



9 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
10 **COUNCIL MILLCREEK CANYON COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,**
11 **MARCH 18, 2024, AT 1:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON**
12 **AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES**
13 **LOCATED AT GATEWAY AT 41 NORTH RIO GRANDE STREET, SUITE 102, SALT**
14 **LAKE CITY, UTAH.**

15
16 **Present:** Del Draper, Chair
17 Ed Marshall
18 John Knoblock
19 Bri Sullivan
20 Adam Lenkowski

21
22 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
23 Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations

24
25 **Others:** Sally Kaiser, New Stakeholders Council Member
26 Crystal Chen, Youth City Council Member

27
28 **Opening**

- 29
30 1. **Chair Del Draper will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Millcreek Canyon**
31 **Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**

32
33 Chair Del Draper called the Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

- 34
35 2. **Review and Approval of the Minutes from the February 20, 2024, Meeting.**

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37 **MOTION:** Ed Marshall moved to APPROVE the Meeting Minutes from February 20, 2024. Del
38 Draper seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

39
40 **FLAP Grant Environmental Assessment Review**

- 41
42 1. **Committee Members will Review the Environmental Assessment Released on the**
43 **Millcreek Canyon FLAP Grant Project.**

44
45 Chair Draper reported that there was a Salt Lake County Council Meeting held on February 27,
46 2024. Chair Draper, Ed Marshall, and Tom Diegel attended that meeting. The purpose of the

1 meeting was to discuss the Federal Lands Access Program (“FLAP”) grant for Millcreek Canyon.
2 Chair Draper provided some comments during the public comment period. His comment was
3 limited to the need for cell service in the canyon. He pointed out how Little Cottonwood Canyon
4 and Big Cottonwood Canyon were able to have service through cell towers connected to buried
5 fiber cable. He noted that this model would likely work in Millcreek Canyon as well. Later in the
6 meeting, he was assured that it was a top priority and the County was looking into cell service.
7

8 There was also public comment received from Grace Tyler with Save Our Canyons. Ms. Tyler
9 did not believe a lot of people were aware of the FLAP grant and felt there should be more public
10 outreach. There was some discussion about that later in the meeting when it was acknowledged
11 that a QR code could not be placed in the canyon as there is no cell service. However, it was
12 determined that a QR code for the FLAP grant would be placed near the kiosk where visitors paid
13 to enter the canyon. Millcreek City Mayor, Jeff Silvestrini, was present at the meeting as well.
14 He spoke in favor of the FLAP grant and believed it will improve the canyon. Mayor Silvestrini
15 stated that he had a meeting several years ago with the Forest Service to talk about a shuttle. It
16 was determined at that time that there could not be a shuttle without a better road in place.
17

18 Chair Draper explained that the FLAP grant consultant shared a presentation at the County Council
19 Meeting. It was the same information that the Millcreek Canyon Committee had seen before. Mr.
20 Diegel spoke for approximately 15 minutes at the meeting and stated that it is unclear whether any
21 of the public comments were taken into consideration. Those that did comment expressed a desire
22 to maintain the existing character of the canyon. He questioned whether the consultants intended
23 to do that. Mr. Diegel also commented on the issue that there is no bicycle lane in the proposed
24 plan above Elbow Fork and questioned whether there are safety statistics to warrant the proposal.
25

26 Mr. Marshall reported that Mr. Diegel proposed there be two 9-foot lanes and a 2-foot uphill
27 bicycle lane. He felt that would be enough for a single-file cyclist and better than the current
28 conditions. However, that raises the question of whether or not that would be sufficient for a
29 shuttle bus in the future. During the last Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting, there was a
30 discussion about how wide the lanes were required to be in order to have a shuttle. John Knoblock
31 noted that it is a County road and not a State road. He believed 10-foot-wide travel lanes were
32 needed for State requirements. Mr. Knoblock shared information about what is proposed and
33 suggested that there be no shoulder on the downhill side and a 2-foot shoulder on the uphill side.
34

35 Mr. Marshall noted that during the County Council Meeting, the consultants emphasized that there
36 is a desire to reach a compromise between the various viewpoints expressed in the comments.
37 Many of the public comments are diametrically opposed. The consultants are trying to strike a
38 balance and recognize the desire to maintain the character of the upper canyon. Those were the
39 main takeaways from the meeting. Chair Draper confirmed that the consultants stated there were
40 competing interests. After the County Council Meeting, the Environmental Assessment was
41 released. Comments on the Environmental Assessment are due by April 5, 2024. Since a comment
42 from the Millcreek Canyon Committee requires approval from the Stakeholders Council and CWC
43 Board, it makes sense to submit individual comments rather than one on behalf of the Committee.
44

45 Reading through the Environmental Assessment, there seem to be very few changes from what
46 was presented last May. However, it is still worthwhile to submit comments. Chair Draper had a

1 conversation with Bekee Hotze with the Forest Service after the meeting about the shuttle,
2 specifically about the proposal that there be parking on one side or the other of I-215. With respect
3 to the Skyline High School parking lot, she stated that there were a lot of cars there. He pointed
4 out that this would change once the two new parking lots were built. Ms. Hotze mentioned issues
5 on game days. She also stated that most places with shuttles are moving away from shuttles. She
6 does not believe they work effectively. Chair Draper believed those comments illustrate her
7 perspective. It seems she wants to find a reason not to proceed with the Environmental Assessment
8 for a Millcreek Canyon shuttle. She did not seem very supportive of the shuttle concept.
9

10 Mr. Knoblock stated that Dave Whittekiend with the Forest Service had a similar view as Ms.
11 Hotze. He thought it was important to collect data about other areas in the country with shuttles.
12 That information might be useful and could even change some opinions. Chair Draper reminded
13 Committee Members to submit comments on the Environmental Assessment by April 5, 2024.
14

15 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, shared information about her conversations with the Forest
16 Service about a shuttle in Millcreek Canyon. The Forest Service continues to cool to the idea of a
17 shuttle in the canyon. She pointed out that Millcreek City Mayor, Jeff Silvestrini, is still in favor
18 of a shuttle. However, what the Forest Service has indicated is that they are interested in timed
19 entry as opposed to a shuttle. That being said, there has not been a hard no on the shuttle. When
20 the CWC submitted the background research for a possible shuttle last year, the Forest Service
21 sent a letter stating that it would not be pursued further, but the discussions are still ongoing. The
22 Forest Service is worried about degradation and the operational costs of a shuttle in the canyon.
23

24 Mr. Knoblock pointed out that fees are collected from vehicles that enter the canyon. A shuttle
25 bus could reduce some of the fees that are being collected. Ms. Nielsen explained that there is no
26 desire to reduce the amount collected. There would be a focus on recouping the fees. Chair Draper
27 discussed the way those funds are spent. The vast majority of the funds collected by the toll booth
28 at the mouth of Millcreek Canyon go towards personnel costs for the Forest Service. In terms of
29 moving forward on a shuttle, one of the goals should be to make sure it is revenue-neutral.
30

31 Mr. Knoblock reported that there are trail projects associated with the FLAP grant. Additionally,
32 the Draft Tri-Canyon Trails Master Plan has been released. He explained that the Forest Service
33 is hoping to receive public comments on the Draft Tri-Canyon Trails Master Plan. The intention
34 is for the Tri-Canyon Trails Master Plan to be finished by the end of the year or early in 2025. The
35 draft identifies trailheads and what should be at various trailheads. It also looks at actual trails.
36 With the trailheads, there are major, minor, and primitive trailheads listed. Some examples of
37 major trailheads in the document are Rattlesnake, Desolation, Winter Gate, and Elbow Fork.
38

39 With respect to the trails, there is some overlap with the FLAP grant work. Some examples that
40 are not related to the FLAP grant were shared, including connecting the Burch Hollow Trailhead
41 over to Porter Fork. The short connector trail will lead to the slightly larger parking lot on the
42 north side of the road. Another example is a sustainable trail that loops around Dog Lake.
43 Currently, there are some user-created trails there. The intention is to protect the lake and reduce
44 the number of user-created trails in the area. Another example is to formalize and improve the
45 upper trail that is referred to as Millcreek Meadows. It used to be a Forest Service trail but was
46 closed. However, the trail was still used. Improvements are needed to make sure it is sustainable.

1
2 Mr. Knoblock reviewed the FLAP grant-related trails. At the Winter Gate, there is a desire to
3 improve the trailhead area. The intention is to have a roundabout there and expand the Winter
4 Gate area so there will be improved traffic flow, improved parking, and a connector trail. Chair
5 Draper believed the roundabout would be above where the Winter Gate is currently located and
6 the Winter Gate will be moved up 100 yards or so. This was confirmed. Chair Draper asked about
7 the connector trail. He wondered whether it is included in the Draft Tri-Canyon Trails Master
8 Plan. Mr. Knoblock reported that Zinnia Wilson with the Forest Service is looking at it as a related
9 project to the FLAP grant work. Ms. Wilson recently asked Trails Utah to write a letter of
10 recommendation for a grant application to the Utah Division of Outdoor Recreation.

11
12 The Forest Service wants to make sure all of the trailheads have ADA options. There is also a
13 desire to fully remove roadside parking near the trailhead parking lots. Mr. Knoblock stated that
14 the Forest Service wants there to be kiosks and a more welcoming experience as well. If there are
15 clear stalls, it is possible to do parking counts and know how many vehicles are in the canyon. At
16 Big Water Trailhead, the yurt would be relocated so it will be at the top of the meadow above the
17 parking lot. In the summer, that would be made into a small visitor center. At the Alexander Basin
18 Trailhead, the intention is to formalize the trailhead more. At Elbow Fork, the idea is to improve
19 the trailhead area. A new bridge would be built over the creek and there would be a parking lot.
20 That trailhead would then service several nearby trails. It makes sense for it to be more formalized.

21
22 Crystal Chen with Save Our Canyons introduced herself to the Committee. She had spoken to
23 Chelsea Phillippe with the Forest Service about the deadline to submit comments on the Draft Tri-
24 Canyon Trails Master Plan. According to Ms. Phillippe, there is not a hard deadline, since it is not
25 a National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) process. Feedback will be received at any time
26 through May 2024. Ms. Nielsen pointed out that Ms. Chen is the Co-Chair of the Youth Council.

27
28 Chair Draper noted that there had been mention of a formalized trail around Dog Lake instead of
29 the existing user-created trails. The Draft Tri-Canyon Trails Master Plan also suggested the same
30 for Cecret Lake, but that is something the Forest Service has pushed back on in the past. He knew
31 Alta Ski Lifts has a proposal to build a small dam and raise the level of Cecret Lake by
32 approximately four feet so there is more water that can be used for snowmaking in the future.
33 Chair Draper explained that he thought it was a good idea to formalize the trail around Cecret
34 Lake. Mr. Knoblock stated that people want to walk around lakes and will do so. As a result, it
35 makes sense to formalize trails rather than have different user-created trails around the lakes.

36
37 Mr. Marshall reported that from time to time, the small businesses in the canyon have issues with
38 those who do not feel there is a place for businesses in recreational canyons. A few years ago, the
39 Zoning Director for the County completely redefined the zone in which the primary portion of the
40 Silver Fork Lodge business was located. This created havoc and damaged the Silver Fork Lodge
41 business. That had an impact on Log Haven as well because there was a long, expensive, and
42 difficult process to deal with similar zoning issues. Fortunately, there was some support. The
43 County Council voted 9-0 to resolve the problem and the Zoning Director left. Recently, the CWC
44 Economy Systems Committee decided to broaden the definition of recreation. Mr. Marshall hoped
45 that it would be possible to receive support for that from the Millcreek Canyon Committee.

1 In the past, almost all discussions related to recreation have had to do with active forms of
2 recreation, such as skiing, mountain bicycling, hiking, rock climbing, and so on. Mr. Marshall
3 pointed out that recreation does not need to be defined in such a narrow manner. In Europe,
4 outdoor dining and events are considered forms of recreation. In urban areas, people visit cafes
5 and outdoor restaurants either before or after their evening stroll. In the mountains, hikers often
6 go from teahouse to teahouse or move from one restaurant to another. As a result of the COVID-
7 19 pandemic, more restaurants in the United States have outdoor dining options, but it is generally
8 still not recognized as a form of recreation in the mountains. This is odd, especially since
9 picnicking is considered a form of recreation by the National Forest Service. It seems that sitting
10 down to dine in the canyons should also be considered a form of recreation. Dining outdoors
11 allows people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the forest canopy and the views of the mountains.
12 Unlike other forms of recreation, it is not limited to people who have a certain level of fitness.
13

14 The Economy Systems Committee has voted to broaden the definition of recreation to include
15 outdoor dining and events. It is believed that this will have a small, but positive impact. Mr.
16 Marshall reported that he recently presented this concept to the Recreation Systems Committee.
17 The Recreation Systems Committee looked at various definitions of recreation. Committee
18 Members believed the definition of recreation was broad enough to include dining, but there was
19 a sentiment that it is possible to distinguish between active and passive recreation. Mr. Marhsall
20 asked that the Millcreek Canyon Committee support the Economy Systems Committee definition.
21

22 Discussions were had about zoning in the Log Haven area. Mr. Knoblock believed it is FR-20.
23 Mr. Marshall noted that there is also an overlay zone that covers the restaurant area. He reiterated
24 his request that the Millcreek Canyon Committee support the broadened recreation definition.
25 Chair Draper did not oppose the broader definition and felt it was accurate to state that recreation
26 is more than physical activities. Mr. Knoblock thought the broader definition was reasonable. He
27 wondered where that broader definition will be codified. Mr. Marshall explained that the intention
28 is to include that definition in the Idealized Systems document for the Economy Systems
29 Committee. The goal is to create an awareness of the issue and gain some support for the approach.
30

31 Chair Draper reported that when skiing at Solitude, there is an option to pay to park in their lot,
32 but there is also roadside parking. Recently, he discovered that roadside parking requires a
33 reservation and payment. That is not driven by Solitude but came from the Town of Brighton. He
34 was not sure whether that could apply to Millcreek Canyon in the future, where a fee would be
35 charged to park roadside. He wanted Committee Members to be aware that this has been
36 implemented in the upper portion of Big Cottonwood Canyon. Chair Draper reported that in Little
37 Cottonwood Canyon, Snowbird parks one-third of the vehicles on the roadside. He was told that
38 it is part of the Forest Service permit with Snowbird. There is no way to implement paid parking
39 in that area without modifying the existing Snowbird and Forest Service agreement.
40

1 **Other Updates**

2
3 1. **Committee Members May Hear Updates on the Land Parcel for Sale in Millcreek**
4 **Canyon, Fire Hazard Reduction Efforts, Cell Service in the Canyon, and other items.**
5

6 Mr. Knoblock explained that he tried to find out whether there is an update on the 18-acre parcel
7 for sale at the bottom of Millcreek Canyon. There were initial discussions taking place between
8 the County and the property owner to see if it can be purchased and put into open space. Mr.
9 Knoblock reported that he spoke to the Open Space Manager about plans to improve the fee booth.

10
11 It was suggested that the Millcreek Canyon Committee obtain a copy of the Forest Service budget
12 for Millcreek Canyon to better understand the fees collected at the fee booth and the traffic
13 estimates. Mr. Knoblock believed it would be possible to ask someone from the Salt Lake Ranger
14 District for that information. Chair Draper stated that this information was looked at
15 approximately three years ago. He recalled that almost all of the fee booth funds went towards
16 personnel costs. Ms. Nielsen reported that she has a monthly meeting with the Forest Service. It
17 is possible to ask for additional information about the fee booth funds at the next meeting. Chair
18 Draper pointed out that fees were raised not long ago. He wondered what the impacts of that were.
19 Mr. Knoblock explained that it allowed there to be two additional rangers in the canyon. The
20 revenue went from approximately \$700,000 to approximately \$1 million per year.

21
22 **Closing**

23
24 1. **Chair Draper will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Millcreek Committee Meeting.**
25

26 **MOTION:** Ed Marshall moved to ADJOURN. John Knoblock seconded the motion. The motion
27 passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

28
29 The Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:25 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the*
2 *Stakeholders Council Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting held Monday, March 18, 2024.*

3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

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9 Minutes Approved: _____