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9 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
10 **COUNCIL RECREATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY,**
11 **JUNE 13, 2024, AT 2:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND**
12 **VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES**
13 **LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY UTAH.**

- 14
15 **Committee Members:** Sarah Bennett, Chair
16 Barbara Cameron, Co-Chair
17 Joanna Wheelton
18 Patrick Morrison
19 John Knoblock
20 Tom Diegel
21
22 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
23 Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations
24
25 **Others:** Emily Salle, Cottonwood Canyons Foundation
26 Dave Iltis, Salt Lake Bicycle Advisory Committee
27

28 **OPENING**

- 29
30 1. **Chair Sarah Bennett will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Recreation Systems**
31 **Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**
32

33 Chair Sarah Bennett called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council
34 Recreation Systems Committee Meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed those present. She
35 reported that there has not been a Recreation Systems Committee Meeting held in several months.
36

- 37 2. **Review and Approval of the March 14, 2024, Meeting Minutes.**
38

39 At the start of the Recreation Systems Committee Meeting, there was not a quorum, so the Meeting
40 Minutes from March 14, 2024, were not approved. The vote was taken when there was a quorum.
41

42 **MOTION:** Barbara Cameron moved to APPROVE the Minutes from March 14, 2024. Patrick
43 Morrison seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
44

45 **STAFF UPDATE**

- 46
47 1. **Staff will Discuss the New Stakeholders Council Newsletter.**
48

1 Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack, shared information about the Stakeholders Council
2 newsletter. Based on the Stakeholders Council Retreat discussions, it was determined that there will
3 be a Stakeholders Council newsletter distributed at the end of each month. This will allow more time
4 for in-depth conversations and interactions at a Council level. During previous Stakeholders Council
5 Meetings, there were subcommittee reports shared. That information will now be included in the
6 newsletter. After each subcommittee meeting, the Chair or Co-Chair will submit a summary of the
7 subcommittee work to CWC Staff. That summary be included in the Stakeholders Council newsletter.
8

9 **USFS QUARTERLY MEETING RECAP**

11 **1. Co-Chair Barbara Cameron and Emily Salle will Give a Brief Summary of the** 12 **Quarterly Meeting of the USFS.**

14 Co-Chair Barbara Cameron shared information about the U.S. Forest Service Quarterly Meeting that
15 took place recently. Co-Chair Cameron and Emily Salle from the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation
16 were able to attend the meeting on June 5, 2024. Ms. Salle had posed some interesting questions at
17 that meeting and there is a desire to discuss some of those with the Recreation Systems Committee.
18

19 The Forest Service stated there is an intention to eliminate most roadside parking and make entry to
20 Little Cottonwood Canyon and Big Cottonwood Canyon available through timed entry. That will not
21 be implemented immediately but over the next few years. The reason for this preference is that
22 tolling, buses, and parking structures are costly and have outstanding issues that need to be addressed.
23

24 John Knoblock referenced recent information shared by the Utah Department of Transportation
25 (“UDOT”). He pointed out that there is a desire to focus on a Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental
26 Study so it is possible to implement tolling. He wanted to know about communication between the
27 Forest Service and UDOT. Co-Chair Cameron explained that she has some concerns about
28 communication. Ms. Salle noted that all solutions will have significant startup costs. The reason
29 Bekee Hotze said that the Forest Service is exploring timed entry is because there would not be an
30 investment in infrastructure. There could be solutions implemented without infrastructure changes.
31

32 According to Ms. Hotze, the plan has been discussed with those at Zion National Park and Zion
33 National Park has been looked at as a model. Starting the bus system in Zion National Park was
34 expensive and there were some issues related to implementation. Zion National Park will be
35 abandoning their shuttle system to enact a timed entry system. Ms. Salle clarified that nothing is
36 certain or finalized from a Forest Service perspective. Many potential solutions have been discussed.
37

38 Co-Chair Cameron reported that during the Quarterly Meeting, there were no comments made about
39 how the ski resorts might feel about timed entry requirements. Chair Bennett believes the timed entry
40 suggestion sounds unworkable given the fact that this does not consider the ski resorts. If this was
41 implemented, it would mean that ski resort users would need a reservation to get into the canyon and
42 a reservation to park. That particular solution would create a lot of barriers to use. Joanna Wheelton
43 shared information about the timed entry at Arches National Park. That system has dramatically
44 impacted the hospitality industry in that area. There has been a 25% to 30% decline in reservations
45 there.
46

47 Patrick Morrison asked whether there are fees associated with timed entry reservations. He also
48 wanted to know if the Forest Service discussed congestion pricing. Ms. Salle reported that the details

1 of the potential model were not discussed. Only broad information was shared. Mr. Morrison noted
2 that this was the first he heard about Zion National Park potentially eliminating the bus system. He
3 would be interested to hear more from them about that. Chair Bennett stated that this was also the
4 first time she heard about Zion National Park considering the removal of the shuttle system there.
5

6 Co-Chair Cameron stated that there needs to be more discussion about transportation, especially as it
7 relates to the work of the Recreation Systems Committee. Ms. Hotze had expressed concerns that
8 buses would result in necessary upgrades to drop-off locations to have ADA compliance. There are
9 high costs associated with that and finances are a concern to the Forest Service. As for restrooms,
10 there are not currently funds to improve the restrooms at Mill D, so porta potties will remain
11 indefinitely. Co-Chair Cameron praised the restroom maintenance contract the CWC has.
12

13 Information about trails was shared. Co-Chair Cameron reported that the boardwalk at Silver Lake
14 is still under construction. Trails Utah stepped in with some funding to do the natural trail portion.
15 The boardwalk section that has been completed is excellent, but there is more to be done. The Town
16 of Brighton is interested in assisting with that. This project has been in the works for four years, but
17 the work slowed down as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. As for Silver Lake Trail, there are
18 now user fees there. The three-day pass is \$10, a seven-day pass is \$20, an annual pass is \$60, and
19 the America The Beautiful pass, which is an interagency annual pass, is \$80. It was clarified that the
20 America The Beautiful pass was once a lifetime pass for senior citizens, but that program ended.
21

22 Ms. Wheelton stated that there has been a positive reception to the Silver Lake fee so far. Visitors
23 seem to see the value in the implementation. She clarified that the fee is only for vehicles visiting the
24 area and the pass is then put on the dashboard. Additional discussions were had about the America
25 The Beautiful pass. It was noted that all of the America The Beautiful products are interagency.
26

27 Co-Chair Cameron discussed fuel mitigation. This is something that the Forest Service wants to focus
28 on more as well as weed mitigation. The Cottonwood Canyons Foundation works hard to track down
29 volunteers to handle some of that work. As for staffing, Ms. Hotze reported that there is some stress
30 there, but the previous graffiti issues and illegal camping issues have been addressed.
31

32 Ms. Salle explained that the main takeaway she received from the Quarterly Meeting is that there
33 needs to be an emphasis on the five different areas of work in the canyons. This includes:
34

- 35 • Trails;
- 36 • Environmental Stewardship and Messaging;
- 37 • Fuels;
- 38 • Restrooms;
- 39 • Graffiti Abatement.

40
41 Now that graffiti abatement has been addressed, Ms. Salle believes that it should be replaced by weed
42 mitigation. The fuels reduction work and invasive weed mitigation work are the two fastest-growing
43 areas. Ms. Hotze stated that it will take a collective effort to inform others why fuels and weed work
44 is so important. Co-Chair Cameron believed some in Little Cottonwood Canyon felt left out from the
45 fuels work so far, but she reported that the efforts will be concentrated there next year.
46

47 Chair Bennett expressed appreciation for the Forest Service. However, she pointed out that the Forest
48 Service often does not have enough resources. It is important to do whatever possible to assist.

1
2 **CYCLING GOALS AND CHALLENGES DISCUSSION**
3

4 1. **Guest Dave Iltis will Discuss Current Cycling Goals and Challenges in the Central**
5 **Wasatch with the Committee.**
6

7 Dave Iltis from the Salt Lake Bicycle Advisory Committee was present at the Recreation Systems
8 Committee Meeting to discuss cycling goals and challenges in the tri-canyons area. Mr. Iltis reported
9 that he is the editor and publisher of *Cycling Utah and Cycling West* magazines. He has been an avid
10 cyclist and bicycle advocate in the Salt Lake Valley since 1991. The canyons are an incredible
11 recreational cycling resource for everyone in the valley. However, cyclists are sometimes treated as
12 a bother, especially in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. There have not been
13 a lot of improvements made over the years. It is important to let visitors know that bicycles belong
14 in the canyons as well. He pointed out that bicycles are a non-polluting way to enjoy the canyons.
15

16 Mr. Iltis reported that Co-Chair Cameron came up with a Big Cottonwood Cycling Plan in 2015. That
17 was shared with the Chair ahead of the meeting. There is a lot of good material in that document.
18 Though some things have changed since it was written, a lot of the needs remain the same. For
19 example, wider shoulders and more Share the Road signs. Co-Chair Cameron noted that the plan
20 included a reference to the Big Cottonwood Scenic Bikeway because both Big Cottonwood Canyon
21 and Little Cottonwood Canyon are scenic highways. Mr. Knoblock asked about the meetings held at
22 the library concerning bicycle safety in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Co-Chair Cameron confirmed that
23 those took place in 2015. At that time, UDOT shifted the lines over, which was an improvement.
24

25 Mr. Knoblock shared some opportunity areas. There are two spots adjacent to the power plant in the
26 lower canyon where the shoulder is essentially non-existent. There is a white line and then the
27 pavement has fallen away down into the creek. He shared some example scenarios and explained
28 that there are still opportunities to improve cyclist safety in the canyons. Mr. Iltis discussed what
29 happened when UDOT shifted the lines previously. One of the issues is that there are a lot of places
30 where the road abuts a cliff, stream bank, or private property, and it is not possible to widen there.
31 The road width in a lot of places is unlikely to change, but a shift in striping can make a difference.
32

33 Mr. Knoblock reported that in 2018 or 2019, there was mill and overlay work done in Little
34 Cottonwood and the line was shifted over a foot there as well. Mr. Iltis shared the Big Cottonwood
35 Cycling Plan that was previously mentioned. It included information about roadway infrastructure
36 maintenance, ecology, parking and signage, public outreach, short-term goals, and long-term goals.
37 It is an informative document and it is a solid starting point for Big Cottonwood Canyon. Something
38 similar would apply to Little Cottonwood Canyon as well. Mr. Iltis reported that in 2013, he had an
39 idea for there to be signage in the canyons that would mimic the signs in Europe. That led to Salt
40 Lake County doing a wayfinding sign study. However, that work ultimately did not move ahead.
41

42 There was work done with Tom Millar in Salt Lake City Transportation. Mr. Iltis explained that a
43 lot of progress was made at that time, but Mr. Millar then received a new job in Salt Lake City. There
44 are signs with designs and there are locations to place the signs. Due to the change in position for
45 Mr. Millar, that work stopped, and he has not had any luck continuing to move that work forward.
46 There are no signs like this anywhere in the country, but these kinds of signs are seen all over Europe.
47 The signs illustrate the importance of recreational cycling and make it clear that bicycles belong there.
48 Mr. Iltis wanted Salt Lake City Transportation to either designate someone to focus on this or to share

1 the work that was done previously. He hopes that the sign conversations can be reinvigorated.

2
3 Chair Bennett believed the signs would inform cyclists about what is ahead of them and also allow
4 them to gauge their own abilities. It would work as a safety feature. Mr. Iltis explained that the signs
5 would also illustrate that the canyons are not just for vehicles. He referenced an incident that occurred
6 in the past where a cyclist was killed in Big Cottonwood Canyon. That ultimately led to the formation
7 of the Utah Bicycle Coalition, which is now Bike Utah. Mr. Iltis reiterated that the signs would make
8 clear that the canyon is for more than just those who choose to visit in personal vehicles. Given the
9 popularity of cycling and the lack of these signs elsewhere in the country, this would put the valley
10 on the map as a trendsetter in the country. 30 to 40 signs throughout all of the canyons would make
11 a notable difference, but would not necessarily be overly expensive. Mr. Millar, with the assistance
12 of the bicycling community, was able to determine the exact locations for sign placement. This idea
13 has been around for approximately 11 years and it would be wonderful to see it move forward.

14
15 Mr. Knoblock stressed the importance of elevating recreational cycling. The city and county often
16 view cycling as something for commuting and recreational cycling is not prioritized. Mr. Iltis agreed.
17 He stated that recreational cycling is approximately 50% of the use. In terms of cycling, there should
18 not necessarily be a distinction between recreational and commuting, because bicycle safety needs to
19 be prioritized for all. Mr. Iltis planned to reach out to Salt Lake City to obtain the existing materials
20 and see what can be done to move the signs forward in the future. Since Salt Lake City controls the
21 watershed in Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon, they might have an influence
22 on the placement of signs. Mr. Knoblock noted that there would be a lot of different entities involved.

23
24 Ms. Salle wondered whether there has been a conversation about recreational bicycle access on the
25 road in the upper section of Millcreek Canyon for the Federal Lands Access Program (“FLAP”) grant
26 project. Mr. Iltis confirmed this. Mr. Knoblock believed it will shut off cycling access above the
27 winter gate for two years. He hopes the upper portion from Elbow Fork to the top will be done first
28 so it will still be possible to bicycle to Elbow Fork during the first year of the construction. Tom
29 Diegel noted that he is frustrated about the total closure that seems to be proposed.

30
31 Ms. Salle asked about the end of the FLAP grant process and cycling improvements. Mr. Diegel
32 reported that there will be a bicycle lane from the gate to Elbow Fork and then there will not be a
33 bicycle lane above. There seems to be a belief that people do not bicycle to the top of the canyon,
34 which is something he has argued about. The statistics have not been acknowledged. Mr. Knoblock
35 noted that widening the road another four feet would be difficult and expensive due to the steep
36 hillside and stream. That has been the rationale presented by the FLAP grant consultants. Mr. Diegel
37 pointed out that it was stated that 10 feet is needed for each lane, but that is not a mandate. The lanes
38 could be 9 feet, which would allow two additional feet for a safe bicycle lane.

39
40 Additional discussions were had about the signage previously mentioned by Mr. Iltis. Mr. Diegel
41 expressed support for the idea. He believes others have made it more complicated than it needs to be
42 and wanted to know if there is something the Recreation Systems Committee can do to move this
43 forward. Chair Bennett noted that there are several cycling-related items on the to-do list. It sounds
44 like a lot of work has been done on these signs already and it might make sense to prioritize this. She
45 is not sure how much the Recreation Systems Committee can do in terms of placements in canyons
46 outside of the CWC study area, but there is support to prioritize this matter at a Committee level.

47
48 Mr. Knoblock stated that he wants to see the efforts of the Stakeholders Council lead to direct and

1 immediate action. Something like this could be worthwhile. Mr. Iltis offered to reach out to Salt
2 Lake City again to ask them for the materials generated so far. He will reach out and then
3 communicate with the Recreation Systems Committee. Chair Bennett expressed her appreciation.
4

5 Ms. Nielsen thought this was an appropriate proposal for the Short-Term Projects Grant Program.
6 Mr. Iltis submitted this idea several years ago and it was rejected, because of the land manager in
7 Millcreek Canyon. The Short-Term Projects Grant Program will open earlier this year in January
8 2025. If all of the details are finalized before that cycle of the grant program opens, it would be
9 appropriate to submit an application for the signs at that time. There can be discussions about what
10 needs to happen ahead of the submission date. For example, who needs to be spoken to, what permits
11 are needed, and so on. Chair Bennett pointed out that there are already designs and placement
12 locations. A lot of preparation has already been done. It is possible to move this work forward.
13

14 Mr. Morrison does not believe this process will be simple, as there are a lot of approvals necessary.
15 That being said, it is something that is possible to achieve. Mr. Iltis further discussed cycling in the
16 canyons. He explained that one issue is access to the mouth of the canyons. There is a problem at
17 the base of Big Cottonwood Canyon when a cyclist is heading north on Wasatch before 7200
18 South/Big Cottonwood Canyon Road. UDOT has installed a barrier there to force vehicles to turn
19 right, but it has been installed in the middle of where the bicycle lane used to be. The lines on the
20 road now take a cyclist into the barrier. This is something he has mentioned to UDOT, but there has
21 not been a response so far. As for amenities, it would be wonderful to have drinking fountains at the
22 top of Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon to refill water bottles on hot days.
23

24 **COMMITTEE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

25

26 **1. Committee Members will Review, Discuss, and Refine the Vision and Goals of the** 27 **Committee.**

28
29 Chair Bennett noted that the goals and objectives of the Recreation Systems Committee have
30 continued to be discussed at each meeting. She suggested that the items discussed during the current
31 meeting be added to the document. It is possible to make adjustments based on what was shared. An
32 addition was made to the existing list of goals to incorporate the road cycling climbing signs.
33

34 **OTHER ITEMS**

35
36 Mr. Knoblock asked about the next steps for the Tri-Canyon Trails Master Plan. He wanted to know
37 when the next draft will be released. Chair Bennett believed an updated version of the plan will be
38 released later in the year. The plan will be approved in early 2025. Mr. Knoblock suggested that it
39 be communicated to the Forest Service that an implementation plan is necessary. The Tri-Canyon
40 Trails Master Plan also needs to anticipate how to take some sort of action. Chair Bennett believed
41 it is also important that there be prioritization to understand which projects will be prioritized over
42 others. Prioritization and implementation both need to be considered during this process.
43

44 Mr. Knoblock suggested that Committee Members review the vision and goals information ahead of
45 the next Recreation Systems Committee Meeting. Ms. Nielsen thought that a specific question about
46 the vision and goals would be worth posing. Alternatively, there could be a ranking of what
47 Committee Members believe is most important. Chair Bennett reported that she and Co-Chair

1 Cameron will add recent discussion items to the document and distribute it to Committee Members.
2 Specific comments will then be asked about the document and the additions made.

3
4 It was noted that the next Recreation Systems Committee Meeting will be on August 8, 2024.

5
6 **CLOSING**

- 7
8 1. **Chair Bennett will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Recreation Systems Committee**
9 **Meeting.**

10
11 **MOTION:** Sarah Bennett moved to ADJOURN the Recreation Systems Committee Meeting.
12 Barbara Cameron seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the
13 Committee.

14
15 The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

1 *I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central*
2 *Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council Recreation Systems Committee Meeting held Thursday,*
3 *June 13, 2024.*

4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

9

10 Minutes Approved: _____