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3 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) LEGISLATIVE AND**
4 **LAND TENURE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2024, AT 12:30 PM.**
5 **THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM.**
6 **THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES LOCATED AT 41 NORTH RIO**
7 **GRANDE STREET, SUITE 102, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**
8

9 **Board Members:** Mayor Erin Mendenhall, Chair
10 Mayor Jeff Silvestrini
11 Christopher F. Robinson
12

13 **Others:** Laura Briefer
14 Crystal Chen
15

16 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
17 Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations
18

19 **OPENING**
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21 **1. Chair Erin Mendenhall will Open the Legislative and Land Tenure Committee Meeting**
22 **and Welcome Fellow Commissioners, Staff, and Members of the Public.**
23

24 Chair Erin Mendenhall called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Legislative and Land
25 Tenure Committee Meeting to order at approximately 12:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.
26

27 **CWNCRA DISCUSSION**
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29 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Status of the Central Wasatch National Conservation**
30 **and Recreation Area (“CWNCRA”) Act and any Needed Updates.**
31

32 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, explained that the last time the Legislative and Land Tenure
33 Committee convened was at the end of 2022. It is wonderful that the Committee is reconvening so
34 legislative and land tenure issues can be brought to the forefront. The first portion of the meeting
35 agenda relates to the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area (“CWNCRA”) Act
36 and where it currently stands. The Committee can discuss if updates to the CWNCRA are needed.
37

38 The most recent version of the CWNCRA is the October 27, 2020, version. That was the last time
39 that any changes were made and public comments were received. The only areas that need to be
40 cleaned up now relate to matters that have been handled elsewhere, such as the Bonneville Shoreline
41 Trail Advancement Act. If the CWC decides to update the CWNCRA, that would be the most

1 substantive change in the bill, as part of what is proposed has been taken care of by the Bonneville
2 Shoreline Trail Advancement Act. Laura Briefer asked if that bill passed, which was confirmed.

3
4 Other than the Bonneville Shoreline Trail, the CWNCRRA is in good shape. There are no other
5 significant changes proposed. Mayor Jeff Silvestrini noted that he has appointments with many in
6 the delegation and it is possible to speak to them about the CWNCRRA. He noted that the Legislature
7 funded the CWC this year, so there is some support for the work done by the organization. He
8 wondered if it made sense for there to be a field trip to the Central Wasatch, similar to what was done
9 in the past with the Great Salt Lake. It might be possible to receive support from the Legislature on
10 the CWNCRRA if that kind of outreach was conducted. He stressed the importance of increasing
11 support for the concept and making sure Legislators understood why the CWNCRRA is so important.

12
13 Chair Mendenhall liked the idea presented by Mayor Silvestrini. It was noted that Commissioner
14 Christopher F. Robinson had joined the meeting. Chair Mendenhall informed him that Mayor
15 Silvestrini suggested using the relationship opportunity between Representative Doug Owens and
16 Representative Phil Lyman to see if there could be a field trip with some of the rural Legislators who
17 might not be as familiar with the Central Wasatch. She thought it was something worth pursuing.

18
19 Chair Mendenhall stated that she was on the Quality Growth Commission for nine years with mostly
20 rural representatives and found that a lot of politically compelling relationships occur out in the land
21 together. She likes the idea of there being a field trip of some sort. It was suggested that a 30-minute
22 meeting be requested with Representative Robert Spendlove, Senator Kirk Cullimore, and
23 Representative Owens, who are familiar with the CWC. There could be a discussion about how to
24 organize that kind of field trip with an appropriate group of participants. Mayor Silvestrini liked that
25 suggestion and offered to reach out to those individuals to see if it is possible to schedule that.

26
27 Ms. Nielsen was supportive of the field trip idea. She reminded those present that this was done in
28 2019 with the Federalism Commission. At that time, a loop of Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little
29 Cottonwood Canyon was done. She believed it was possible to build on that since it has been a few
30 years. Ms. Briefer stated that she participated in that field trip and thought it was effective. A repeat
31 of something similar would be beneficial. Mayor Silvestrini reiterated that he would reach out.

32
33 Mayor Silvestrini believed part of the resistance the CWNCRRA would face in the Utah Legislature
34 had to do with more Federal control over lands in Utah. He wondered whether there could be a role
35 for the State. Ms. Briefer referenced the Mountain Accord process. When the concept of the Local
36 Management Plan was developed as part of the Federal Legislation, the State did have a role in that.
37 She suggested that this be highlighted. She noted that there is still interest from Snowbird and
38 Solitude to explore land exchanges, where they would receive the Federal lands they have a Special
39 Use Permit on at the developed base areas and the lands owned outside of the base areas could move
40 into Federal ownership. That component of the land exchanges, which benefits the ski areas, could
41 offset the perception of additional Federal control. It might be worth it to have a small Working
42 Group with Snowbird, Solitude, and the U.S. Forest Service to reengage on that particular matter.

43
44 Ms. Nielsen was pleased to hear about the desire from Snowbird and Solitude to continue those
45 discussions. She believes there is more to discuss when it comes to the potential land exchanges.
46 That being said, she wanted to clarify that it is not technically true that the CWNCRRA would invite
47 more Federal control of the lands. The CWNCRRA would only impact lands that were already public.

1 Mayor Silvestrini understood that, but believed there is a perception that it means something different.
2 It is important to clarify that information through additional education and outreach.

3
4 Ms. Briefer asked to further discuss the field trip idea that was presented earlier. She thought it was
5 important to have some context about what has happened since 2019 with Representative Lyman. He
6 has taken a very active role in Big Cottonwood Canyon on behalf of the Cardiff owners and has been
7 working closely with County Council Member, Dea Theodore. There is potential to have a stronger
8 relationship there. As a result, she believed the field trip would be useful. Discussions were had
9 about the best kind of approach. Chair Mendenhall liked the idea of a small Working Group with the
10 ski resorts before a field trip took place. She also thought it might make sense for Representative
11 John Curtis to characterize what the Federal action, inaction, or authority would be for the CWNCRA.

12
13 Ms. Nielsen reported that Council Member Theodore and Cardiff owners are convening Working
14 Group committee sessions focused on specific matters in Big Cottonwood Canyon, such as land
15 access and wildfire mitigation. That work is scheduled and the CWC has been invited to attend. Ms.
16 Nielsen offered to send the meeting information to Commissioner Robinson so he can attend.

17
18 Chair Mendenhall liked the ideas that had been shared by Mayor Silvestrini. She thought it made
19 sense to plan for a mid to late-summer field trip. The city has some nine-passenger vans that could
20 be used for the field trip. As for the Working Group for the resorts, that is something that can be
21 organized. She wondered if there is more that should be done beyond these two parallel tracks. Ms.
22 Nielsen explained that if there is a desire to refocus on the Legislation, the organization might want
23 to think about hiring a DC lobbyist on retainer month to month. If the time comes and State Lobbyist,
24 Casey Hill, thinks it is appropriate to move forward at a State level, then everything will be ready. In
25 the summer, it might make sense to look into a small contract with someone working in DC.

26
27 Mayor Silvestrini wondered whether there was support for these matters to be discussed with
28 Representative Curtis during his appointment next week. Chair Mendenhall and Commissioner
29 Robinson expressed support for that. Mayor Silvestrini confirmed that he will speak to him.
30 Discussions were had about upcoming meetings next week. Ms. Nielsen asked Committee Members
31 about the kind of support that is desired from CWC Staff for those meetings. She noted that
32 informational sheets or talking points can be shared ahead of time since CWC Staff is there to assist.

33
34 Chair Mendenhall wondered when the Legislative and Land Tenure Committee will reconvene. She
35 wanted to make sure there is some follow-up on the items being discussed. Ms. Nielsen stated that
36 the next meeting date has not been set, but that can be scheduled. Ms. Briefer believed in addition to
37 the items discussed, it would be best to sit down with the environmental community. If there are
38 discussions with the ski resorts but other stakeholders are not included, that could create issues. She
39 felt those kinds of discussions should happen concurrently with the ski resort discussions. At some
40 point, the ski resort and environmental community tracks may merge, but work can start concurrently.

41
42 Mayor Silvestrini reported that he had promised to attend the Stakeholders Council Meeting on March
43 20, 2024. It might be possible at that time to mention that the CWC Board is interested in
44 reinvigorating the CWNCRA work. He was not sure that it would be appropriate to share some of
45 the details about the possible tracks, but it is possible to share and then receive feedback from Council
46 Members. He asked about the Stakeholders Council subcommittees. Ms. Nielsen reported that the
47 four Systems Committees resemble the Systems Groups from the Mountain Accord process. There

1 is the Environment Systems Committee, Recreation Systems Committee, Economy Systems
2 Committee, and Transportation Systems Committee. These discussions would be relevant to all.

3
4 Ms. Briefer liked the idea of the CWNCRRA being mentioned at the next Stakeholders Council
5 Meeting. Mayor Silvestrini explained that he can provide more details if the Legislative and Land
6 Tenure Committee is comfortable with that. Chair Mendenhall was comfortable with there being
7 clarity that the Committee is considering different strategies to advance the CWNCRRA. She discussed
8 next steps and stated that Mayor Silvestrini will speak to Representative Curtis next week and will
9 also reach out to Representative Owens, Representative Spendlove, and Senator Cullimore. By the
10 next Committee Meeting, she hoped there would be a meeting scheduled with State Legislators. Chair
11 Mendenhall added that Mayor Silvestrini will also speak to the Stakeholders Council. She wondered
12 who would handle the ski resort Working Group coordination. Commissioner Robinson believed
13 CWC Staff should handle the organization of that. Ms. Briefer stated that she can serve as an advisor.

14
15 Chair Mendenhall wondered whether the Legislative and Land Tenure Committee should reconvene
16 after the meetings with the Legislators and ski resorts take place. Ms. Nielsen suggested the
17 Committee meet again at the end of April. Chair Mendenhall believed that was appropriate.
18 Commissioner Robinson noted that there can also be discussions at the Executive/Budget/Audit
19 Committee Meeting. He asked Committee Members if there is a desire to try to broker some kind of
20 arrangement with the plaintiffs and the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) to allow buses
21 associated with Phase 1 of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement
22 (“EIS”) to move forward. Ms. Briefer offered to speak with him after the meeting about that matter.

23
24 In the past, to assist with the CWNCRRA work, Ms. Briefer had provided maps and technical
25 information related to watersheds. She explained that she is happy to share that information if it is
26 needed for future meetings. Chair Mendenhall thought it would be wise to have that data in the future.

27 28 **LAND CONSERVATION DISCUSSION**

29 30 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Topic of Land Tenure and Conservation Across the** 31 **Central Wasatch Commission’s Study Area.**

32
33 Chair Mendenhall wondered whether some of the recent land conservation discussions had taken
34 place within the organization because there has not been progress with the CWNCRRA. Ms. Briefer
35 believed that was part of the reason, but there were also discussions related to Cardiff and there is
36 interest from the recreation community to develop more trails. She remembered that during the
37 Mountain Accord process, Ben McAdams had the idea for money to be raised and put into a pot.
38 There would then be a request for proposal (“RFP”) for private land owners to apply to sell their land.
39 It would be a competitive process that the CWC could have more control over. She expressed
40 concerns about the recent discussions at a Stakeholders Council level, as those discussions centered
41 around creating maps and identifying potential lands for purchase. That is something that could
42 potentially undermine the efforts to acquire land. It might be best to think more about this issue.

43
44 Commissioner Robinson liked the idea shared from the Mountain Accord process. Ms. Briefer agreed
45 that it is a smart way to handle conservation. She stressed the importance of making sure there is a
46 comprehensive and thoughtful strategy. Chair Mendenhall asked about an appropriate next step. Ms.
47 Briefer believed it would be wise to speak to Stakeholders Council leadership about this matter.
48 Commissioner Robinson noted that there needs to be transparency with the Stakeholders Council.

1 Ms. Nielsen wondered whether there was a desire to formalize the discussion. It is possible for her
2 to speak to the Co-Chairs of the Stakeholders Council informally or there can be a formal discussion.
3 Ms. Briefer thought an informal discussion would be the best way to provide feedback at the moment.

4

5 **OTHER BUSINESS**

6

7 Mayor Silvestrini felt this was a productive discussion. Ms. Nielsen informed the Legislative and
8 Land Tenure Committee that she will send out an email with a recap of all the action items discussed.

9

10 **CLOSING**

11

12 1. **Chair Mendenhall will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Legislative and Land Tenure**
13 **Committee Meeting.**

14

15 The Legislative and Land Tenure Committee Meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Legislative and Land Tenure Committee Meeting held Friday, March 8, 2024.*

3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____