord trail proposals had related to Parleys Canyon
32 along the I-80 corridor. However, Mr. Nelson had asked that planning not be done until the
33 Watershed Management Plan was underway.

34
35 Committee Members discussed possible goals and objectives for the Trails Committee. There was
36 discussion regarding educational campaigns and signage. Ms. Cameron mentioned the Scenic
37 Byways Plan and wondered if some of those guidelines could be followed. Ms. Bennett
38 emphasized the importance of increasing regional and geographical awareness. Chair Knoblock
39 reviewed the drafted goals and objectives:

- 40
- Input to the various groups on the trails and watershed plans;
 - Input on transportation and trail capacity management;
 - Input to the Forest Service and Salt Lake City Public Utilities on signage and user
44 education; and
 - Enforcement advocacy.
- 45
46

1 Chair Knoblock asked the Committee whether they should revisit the work done with the Mountain
2 Accord or provide input to other groups on existing trails and watershed plans. Mr. McCarvill
3 reported that he shared the final map draft from the Mountain Accord process with Ms. Wilson six
4 to nine months ago. He felt that the Trails Committee should provide input and assistance to the
5 ongoing Trails Master Plans.

6
7 Chair Knoblock noted that the four long-term goals could be presented to the Stakeholders
8 Council. Stakeholders could provide additional input on the Trails Committee objectives.
9 Mr. McCarvill asked that the four goals be sent via email for review and reflection.

10
11 **b. Short-Term.**

12 No additional goals were discussed.

13
14
15 **9. Next Meeting Timing and Agenda.**

16
17 Future times and dates for Trails Committee Meetings were discussed. Chair Knoblock suggested
18 that meetings be held on the second Thursday of each month. Meetings would be scheduled at
19 2:00 p.m. and last for approximately two hours.

20
21 Next Meeting of the Trails Committee will be Thursday: February 11, 2021 at 2 p.m.

22
23 The Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Trails Committee Meeting adjourned at
24 approximately 3:57 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Transportation Committee Meeting held Thursday, January 14, 2021.*

3

4 *Teri Forbes*

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____