MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION ("CWC") STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL ECONOMY SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

Committee Members:	John Adams, Chair
	Ed Marshall
	Hilary Arens
	Mike Marker
	Kim Doyle
Staff:	Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
	Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations
	Ben Kilbourne, Communications Director
Others:	Doug Tolman
	John Knoblock

OPENING

1. Chair John Adams will Open the Public Meeting of the Economy System Committee.

Chair John Adams called the Central Wasatch Commission ("CWC") Stakeholders Council Economy System Committee Meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the March 12, 2025, Meeting.

MOTION: Ed Marshall moved to APPROVE the March 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Hilary Arens seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

3. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the April 9, 2025, Meeting.

Chair Adams noted that on Page 4, there was a discussion about the interpretation of the Mountain Accord and that new development should be centralized at existing nodes. He asked if there needs to be a Committee consensus. Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, explained that the Meeting Minutes reflect what was said. It is not necessary to come to an agreement about the actual comments made.

Ed Marshall referenced Page 4 of the Meeting Minutes from April 9, 2025. There was a discussion about a Canyon Purpose Trust. Chair Adams explained that he brought up the trust simply as an idea. He is not proposing anything specific about how a Canyon Purpose Trust could work.

MOTION: Ed Marshall moved to APPROVE the April 9, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Hilary Arens seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

"ECONOMY OF THE CANYONS" CONCEPT

1. The Committee will Review and Finalize the Document Titled ("Economy of the Canyons").

Chair Adams reported that the Economy of the Canyons concept was discussed at the last Economy System Committee Meeting. At that time, there were some changes suggested, which have since been made. Mr. Marshall shared some comments about the updated language. On Page 1, in Line 2 and Line 3, there is a reference to money. The Committee has been talking about tax revenues and finding a way to allocate those back to the canyons. In his edits, he has changed those references to tax revenues being invested back into the canyons. Chair Adams pointed out that there could be other sources of money as well. Mr. Marshall asked if new taxes were being proposed for the businesses. Chair Adams denied this. In the past, there have been discussions about money that is generated in the canyons that goes into a fund and then some is allocated back. There seemed to be agreement that there were needs in the canyons that could be satisfied if some of those monies were reallocated.

Discussions were had about tax revenues as well as permit fees. Chair Adams explained that he does not want to only reference tax revenues in the document language because there are other potential sources that could be considered. Mike Marker believes one of the primary tasks of the Economy System Committee is to identify some of those. Understanding the current sources and how those are allocated would be beneficial. Chair Adams confirmed that the Committee is interested in looking at the money that is being generated as well as areas of need in the canyons. Mr. Marker feels the main tasks should be to identify the sources of revenue and then determine how to address the current canyon needs. John Knoblock referenced the Ski Hill Resources for Economic Development ("SHRED") Act as well as restaurant taxes, sales taxes, and transient room taxes. The restaurant, sales, and transient room taxes go to the State and then the State redistributes that money back to the counties in which the money originated. He noted that half of the Salt Lake County Parks and Recreation budget comes from the Tourism, Recreation, Culture, and Convention ("TRCC") fund. It would be nice if restaurants, sales, and transient room taxes generated in the CWC study area were allocated back into the canyons. However, he acknowledged that would be a difficult change to make.

Chair Adams stressed the importance of determining the existing needs. There could be a letter drafted and considered by the Stakeholders Council. If there was support at that level, it could be forwarded to the CWC Board. Mr. Marshall believed that if a recommendation were made to the CWC Board, it should be for something that is credible and something that the CWC Board would be interested in implementing. He questions whether the CWC Board would want to tell Salt Lake County to allocate some of its funding to the canyons. Mr. Knoblock agreed with earlier comments from Mr. Marker that the Economy System Committee needs to show the purpose and need for the funding. For example, if there is a need for more trail crews, more invasive weed crews, or additional signage. There would need to be specific items determined and a clear budget estimate for the costs. From there, it would be possible to present a realistic proposal to the TRCC Advisory Board.

Mr. Marshall continued to share comments on the Economy of the Canyons document. On Page 1, he believes there are different types of tax revenues being discussed. It does not make sense to use the term revenues generally, because that suggests the revenues of the ski resorts and small businesses would be used to support public recreation needs on U.S. Forest Service land. As far as permit fees or rent paid to the Forest Service, that money is already used for Forest Service recreational needs. Chair Adams pointed out that money generated from the canyons does not necessarily need to be spent in the canyons. That money can be spent anywhere in the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. It is his understanding that the purpose of the SHRED Act is for money that is produced locally to remain local. Mr. Marshall suggested updated language: "…trying to identify tax revenues and permit fees allocated back to support the health and balance of the canyons."

Chair Adams shared some language from the Mountain Accord and pointed out that the canyons provide a lot of value overall. If there is a letter drafted for the Stakeholders Council and CWC Board consideration, there needs to be a link back to the holistic vision of the Mountain Accord. Mr. Knoblock pointed out that there is a piecemeal way that money is returned to the canyons. For example, to redo the Silver Lake Loop Trail and Boardwalk, Trails Utah received $450,000 from the TRCC Board. It is possible to apply for funding for specific projects that address the needs in the canyons. Chair Adams noted that based on past discussions, one need is restroom maintenance.

Mr. Marshall shared additional comments about the Economy of the Canyons document. He referenced the following language: "…generating wealth via the income…" and "…tax revenue inflows and outflows." He thought there needed to be more clarity provided and suggested the following: "…retaining tax revenues in the canyons." Ms. Nielsen thought it made sense to make additional amendments to the document via email. The remaining meeting time can be spent discussing other agenda items rather than only focusing on proposed edits to the language. Chair Adams asked Committee Members to submit their comments and suggestions following the meeting.

COTTONWOOD CANYONS REVENUE ALLOCATION DISCUSSION

1. The Committee will Continue to Work on Identifying Revenue Generated by the Canyons and Ideas for Allocating Some of that Revenue Directly Back into the Canyons.

a. Progress on Attempts to Identify Tax Revenue in the Cottonwood Canyons from the Ski Resorts.

Chair Adams thanked Hilary Arens and Kim Doyle for asking questions and attempting to identify ski resort information. Mr. Arens reported that Snowbird holds those numbers close and she was unable to obtain the desired details. Chair Adams noted that it is possible to take the broad number from the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute and theorize the size of the four resorts in the canyons. There could be an estimate created based on the information that is known. Mr. Knoblock pointed out that the Mountain Accord also includes the Park City side. Chair Adams stated that he has spoken to Morgan Mingle and there seems to be a different process there compared to the Cottonwood Canyons. Mr. Knoblock referenced some of the other locations included in the CWC study area.

b. Ideas on Where Money Could be Reinvested Back into the Canyons.

Chair Adams noted that it is possible to create a list of potential funding sources for the canyons. In the Meeting Minutes from March, there was a suggestion made to meet with the resorts to hear some of their ideas. The pressures in the canyons will continue to increase as the visitation levels increase. Chair Adams explained that a list of potential sources and projects can be created by the Committee.

Ms. Doyle noted that the tire checks at the bottom of the canyon have been beneficial and pointed out that a higher budget for that work would be beneficial. Chair Adams asked if the tire checks would continue. Ms. Doyle believes the plan is to continue, but more funding will likely be needed for that work. Mr. Knoblock shared information about a project the City of Millcreek is interested in. It would be nice if there was a Central Wasatch fund that could be used for those kinds of projects.

Discussions were had about potential projects, such as restroom maintenance, additional restrooms, and trailhead improvements. Mr. Knoblock noted that one of the key elements in the Mountain Accord had to do with identifying and purchasing private property from willing sellers to put more property into public hands in order to restrict and prevent development in the canyons. If there was a pool of money dedicated to that kind of effort, that could be beneficial. Chair Adams suggested that a list be created. Committee Members could look into some of the cost estimates for each.

Mr. Marker mentioned shuttle bus service. There have been discussions about the reasons UTA cannot provide service to trailheads in Little Cottonwood Canyon and Big Cottonwood Canyon, but a shuttle bus service would take some pressure off the roads. There have been a lot of conversations about a shuttle bus in Millcreek Canyon. Mr. Knoblock acknowledged that shuttle bus services can be costly, but if there was a pool of money dedicated to the canyons, then that service could work. Mr. Marker stated that the intention is to reinvest in the canyons in a way that adds more value.

Mr. Marshall stated that a shuttle system makes sense for all of the canyons. In Millcreek Canyon, a shuttle makes sense as a way to address the parking needs during peak times, and in the Cottonwood Canyons, a shuttle makes sense to alleviate the traffic problems in peak times. Mr. Knoblock noted that during the summer months, there are not necessarily traffic issues in the Cottonwood Canyons, but there are parking issues. From a recreation point of view, it would be nice to take a shuttle bus to a certain location, do some hiking, and then catch the shuttle back to the bottom of the canyon. There could be point-to-point hikes. This would enhance the recreational opportunities in the canyons.

Mr. Marker noted that there is an employee bus service to Snowbird in the summer, but there are no regularly scheduled buses to access certain activities, such as Oktoberfest. It was noted that there is one bus up the canyon and one bus down the canyon each day in the summertime. Ms. Arens reported that Snowbird is using a service called Alta Shuttle for employees. Mr. Marker feels the Committee should look at ways to provide more mass transit in the canyons to reduce vehicles. Chair Adams reported that he will create another tab on the spreadsheet in the shared folder so ideas can be added.

c. Potential Letter to CWC Commissioners.

Chair Adams explained that the reason the Economy System Committee is focused on this work is to look at potential sources of revenue and the canyon needs. If there is Committee agreement on the sources and needs, then a letter can be drafted to the Stakeholders Council and CWC Board.

2. The Committee will Determine Next Steps and Action Items.

Chair Adams reported that the next steps and action items include determining the potential funding sources and the different needs in the canyons. He reiterated that the spreadsheet can be added to.

SMALL BUSINESS DISCUSSION

1. Committee Member Ed Marshall will Discuss the Committee's Treatment of Small Businesses in the Canyons.

Mr. Marshall requested that in the future, the Economy System Committee focus on the locations of the problems and the sources of the problems. He does not feel it is best to take a broad approach. There are four ski resorts, which are large businesses, and there are four small businesses in the tri-canyons area. The small businesses include: Silver Fork Lodge, Millcreek Inn, Log Haven, and the Boy Scout camps. The problems that the Committee has been focused on are in the Cottonwood Canyons and are largely generated by the ski resorts and the associated recreation. The resorts have done a lot already to mitigate the problems that exist. The small businesses do not cause the problems and do not benefit from the associated solutions to the problems. Millcreek Inn is a special event center and does not do a lot of business during the winter months. The Boy Scout camps hold special camping nights and jamborees, but there is enough parking available for the uses. Log Haven does see some skiers, but that is a small portion of the business. He explained that Log Haven loses money in the wintertime when the ski resorts are thriving so much that parking is an issue. Log Haven depends on diners, weddings, parties, and special events, and is busy during the summer months.

The small businesses in the tri-canyons do not cause the problems or benefit from the solutions. As a result, he feels the discussions should focus on the sources and locations where the problems exist. As far as Millcreek Canyon, that is a separate situation from Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. Since it does not have the same problems as the Cottonwood Canyons, it does not require the same solutions. Mr. Marshall noted that there have been discussions about a Millcreek Canyon shuttle, which is something that he supports. He shared comments about the Millcreek Canyon fee booth and the funds that are collected there. When problems are being discussed by the Economy System Committee, the focus should be specific rather than general. It does not make sense to speak generally about businesses, as the small businesses need to be distinguished. During past discussions, the conversations have been general to both the canyons and the businesses.

Chair Adams noted that there is a separate Millcreek Canyon Committee because Millcreek Canyon has unique needs that need to be addressed. He believes Mr. Marshall is requesting specificity when discussing items in the future. For instance, instead of referencing the canyons in general, mention Big Cottonwood Canyon, Little Cottonwood Canyon, or Millcreek Canyon. If there are discussions about unintended consequences from a business, the Committee can mention the specific business.

Discussions were had about other locations in the CWC study area. Chair Adams explained that his primary focus is on Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon, but this focus can be expanded as needs are determined elsewhere. Mr. Knoblock reported that in the past, the Millcreek Canyon fee was only $3 and there was a push to increase the fee. It increased to $5, which allowed the Forest Service to be able to hire two uniformed information rangers as well as pay for some trail work projects and other needs. The increase at the Millcreek Canyon fee booth benefited the area.

OTHER ITEMS

1. The Committee May Raise Other Topics Not Previously Discussed.

Chair Adams reminded Committee Members that there is a shared folder that can be accessed. The Economy of the Canyons document is there as well as other items. Committee Member suggestions and changes can be made to the Economy of the Canyons document ahead of the next meeting. There are also action items listed on the spreadsheet. He asked Committee Members to review those. Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack, noted that anyone unable to access the shared folder can send an email to CWC Staff to receive access. She is able to assist Committee Members as needed.

Chair Adams noted that there has been word that the Forest Service does not have the resources to take care of everything and that there will be fewer resources in the near future. However, in previous discussions, there was a concern raised that once private entities find funds to take care of these needs, the funding will likely need to be continued long-term. When there are discussions about projects, he suggested that Committee Members consider whether it is something ongoing or temporary.

2. The Committee will Discuss Potential Agenda Items for the June 11, 2025, Meeting.

It was noted that there are action items in the shared folder that can be discussed at a future meeting. Committee Members were also asked to comment on the Economy of the Canyons document. Ms. Nielsen reported that the next Economy System Committee Meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2025. The next Stakeholders Council Meeting will take place on June 4, 2025, and it is a retreat.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

CLOSING

1. Chair Adams will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Economy System Committee Meeting.

MOTION: Mike Marker moved to ADJOURN the Economy System Committee Meeting. Ed Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:32 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Economy System Committee Meeting held Wednesday, May 14, 2025.

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes
T Forbes Group
Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: _____