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9 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
10 **COUNCIL ECONOMY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY,**
11 **TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2024, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-**
12 **PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC**
13 **OFFICES LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY,**
14 **UTAH.**

15
16 **Committee Members:** Morgan Mingle, Co-Chair
17 John Adams
18 Ed Marshall
19 Dan Zalles
20

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

24 **OPENING**
25

26 **1. Committee Leadership will Open the Public Hearing.**
27

28 Co-Chair Morgan Mingle called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council
29 Economy Systems Committee Meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.
30

31 **2. Review and Approve the Minutes from the February 8, 2024, Meeting.**
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33 There was not a quorum present. As a result, the Meeting Minutes from the February 8, 2024,
34 Economy Systems Committee Meeting were not voted on and would be addressed at the next meeting.
35

36 **STAFF UPDATE**
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38 **1. Staff will Discuss the New Stakeholders Council Newsletter.**
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40 Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack, shared information about the new Stakeholders Council
41 newsletter. At the recent Stakeholders Council Retreat, Council Members expressed a desire to be
42 more connected and learn more about other subcommittee work. As a result, a newsletter is now
43 proposed, which will be released each month. The newsletter could largely replace the subcommittee
44 reports made during Stakeholders Council Meetings. That time can then be spent on more in-depth
45 conversations or breakout sessions. The plan is to release the newsletter at the end of each month.
46 The request is that the Chair and Co-Chair of each subcommittee submit a summary of the discussions
47 after each meeting. CWC Staff will then compile the submissions and include them in the newsletter.
48

1 Ms. Kilpack noted that there needs to be a discussion with the Economy Systems Committee about
2 the ongoing meeting schedule. She pointed out that the Committee has not met in some time.

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4 **STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL RETREAT RECAP**

5
6 **1. Committee Members will Hear a Presentation from Committee Member John Adams.**

7
8 John Adams reported that he recently joined the Stakeholders Council. When he joined the Council,
9 he was asked about subcommittee participation and expressed an interest in the Economy Systems
10 Committee. However, there have not been any meetings in the last few months. Mr. Adams is looking
11 for updates about the Committee work. He also has some ideas related to the Mountain Accord.

12
13 Co-Chair Mingle welcomed Mr. Adams to the Stakeholders Council and Economy Systems
14 Committee. She clarified that it has been difficult to find traction on current items to discuss and
15 focus on at a subcommittee level. The majority of the previous discussions have been related to the
16 other subcommittees. She looks forward to hearing more about the ideas Mr. Adams has for the
17 Committee.

18
19 Mr. Adams shared some presentation slides with the Economy Systems Committee. He explained
20 that he spent some time focusing on the Mountain Accord. It was impressive how many groups came
21 together for the Mountain Accord process to collaborate and compromise. Since then, the population
22 has grown, there has been a lot of economic growth, and there are more pressures on the environment
23 than before. There is a need to preserve the natural environment of the canyons, but there is also a
24 need at the State level to grow the economy. Sometimes, those needs can clash. Since the Economy
25 Systems Committee is tied to the other subcommittees, it is important to consider the challenges
26 associated with decision-making and how to focus on coordination. Taking time to recognize the
27 systems and mindsets in place that drive certain issues forward is something the Committee can do.

28
29 Mr. Adams explained that he moved from the Boston area in 1989. He came out to this area to ski
30 for a year and stayed. He worked at Solitude on the lifts and as a ski patrol. Additionally, he did
31 part-time avalanche mitigation at Snowbird. Once he started a family, he moved into corporate work
32 but kept his ski patrol job on the weekends. A few years ago, he was able to retire early but still
33 works on the ski patrol. Mr. Adams lives in Cottonwood Heights and has a strong interest in the
34 canyons. Now that he has retired, he can spend more time focusing on his areas of interest. He
35 believes there is a need to take a step back and look at issues from a systems perspective. This is
36 something that he has started to do recently by looking further into the Mountain Accord document.

37
38 Mr. Adams referenced the polarizing desire to preserve the environment (long-term view) versus the
39 desire to grow economically (short-term view). Ed Marshall is not sure that he sees the polarizing
40 nature of preserving the environment. He is not sure that this desire is polarizing. He explained that
41 Log Haven works to preserve the environment and he imagines that the ski resorts do that as well.
42 Polarization normally comes when a business is trying to do something beyond what it is already
43 doing. It was noted that it could also be the result of the continued growth of a business.

44
45 Co-Chair Mingle understood the comment about polarization in some instances. Certain expansions
46 come at an environmental cost, especially when this involves expansion of the ski terrain. When she
47 thinks about managing open space and making sure the economy is supported, oftentimes, the only
48 way to preserve part of that open space area is by making it economically viable, so there is an

1 incentive for preservation. She is not sure preservation and economic growth are always mutually
2 exclusive. However, there are times when centering the economy is a detriment to the environment.

3
4 Mr. Adams asked about the statement that sometimes, the only way to preserve a space is to make it
5 economically viable. Co-Chair Mingle explained that it is often necessary to provide a benefit to the
6 economy or visitors to incentivize the preservation of open space. Mr. Adams noted that there needs
7 to be an agreement when it comes to the terms used at a Committee level and beyond. For example,
8 the term “polarizing,” which was used earlier, immediately made Mr. Marshall think of his business,
9 Co-Chair Mingle thought of the ski resorts expanding their boundaries, and Mr. Adams thought of a
10 ski resort that was growing the business without expansion of the boundaries. One term can be viewed
11 very differently, depending on each of the individual experiences.

12
13 Co-Chair Mingle stated that well-managed and preserved natural environments are a product.
14 Visitors come and recreate in those areas. All of the economy-generating amenities in the canyons
15 are enhanced by a well-managed environmental product. Mr. Adams asked about the value of green
16 space. Co-Chair Mingle reported that there has been a lot of academic research on that front,
17 especially when it comes to sustainable tourism-focused work. It is difficult to determine a dollar
18 amount, but there are a lot of different ways to look at this issue. Mr. Marshall pointed out that even
19 the public entities treat the canyons economically to have the funds to preserve the environment or
20 provide amenities for people who are using the canyons. For example, with the U.S. Forest Service,
21 the District Ranger has said that the lack of funds has prevented them from reducing fuels in the
22 canyons. In Millcreek Canyon, after collection costs, the tolls go entirely to the Forest Service. That
23 gives the Forest Service funds to tackle some necessary environmental work.

24
25 At the recent Forest Service Stakeholder Meeting held last Thursday, it was stated that the Forest
26 Service will introduce fees in a number of areas. This will start in Silver Lake. Mr. Marshall reported
27 that the Forest Service will charge fees so there is enough money to maintain restrooms, build new
28 restrooms, and handle outstanding work. Even the Forest Service treats the canyon as an economy.
29 Discussions were had about the Forest Service and some of the systems that are currently in place.

30
31 Mr. Adams reported that the systems he wanted to focus on relate to private businesses. He wants to
32 understand the underlying economic forces that need to be in place for a private business to survive.
33 When he thinks about the Stakeholders Council subcommittees, it seems that it all revolves around
34 the intersection of economics and how that is defined. There is a unique topography in the canyons,
35 which is what the Mountain Accord wanted to protect in addition to addressing businesses in the area.

36
37 Mr. Adams used Central Park in New York City as an example. It was determined that there was
38 value in preserving nature in the city. He pointed out that there are a lot of different access points for
39 Central Park, but with the canyons in the CWC study area, there are not as many accesses available.

40
41 Mr. Marshall believed there needs to be a distinction made between corporate-driven businesses and
42 other businesses. Businesses are not only there to make money. Mr. Adams has been discussing the
43 profit side of things, but some businesses were started because of a love of skiing and being in nature.
44 The corporate level tends to be where the dynamic shifts and there is always a desire to see increased
45 profits. Discussions were had about the differences between various business types in the canyons.

46
47 Mr. Adams shared information about ski resort passes. Co-Chair Mingle agreed that the priority is
48 often profits for a lot of the corporate-run ski resorts. However, those resorts have a vested interest

1 in preserving their product, which relies on the natural environment. In all of her dealings with Vail
2 Resorts in Park City, it comes down to the money, but if the quality of the environment is not there,
3 the business will lose value, both in terms of the product and in the mind of the customer. Even
4 corporate businesses are thinking about the natural environment. Mr. Adams agreed with that point.

5
6 Mr. Adams referenced the economic value of land. He discussed ski resort use versus backcountry
7 use. Both involve the same type of activity and have the same dependence on the terrain, but one is
8 more likely to live on a balance sheet. It is easier to extract economic value from ski resort land.

9
10 The previous gondola conversations were mentioned. Mr. Adams explained that he listened to a lot
11 of comments both for and against the gondola. Many entities wanted to address the same problem,
12 which is traffic but had different definitions of the terms and concepts used to understand those
13 problems. For instance, some argued that the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) Little
14 Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) had a narrow scope. He explained
15 that everyone has a different agenda and thinks about things differently. However, with the Mountain
16 Accord process, it seemed that there was a lot of agreement on the terms. This included progress,
17 growth, economy, and what it means to preserve the environment and businesses. It also looked like
18 there was agreement in the Mountain Accord that resorts would not expand their natural boundaries.

19
20 Mr. Marshall reported that there was a deal made between the ski resorts, Save Our Canyons, and Salt
21 Lake City Public Utilities at the time of the Mountain Accord. Mr. Adams pointed out that there was
22 a lot of consensus during that process. With complex issues, it can be difficult to have coordination
23 since everyone is describing terms differently. That very situation was seen earlier in the Economy
24 Systems Committee Meeting. Everyone has different viewpoints based on their own experiences.

25
26 Mr. Adams reviewed traditional definitions of “economy.” The broader economic definition does
27 not necessarily include natural resources. It also does not take externalities into account. One
28 example of an externality for a growing ski resort business is a traffic problem. That could be driven
29 by the marketing of the ski resorts, from the people who provide goods to the ski resorts, and from
30 the State who wants to grow tourism. It is important to recognize these kinds of costs. There are
31 situations when the externalities are too high and the public will speak out about those matters. Mr.
32 Adams used social media as an example and discussed some of the unintended consequences.
33 Sometimes, when externalities are significant and impact core values, there is public pushback.

34
35 It was noted that the State of Utah has the fastest-growing economy. Mr. Adams stated that there are
36 a lot of competing systems in place. Mr. Marshall acknowledged that Mr. Adams has used his skills,
37 knowledge, and energy to put together a high-level intellectual and theoretical presentation about
38 what is happening in the CWC study area. However, he wondered how this applies specifically to
39 the economy of the canyons. Mr. Adams clarified that if there is a desire to make decisions that
40 preserve the canyons in a certain way for decades to come, there needs to be discussion about growth
41 and the systems that are currently in place. The canyons can hold more people, but there is no clear
42 definition of what the capacity is. Knowing that some of the core economic drivers are the ski resorts,
43 he wonders whether a business that requires endless growth can continue to grow long-term.

44
45 Mr. Adams shared an example of the traffic problems. There now needs to be another way to move
46 visitors up Little Cottonwood Canyon. One suggestion was to build a gondola, but there is
47 controversy about whether that is the best path forward. It is important to look at how externalities

1 come together and how those externalities impact the decisions made. As for why he put so much
2 effort into this presentation, there is a desire to remove defensiveness and have broader conversations.

3
4 Co-Chair Mingle believed the presentation is an example of the struggle the Economy Systems
5 Committee has had so far. The reality is that the economy touches everything. Without a specific
6 problem or issue to put the economic lens on, conversation and action as a Committee becomes more
7 difficult. The impacts of a growing tourism economy are not always proportional to the growth if it
8 is done thoughtfully. Mr. Adams previously mentioned the gondola and ski resorts. Co-Chair Mingle
9 noted that it is possible for the ski resorts in Little Cottonwood Canyon to responsibly manage more
10 visitation if the transportation component is addressed. All of these different systems are connected,
11 but the thread that goes through everything is economy. She wondered whether Mr. Adams had
12 thought through some actions that could come from the foundational theory that had been presented.

13
14 Dan Zalles reported that he is the Co-Chair of the Environment Systems Committee. There have been
15 discussions at that subcommittee level about the Human Element of the Environmental Dashboard
16 and the data collection process. He believes the presentation from Mr. Adams provides some nice
17 framing, especially when it comes to externalities. Economic impacts can be broken down into who
18 makes money from a particular endeavor and who ends up covering the costs of that endeavor. It is
19 easy to look at how many jobs are created and how much money a company makes, but other costs
20 need to be considered as well. The idea of exploring externalities is meaningful. Costs can also be
21 viewed in the context of losing revenue from tourism. For example, if the traffic continues to increase
22 and pollution increases, visitors might not want to come to the area. That can then impact restaurants
23 and other businesses. A lot of this is connected and he likes the idea of further exploring the
24 externalities. That is a useful framing device to focus on moving forward.

25
26 Mr. Marshall pointed out that the gondola is an excellent example of externalities. There has been a
27 lot of opposition to the proposal simply based on the environmental impact. Mr. Adams reported that
28 he previously spoke to Josh Van Jura about capacity. Co-Chair Mingle noted that the time allotted
29 for the meeting has ended. She suggested that there be more in-depth conversations about what was
30 shared by Mr. Adams at the next Economy Systems Committee Meeting.

31 32 **COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP CHANGE**

33 34 **1. The Committee will Select a New Chair.**

35
36 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that she reviewed the Rules and Procedures document.
37 Though there is not a quorum present, the Rules and Procedures do not state that there needs to be a
38 quorum to change Committee leadership. The current Chair, Dave Fields, indicated that he wants a
39 new Chair to take over. Mr. Marshall believed it was logical for Co-Chair Mingle to take over the
40 vacant Chair position. Co-Chair Mingle stated that she is willing to serve in that role. Ms. Nielsen
41 noted that a new Co-Chair is now needed. Mr. Adams expressed a willingness to be Co-Chair.

42
43 Discussions were had about the future meeting schedule. Ms. Nielsen asked whether there is a desire
44 to revert to the regular meeting schedule of the second Thursday of the month at 3:30 p.m. All of the
45 Committee Members present confirmed that the existing meeting schedule works well for them. Ms.
46 Kilpack informed Committee Members that the next meeting will be held on July 11, 2024.

1 Ms. Nielsen noted that a lot of important ideas were shared during the Economy Systems Committee
2 Meeting. She reminded Committee Members that the Stakeholders Council is a forum for exchanging
3 ideas. She appreciates the time and effort that went into the latest meeting and discussions.

4

5 **OTHER ITEMS**

6

7 There were no additional items.

8

9 **CLOSING**

10

11 **1. The Chair will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Economy Systems Committee Meeting.**

12

13 **MOTION:** Morgan Mingle moved to ADJOURN the Economy Systems Committee Meeting. Ed
14 Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

15

16 The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Economy Systems Committee Meeting held Wednesday,*
3 *June 12, 2024.*
4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes
7 T Forbes Group
8 Minutes Secretary
9

10 Minutes Approved: _____