

MEETING MINUTES
ALTA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, March 27th, 2024, 3:00 PM
Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

PRESENT: John Nepstad, Chair
Jeff Niermeyer, Vice-Chair
Rob Voyer
Dave Abraham
Maren Askins
Roger Bourke, Town of Alta Mayor (ex-officio)

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Cawley, Town Manager
Molly Austin, Assistant Town Clerk
Chris Otto, Assistant Town Manager
John Guldner, Cottonwood Lands Advisory
Polly McLean, Town Attorney

OTHERS: Todd Godfrey, HGB Law

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Planning Commission Chair John Nepstad opened the March 27, 2024 meeting at 3:01 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE February 27, 2024, MEETING

After some initial confusion about the day of the week, the approval of the meeting minutes was discussed. Chris Cawley mentioned that staff were using AI tools for generating planning commission meeting minutes, which prompted a brief discussion on its effectiveness. Despite some concerns about the accuracy of assigning certain comments to specific commission members in the minutes, and about the level of detail contained in the minutes, they were ultimately approved.

Planning Commission Member Rob Voyer introduced a motion to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2024, Alta Planning Commission Meeting. Planning Commission Member David Abraham seconded the motion, and the motion was passed with unanimous consent of the commission.

3. Introduction to Town of Alta Subdivision Ordinance Update Project – Todd Godfrey, HGB Law

For this agenda item Polly McLean provided initial background information on the topic. She discussed how legislative mandates regarding subdivision ordinances have evolved, and that

municipalities in Utah were required to change their subdivision ordinances to streamline the approval process.

John Nepstad introduced Todd Godfrey from HGB Law, who specializes in representing cities and towns. Todd was hired by Alta and tasked with drafting changes to bring the Town's ordinance into compliance with state law. The discussion revolved around the timeline for implementation and the allocation of state funding for municipalities to hire consultants such as Todd. Todd then provided an overview of the legislative background and context regarding subdivision updates mandated by state law. He outlined the two-step subdivision process now required by state law: preliminary plat consideration and final plat approval. Notably, city councils have been removed from the subdivision approval process. Planning Commissions or staff can conduct preliminary plat reviews, and only staff can oversee final plat approvals. Alta's amended ordinance should be finalized by the end of the year.

Discussion ensued regarding the engineering-heavy nature of the town's environment, with concerns about avalanches and utility issues raised by various attendees, including John Guldner and Jeff Niermeyer. Polly McLean inquired about including provisions for plat amendments and the presentation format for proposed changes, prompting further clarification from Todd that there is question as to whether the state funding supporting Todd's work for Alta would cover other code updates. There is an information meeting about the state funding program on April 2nd where Todd will raise this question and determine if that is the case. Todd will provide the proposed changes in Alta's code in a red lined comparison draft, or they may simply recommend drafting an entire new chapter.

Mayor Bourke expressed concerns about potential disadvantages for smaller towns under the new legislation, while Chris Cawley sought additional context on the legislative motivation for the changes, which Todd provided, citing a focus on efficiency and affordable housing production as the motivation for the changes which impact larger municipalities.

Future steps were discussed, including the anticipated presentation of draft revisions at the April Planning Commission meeting and the process for recommending the ordinance changes to the Council. The meeting concluded with a consensus to move forward with the proposed revisions and to work collaboratively with Todd on the process, ensuring compliance with state law while addressing the unique needs of the town.

4. Discussion and possible action to appoint a commission chair and vice-chair for 2024

Planning Commission Member Rob Voyer introduced a motion to reappoint John Nepstad as Chair of the Planning Commission and Jeff Niermeyer as Vice-Chair. Planning Commission Member David Abraham seconded the motion, and the motion was passed with unanimous consent of the commission.

5. Date of Next Meeting

During the town council meeting, Chris Cawley and John Nepstad discussed potential agenda items for the upcoming April meeting. They considered providing training and education for the Planning Commission, as well as clarifying their roles and responsibilities. Rob Voyer and Mayor Bourke also expressed support for ongoing education opportunities. Jeff Niermeyer inquired about Open Meetings training, while Polly McLean confirmed that the past training was conducted in November, but they will try to get that scheduled at some point in the summer. The commission agreed on scheduling future meetings to get updates from Mike Maughn regarding capital projects at Alta Ski Lifts which includes an expansion of the Albion Day Lodge and replacing the Sugarloaf Top Ski Patrol Building. The next meeting is scheduled for April 24, 2024 at 3pm.

6. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Planning Commission Vice-Chair Jeff Niermeyer moved to adjourn the meeting. Planning Commission Member Maren Askins seconded the motion, and the motion was carried with unanimous consent of the commission.

Minutes Approved on

Chris Cawley, Town Manager