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9 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
10 **COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD TUESDAY,**
11 **APRIL 9, 2024, AT 3:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND**
12 **VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES**
13 **LOCATED AT 41 NORTH RIO GRANDE STREET, SUITE, 102, SALT LAKE CITY UTAH.**

14
15 **Committee Members:** Kelly Boardman, Chair
16 Dan Zalles, Co-Chair
17 Pat Shea
18 Kirk Nichols
19 Adam Lenkowski
20 Maura Hahnenberger
21 Brenden Catt
22 Jonny Vasic
23 Joanna Wheelton

24
25 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
26 Pheobe McNealy, University of Utah DIGIT Lab

27
28 **OPENING**

- 29
30 1. **Chair Kelly Boardman will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Environment**
31 **Systems Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**

32
33 Chair Kelly Boardman called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council
34 Environment Systems Committee Meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

- 35
36 2. **Review and Approval of the Minutes from the March 12, 2024, Meeting.**

37
38 **MOTION:** Kelly Boardman moved to APPROVE the March 12, 2024, Meeting Minutes. Dan Zalles
39 seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

40
41 There was discussion about the order of the agenda items. Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen,
42 suggested allowing Pheobe McNealy from the University of Utah DIGIT Lab to present first. It was
43 determined that the Environment Systems Committee Meeting agenda would be taken out of order.

44
45 **HOUSEKEEPING**

- 46
47 1. **Chair Boardman will Invite New Committee Members to Introduce Themselves.**
48

1 **2. Committee Members will Discuss their Ability to Contribute their Time and Resources**
2 **to the Committee.**
3

4 Chair Boardman reported that there are some new members on the Environment Systems Committee.
5 She asked the new members to introduce themselves but first acknowledged that Committee Members
6 receive a lot of emails from the CWC, Stakeholders Council, and the various Systems Committees.
7 There is a decent amount of information to review, so it is important to consider the time Committee
8 Members have to dedicate to the work. New Committee Members introduced themselves.
9

10 Brenden Catt stated that he is new to the Stakeholders Council and the Environment Systems
11 Committee. He grew up in Oregon and now calls Salt Lake home. He has a Bachelor of Science as
12 well as a JD from the University of Oregon. Mr. Catt has been working in the public sector for two
13 years representing different government organizations. He is excited to bring his experience to the
14 Council and Committee. As far as bandwidth, he has most evenings and weekends available to focus
15 on the work. If his assistance is needed for something specific, he can be relied on to get things done.
16

17 Jonny Vasic explained that he is the Executive Director of Utah Physicians for a Healthy
18 Environment. It is a 501(c)(3) that has been around for 16 years. He has been involved for six years.
19 The focus is on linking environmental issues with public health. Air quality is one of the main areas
20 of interest for the organization. Mr. Vasic graduated from the University of Utah. He grew up in Salt
21 Lake, moved away for 20 years, and has been back for approximately seven years. In terms of his
22 bandwidth, some weeks he will be able to do more than others, but he is happy to assist with the work.
23 Mr. Vasic hopes to contribute to the Environment Systems Committee in a meaningful way.
24

25 **ENVIRONMENTAL DASHBOARD REVIEW AND DISCUSSION**
26

27 **1. Committee Members will Revisit the Action Items from Last Month's Meeting.**
28

29 Chair Boardman noted that there were a few action items determined at the last Environment Systems
30 Committee Meeting. At that time, it was determined that Joanna Wheelton would look into some
31 numbers for resort use. Ms. Wheelton reported that she had requested the information. She heard
32 back from Brighton, who said that the data would be available from Ski Utah at the end of the season.
33 Solitude does not release their numbers as part of their corporate financial protocols. The same was
34 true of Snowbird, though Snowbird stated that they fall into the large resort category. That means
35 that their visitor numbers are 500,000 per year or more. There was no response received from Alta.
36

37 Chair Boardman explained that it is important to understand who is using the canyons and for what
38 purpose. It is also essential to understand how visitors are arriving to the canyons. Knowing the
39 trends makes it possible to grow sustainably. Additionally, knowing the numbers will assist in
40 planning efforts and ensure that transportation issues are addressed with the environment in mind.
41

42 Another action item from the last meeting was to find out if a GIS model had been developed. Chair
43 Boardman believed that in order to plan appropriately, the Committee needs to know the current
44 situation. It is also necessary to look at what the phased solutions will do. GIS modeling will assist
45 with that. She asked Ms. McNealy whether this type of modeling had been done. Ms. McNealy
46 stated that it has been done on a small scale, but not for the Cottonwoods. It was done as more of a
47 proof of concept in a couple of areas. She did not believe those models would transfer to the area.
48

1 Chair Boardman wondered whether Ms. McNealy thought it would be a good idea to model the
2 transportation patterns. Ms. McNealy stated that this would be useful if it was possible to obtain the
3 underlying data. She acknowledged the difficulty in capturing that data. Vehicle emissions data is
4 in the Environmental Dashboard under the Air Quality section. That data relates to the number of
5 vehicles passing. Every vehicle in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon is
6 counted twice in the winter. However, there is no idea how many occupants are in the vehicles.

7
8 Chair Boardman does not necessarily think it is necessary to know the number of vehicle occupants
9 if the resort visitor data is known. She thought it was important to look at the congestion and merging
10 that happens on Wasatch Boulevard and how the proposed parking areas will impact traffic patterns.
11 Ms. McNealy explained that it is possible to build models where different factors are considered.
12 That being said, all of the backcountry skiers are not captured with resort use data. Additionally, a
13 number of people visit the resorts to accompany others but do not purchase ski passes. She is doubtful
14 that the ski resorts will provide their numbers, but even if they do, it will not necessarily be an accurate
15 representation of overall visitor use in the canyons. There is a lot of other canyon use taking place.

16
17 Chair Boardman wanted to know if it is possible to visualize what the different transportation
18 solutions would look like. Ms. McNealy suggested agent-based modeling. As long as there is good
19 data, it is possible to change the parameters and visualize what different situations will look like.
20 Chair Boardman stated that this would be a great resource and would assist with decision-making.
21 Based on her interactions with the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”), it seemed that they
22 created a cursory model, but it is not something that there is a willingness to share with others.

23
24 **2. Committee Members will Delegate New Action Items and Timeframes Regarding the**
25 **Environmental Dashboard and Human Elements Workshop.**

26
27 There was discussion about potential new action items for Committee Members to work on. Chair
28 Boardman asked Ms. McNealy what might be useful. Ms. McNealy stated that a lot of it comes down
29 to the collection of data. She suggested bringing Dr. Jordan Smith into the discussion to determine
30 what is feasible for data collection. Chair Boardman thought a year-round approach was best because
31 if a gondola is being considered, there needs to be clarity about the use levels at different times.

32
33 Co-Chair Dan Zalles asked about the agent-based modeling that was mentioned earlier. He wanted
34 to know if that was based on real data or assumptions. Ms. McNealy clarified that there needs to be
35 real data to build the platform. Initial data sets must be provided. From there, it is possible to look
36 at different scenarios and determine how those scenarios will impact the area. Co-Chair Zalles
37 wondered whether there was enough data to start that modeling. This was denied. Committee
38 Members discussed the Ski Utah data. Ms. McNealy explained that there is an annual total, but there
39 needs to be more granularity than that. Weekly or daily data is needed for the models.

40
41 Chair Boardman referenced the UDOT Cottonwood Canyons website that has the road meter showing
42 how many vehicles are on the road. She wanted to know if that data was available. Ms. McNealy
43 reported that the data received from UDOT is their counter data. However, that data does not
44 differentiate between a bus and a personal vehicle, so there is a difference in terms of the numbers. It
45 is also necessary to factor in weather conditions, as that can impact the canyon traffic flows.

46
47 Mr. Vasic stated that with data from UDOT, it is likely possible to determine how many public buses
48 are in the canyons and how many Snowbird and Alta shuttles are in the canyons. Ms. McNealy

1 believed it is possible to model moving capacity in dry conditions with a mixture of vehicles. Chair
2 Boardman noted that it would be a lot of work to model all three canyons in different scenarios. Ms.
3 McNealy confirmed this and reiterated that there would need to be major data collection to validate
4 everything beforehand. Co-Chair Zalles thought the Environment Systems Committee needed to
5 determine whether it is feasible to obtain the necessary data for the modeling and also think about
6 who could potentially fund data collection. Chair Boardman stated that the end goal of a traffic study
7 is to be able to plan for sustainable transportation solutions with the lowest environmental impact.

8
9 Mr. Vasic noted that the number of parking spots available in the canyon is one metric that can
10 determine the number of vehicles that should be there. In his experience, a lot more vehicles enter
11 the canyon than there is room to park. If UDOT has data about the number of vehicles moving up
12 and down the canyon, that data can be weighed against the number of available parking spaces. A
13 question was asked about the Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”). Ms. Nielsen explained that UTA and
14 the CWC work well together. The CWC, in conjunction with jurisdictional partners and UTA, runs
15 the ski bus priority access program. Through that program, ridership numbers are received each
16 month that the program is in operation. That results in data that can be used.

17
18 Chair Boardman pointed out that Alta and Solitude know exactly how many parking spots they have
19 since there are reservation systems in place. She knows that Snowbird is resistant to having that kind
20 of system because there is uncertainty about the number of parking spots that are in place.
21 Additionally, there is a reliance on the on-street parking. There was discussion about reservations.

22
23 Ms. McNealy described the higher number of visitors during Oktoberfest. There have been times
24 when she was stuck in three hours of traffic during Oktoberfest. She stressed the importance of
25 looking at year-round numbers for the canyons. There is often a focus on winter use, but the summer
26 season and fall season numbers are increasing. The uses are also more spread out at that time.

27
28 Patrick Shea noted that it is possible to count the number of occupants in each vehicle that enters the
29 canyons. There is camera technology that can provide count numbers. Co-Chair Zalles thought that
30 kind of data was important. Ms. McNealy noted that the current vehicle data is only a count number.
31 Theoretically, it is possible to divide the daily traffic numbers in half to obtain the vehicle count for
32 the day. As for the number of people in each vehicle, that is not something there is currently data for.

33
34 **3. A Representative from The DIGIT Lab will Discuss the Feasibility of the Committee’s**
35 **Environmental Dashboard Goals.**

36
37 Chair Boardman explained that the Environment Systems Committee is trying to brainstorm ideas to
38 make the Human Element of the Environmental Dashboard more robust. Ms. McNealy explained
39 that it all comes down to the data collection. That has been an expensive component of the work.
40 The team scoured what data was available before the work was done by Dr. Smith and the only data
41 for usage was the traffic count data. She suggested speaking to Dr. Smith about what data can be
42 collected in the canyons to better understand what is feasible and what the costs could look like.

43
44 Mr. Shea reported that there is technology for a grid photograph. Through infrared, it can determine
45 who is there. It seems possible to use that technology at certain times of day (9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m.,
46 and 5:00 p.m.) in an area to obtain some basic numbers. Ms. McNealy was not familiar with that
47 technology, other than for animal detection, but it sounded like something that was feasible. As for

1 the costs associated with that kind of technology and data collection, she was not certain. Given the
2 size of the Cottonwood ski areas, she believed there would be a lot of imagery to process.

3
4 Ms. Nielsen thanked Ms. McNealy for attending the Environment Systems Committee Meeting. Ms.
5 McNealy explained that she can answer any additional Committee Member questions that arise.

6 7 **TRANSFER OF PUBLIC LANDS MOVEMENT**

8 9 **1. Co-Chair Zalles will Discuss the Possibility of Bringing a Presentation on the Transfer** 10 **of Public Lands Movement to a Future Committee Meeting and/or Stakeholders Council** 11 **Meeting.**

12
13 Co-Chair Zalles shared information about a possible presentation on the Transfer of Public Lands
14 Movement at a future meeting. It was noted that Kirk Nichols put together a 12-minute video that
15 discusses this matter. The video was played for the Committee. It included information about the
16 Utah Transfer of Public Lands Act of 2012 sponsored by Ken Ivory. Some historical documents were
17 shared that relate to the transfer of lands as well as some background history about territories.
18 Negotiations with other governments were highlighted. It was noted that there are pieces of the
19 Constitution that apply to this topic, which includes the Property Clause, which stated the following:

- 20
21 • The Congress shall have the power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations
22 respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.

23
24 The Utah Enabling Act is the Federal Law passed in 1894, which describes what the State must do to
25 become a state. In the video presentation, Mr. Nichols read the following language:

- 26
27 • That the people inhabiting said proposed states do agree and declare that they forever disclaim
28 all right and title to the unappropriated public lands lying within the boundaries thereof, and
29 to all lands lying within said limits owned or held by any Indian or Indian tribes; and that until
30 the title thereto shall have been extinguished by the United States, the same shall be and
31 remain subject to the disposition of the United States, and said Indian lands shall remain under
32 the absolute jurisdiction and control of the Congress of the United States.

33
34 Additional sections of the Utah Enabling Act were read aloud, including Section 12, which stated:

- 35
36 • Utah shall not be entitled to any further or other grants of land for any purpose than as
37 expressly provided in this Act.

38
39 The video also included some definitions for clarity, such as disposal and withdrawal. Mr. Nichols
40 reviewed some of the most notable withdrawals, including Yellowstone in 1872. In Utah, the first
41 one came in the first year of statehood. He shared additional historical information and explained
42 what happened in 1976 with BLM lands. Additional information about land transfers was reviewed.

43
44 Mr. Nichols next discussed the Utah Transfer of Public Lands Act of 2012. That required the Federal
45 Government to grant the majority of Federal Land in the State to the State of Utah after 2014. He did
46 not believe the State of Utah was ready for the claim on the land, because Utah has no management
47 plan whereas the Federal Government has been working on that for decades. There is no Utah

1 Endangered Species Act or Utah Wilderness Act. There are many areas of concern associated with
2 what has been proposed, largely because Utah does not have certain policies in place.

3
4 Ms. Nielsen thanked Mr. Nichols for creating the video presentation for the Committee. Co-Chair
5 Zalles also thanked Mr. Nichols for his efforts as it was a useful way to receive background
6 information. Co-Chair Zalles asked for additional information about the Utah Transfer of Public
7 Lands Act. Mr. Nichols clarified that Utah said that this is to have happened by 2014, but no one has
8 done anything. Utah put aside \$4 million to take this to court, but that has not been done.

9
10 Mr. Shea stated that when he was with BLM, the strongest support for keeping the public lands
11 Federal was from the Northeast and the Midwest. The American public has spent a lot of money
12 preserving and protecting those lands. To have those given away to the States is an unlikely
13 proposition. Committee Members discussed the probability of this moving forward. Mr. Nichols
14 noted that if the BLM and Forest Service lands were granted to the State, it is unlikely that the mineral
15 rights underneath would be given. Co-Chair Zalles suggested discussing the implications for the
16 Central Wasatch should this move forward. Mr. Nichols noted that a lot of it was not well thought
17 out. Co-Chair Zalles asked to what extent the CWC should be concerned about this matter. Currently,
18 it sounds like it is far-fetched, but on the other hand, something that could move ahead. Mr. Shea did
19 not feel the CWC had the jurisdictional influence to address this particular issue.

20
21 Mr. Nichols liked that the issue was discussed by the Environment Systems Committee because now
22 everyone has a base level of awareness. It is something the Committee can continue to study. Chair
23 Boardman thanked Mr. Nichols for preparing the video and presenting information to the Committee.

24 **OTHER ITEMS**

25
26
27 There was discussion about the potential purchase of parcels in private ownership for conservation.
28 Additionally, the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act (“CWNCRA”)
29 was referenced. Co-Chair Zalles mentioned a recent New York Times article that highlighted an
30 interesting use of carbon offsets. He asked for feedback about carbon offsets for forest sustainability.
31 Mr. Shea was not sure this was something mature enough that could be relied on at this point. Co-
32 Chair Zalles imagined there were some mechanisms in place to monitor the offsets. He offered to
33 send the link to the New York Times article to the Environment Systems Committee.

34
35 Chair Boardman asked Committee Members to think about what can be done to better represent
36 human impacts in the Environmental Dashboard. There was clarity provided by Ms. McNealy about
37 what she needed to create a model. She asked Committee Members to consider the data that might
38 be needed. It was noted that Ms. McNealy left her email address in the Zoom chat box. Committee
39 Members with questions could reach out to her after the Committee Meeting.

40
41 Co-Chair Zalles asked if there is a desire to invite Dr. Smith to a future Environment Systems
42 Committee Meeting. This was confirmed. Ms. Nielsen offered to check to see if Dr. Smith was
43 available. The next Environment Systems Committee Meeting is scheduled for May 14, 2024.

44
45 There was additional discussion about the Environmental Dashboard. Adam Lenkowski noted that
46 there is a lot of solid data there, but it is located in different sections throughout. That can make it
47 harder to access everything. People like interactive maps that are easy to click on and interpret. It
48 was suggested that there be one interactive map that has all of the different information available.

1
2 Ms. Nielsen asked about the Google document that Committee Members previously added to. She
3 clarified that it was a document where Committee Members shared ideas about the Environmental
4 Dashboard. She believed the ideas were shared but there was no follow-up with the suggestions. Co-
5 Chair Zalles stated that it was a way Committee Members brainstormed ideas. He thought there
6 should be a conversation about the document. Dr. Smith could determine what was feasible.
7

8 Ms. Nielsen believed the Environment Systems Committee wanted Dr. Smith to attend the next
9 meeting, if he is available. She suggested sharing the Google document at the next meeting so it
10 could be reviewed, discussed, and finalized. It will be possible to ask Dr. Smith about anything that
11 is related to the Human Element of the Environmental Dashboard. From there, CWC Staff can deliver
12 the finalized document to Ms. McNealy to receive her feedback. Chair Boardman sent a copy of the
13 Google document to Ms. Nielsen and offered to send it out again to all Committee Members.
14

15 For the benefit of the new Committee Members, it was explained that the original ask was for
16 everyone to look through the Environmental Dashboard and share questions, comments, concerns,
17 and suggestions. It was noted that the Google document would be sent out to new members as well.
18

19 Mr. Lenkowski referenced the earlier discussion about the ski resort visitor use numbers. It seemed
20 like there was solid data for trail use in the summer and there was vehicle data for the winter use. Ms.
21 Nielsen noted that the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance has some winter data that could potentially be
22 incorporated into the Human Element of the Environmental Dashboard. Chair Boardman confirmed
23 that the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance had trail counters at the popular backcountry trailheads.
24

25 **CLOSING**

26 27 **1. Chair Boardman will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Environment Systems Committee** 28 **Meeting.**

29
30 **MOTION:** Patrick Shea moved to ADJOURN the Environment Systems Committee Meeting. There
31 was no second. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
32

33 The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Environment Systems Committee Meeting held Tuesday,*
3 *April 9, 2024.*

4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

9

10 Minutes Approved: _____