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10 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
11 **COUNCIL MILLCREEK CANYON COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY,**
12 **JUNE 17, 2024, AT 1:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON**
13 **AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES**
14 **LOCATED AT GATEWAY AT 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE**
15 **CITY, UTAH.**

16
17 **Present:** Del Draper, Chair
18 Tom Diegel, Co-Chair
19 Dan Zalles
20 Ed Marshall

21
22 **Staff:** Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations

23
24 **Others:** Sally Kaiser, New Stakeholders Council Member

25
26 **Opening**

- 27
28 **1. Chair Del Draper will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Millcreek Canyon**
29 **Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**

30
31 Co-Chair, Tom Diegel, called the Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

- 32
33 **2. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the March 18, 2024, Meeting.**

34
35 At the beginning of the Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting, it was noted that there was not a
36 quorum present. It was determined that the Meeting Minutes would be voted on once there was a
37 quorum. At approximately 1:35 p.m. Chair Del Draper joined the meeting, and a vote was taken.

38
39 **MOTION:** Ed Marshall moved to APPROVE the Meeting Minutes from March 18, 2024. Tom
40 Diegel seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

41
42 **Staff Update**

- 43
44 **1. Staff will Discuss the New Stakeholders Council Newsletter.**
45

1 Director of Operations, Samantha Kilpack, shared information about the new Stakeholders Council
2 newsletter. During the Stakeholders Council Retreat, it was determined that the breakout sessions
3 went well, as there was interaction between different Council Members. Based on the success of
4 the retreat, there is a desire to focus on more activities like that in the future. Instead of sharing
5 subcommittee reports during the Stakeholders Council Meetings, CWC Staff will put together a
6 newsletter at the end of each month with updates from each subcommittee about the work taking
7 place. This will ensure there is time during the Stakeholders Council Meetings to interact more.
8

9 After each subcommittee meeting, the Chair or Co-Chair will send some bullet points or a short
10 paragraph outlining the discussions that took place and the work that is being done. That
11 information will then be added to the Stakeholders Council newsletter and distributed.
12

13 **FLAP Grant Discussion**

14 15 **1. Committee Members will Discuss the Ongoing Millcreek Canyon FLAP Grant** 16 **Project.** 17

18 Chair Draper reported that there was a presentation made to the CWC Board where Forest
19 Supervisor, Dave Whittekiend, provided an update about the Federal Lands Access Program
20 (“FLAP”) grant. Mr. Whittekiend stated that on May 15, 2024, the Federal Highway
21 Administration (“FHWA”) released their finding of no significant impact on the \$19 million road
22 improvement at the top of Millcreek Canyon. On May 22, 2024, the U.S. Forest Service issued a
23 draft decision of no significant impact on that project. The Forest Service now has an objection
24 period, and those objections can be submitted until July 7, 2024. In early August 2024, the Forest
25 Service will issue its final decision. Chair Draper pointed out that there is some confusion about
26 the objection period and who is able to submit an objection to the Forest Service draft decision.
27

28 The Forest Service has only weighed in on specific limited issues. This includes the following:
29

- 30 • Realignment of the roadway and the granting of an easement for the new roadway;
- 31 • The workspace related to the roadway;
- 32 • Relocation of picnic areas and parking areas.
33

34 If there is an objection to the specific issues that are within the decision-making ability of the
35 Forest Service, and comments were previously filed on the FLAP grant, it is possible to make an
36 objection. However, if the protest is not related to those specific Forest Service jurisdictional
37 areas, or comments were not previously filed, then it is not possible to protest the draft decision.
38

39 Co-Chair Diegel was not aware that the protest needed to be limited to those specific issues. It
40 was his understanding that the protest could cover all of the FLAP grant-related issues. That being
41 said, he believed in order to protest, a comment needed to have been submitted during the most
42 recent comment period in March. Chair Draper was not certain whether all FLAP grant issues
43 could be mentioned in the submission. Co-Chair Diegel explained that he has protested different
44 areas previously and will likely do that regardless of whether it fits in with the Forest Service
45 focus. This is the last chance he has as a citizen to make some points about the FLAP grant process.

1
2 Co-Chair Diegel explained that he feels the FLAP grant process was flawed in many ways, mostly
3 when it comes to listening to what people actually want. He reiterated that he is planning to submit
4 a protest that covers a variety of issues. Co-Chair Diegel stressed the importance of reaching out
5 to those they are representing, whether that be friends or a more formal organization. He suggested
6 sharing the protest link with others, so it is easier for those interested to submit something.
7

8 Dan Zalles reported that he is in Millcreek Canyon often. He listened to the presentation that Mr.
9 Whittekiend made to the CWC Board, and it seemed there was no support for a shuttle in the
10 canyon. The Forest Service seems more interested in timed entry. He wondered whether it would
11 be possible to reference timed entry in the protest comments. Co-Chair Diegel explained that there
12 is nothing in the FLAP grant that addresses timed entry or even a shuttle. There is nothing that
13 addresses transportation in the canyon. In his opinion, it is not the road that is the issue, but the
14 transportation available on the road. However, it doesn't hurt to lay the groundwork for what will
15 be a future discussion point. At the recent Recreation Systems Committee Meeting, Barbara
16 Cameron stated that there were discussions about timed entry for both of the Cottonwood canyons.
17 The Forest Service is moving in the direction of timed entry rather than a shuttle.
18

19 Chair Draper believed that if timed entry was mentioned in a protest comment, Mr. Whittekiend
20 would state that it is not one of the decisions the Forest Service is making with respect to the FLAP
21 grant. It is a visitation management issue to be addressed in the future. While it doesn't hurt to
22 include those kinds of comments, it is unlikely that it will impact the actual FLAP grant work.
23

24 Chair Draper found the comments from Mr. Whittekiend on the shuttle to be disheartening. The
25 Forest Service has chosen to ignore various parking possibilities. Mayor Jeff Silvestrini shared
26 some comments that indicated there is no desire to give up on a shuttle in Millcreek Canyon.
27

28 Mr. Whittekiend spoke negatively about the shuttle and stated that it would put too many visitors
29 in the canyon. Chair Draper is not sure it is appropriate to state that when there have been
30 discussions about a gondola in Little Cottonwood Canyon despite the fact that there are no clear
31 capacity numbers. The comments on the shuttle were disappointing, as it is clear the Forest Service
32 is not interested in pursuing a Millcreek Canyon shuttle and prefers the timed entry alternative.
33

34 Mr. Whittekiend also stated that the shuttle fees would need to be recompensed back to the Forest
35 Service. That was not something Chair Draper realized was an issue, since the Forest Service
36 would not be the ones paying for the Millcreek Canyon shuttle. Co-Chair Diegel pointed out that
37 timed entry is not part of the FLAP grant discussion. That being said, he was speaking to some
38 friends about this issue and there is consensus that a timed entry system would be very restrictive.
39 That system would eliminate the ability to visit the canyons spontaneously, which is problematic.
40

41 Ed Marshall explained that the reason the Forest Service wants to limit visitors is not for the sake
42 of limiting visitation, but because there is not enough parking. That issue will be even more
43 pressing during the FLAP grant construction because people who normally use the upper portion
44 of the canyon will need to use the lower portion of the canyon instead. When roadside parking is
45 eliminated, he is concerned that there will not be replacements made that offer an equal amount of
46 visitor parking. In his view, the issue is not related to the amount of traffic or the number of

1 visitors in the canyon, but that there is not enough parking for those who are in Millcreek Canyon.
2 Co-Chair Diegel pointed out that this issue could be addressed with a canyon shuttle.

3
4 Mr. Zalles noted that during the CWC Board Meeting, concerns were expressed by Mr.
5 Whittekiend about the shuttle and dog users. Chair Draper stated that it is possible to address that
6 issue, but it does not make sense to dismiss the entire idea of a shuttle because some people bring
7 their animals to the canyon. Co-Chair Diegel commented that this is a management issue to be
8 addressed. He was extremely disappointed by the comments shared by Mr. Whittekiend. Chair
9 Draper explained that there are several ways to address animals. Shuttles would not be the
10 exclusive way to access Millcreek Canyon, so dog owners could use personal vehicles instead.

11
12 Mr. Zalles suggested a combination of timed entry and a Millcreek Canyon shuttle. For example,
13 a dog owner could use the timed entry system whereas a visitor without a dog could use the shuttle.
14 Chair Draper pointed out that there are different solutions that could be explored, including the
15 one suggested by Mr. Zalles. Dogs are not a reason to avoid proceeding with the canyon shuttle.
16 Co-Chair Diegel reported that it would also be possible to have monitors on the parking spaces to
17 indicate when there is and is not parking available. This would increase communication to visitors.

18
19 Mr. Zalles asked about the roadwork associated with the FLAP grant. Mr. Whittekiend stated that
20 if the roadwork is not done, there will be threats to the stream. He wanted to better understand the
21 erosion issues. In his experience, Millcreek Canyon Road seems to be fine with the exception of
22 the last half mile. The FLAP grant sounds like it involves fairly radical work. Chair Draper noted
23 that the comments shared by Mr. Zalles align with many of the comments submitted during the
24 FLAP grant process. Despite that, there seems to be a determination to proceed. There is no
25 bicycle lane planned above Elbow Fork, so some accommodations were not made.

26
27 The protests need to be filed by July 7, 2024. After that, the Forest Service will issue its final
28 decision. The FLAP grant work will likely proceed from there. Discussions were had about the
29 history of the FLAP grant project. Co-Chair Diegel reported that the FLAP grant was first
30 discussed approximately two years ago when Helen Peters had a long list of items for Millcreek
31 Canyon. The Millcreek Canyon Committee was excited about the idea. Unfortunately, all of the
32 items were eliminated from the list with the exception of improvements to the road and widening
33 from the gate to the top of the canyon. Since then, there has not been variation in the plan, despite
34 a lot of public opposition to what has been proposed through the FLAP grant work. Most of the
35 complaints and comments submitted by members of the public have been ignored.

36
37 As an individual, Co-Chair Diegel plans to submit a protest comment. His concerns have to do
38 with the Environmental Analysis. It was stated that there is no data to support that cyclists go
39 above Elbow Fork. Co-Chair Diegel provided a link with that data and that data was completely
40 ignored. Additionally, some data supports the number of accidents that have occurred in that
41 portion of the canyon. In his opinion, the analysis portion has not been taken seriously.

42
43 Mr. Zalles asked about the second phase of the FLAP grant, which will focus on the lower portion
44 of the canyon. He wanted to know whether that has been finalized and if funding is needed. Chair
45 Draper reported that the second section of work has not been finalized. A second FLAP grant
46 application would need to be submitted and then considered for the lower portion of the canyon.

1 If that project is approved by FHWA, it would likely be constructed in the 2030 timeframe. That
2 is a separate FLAP grant project, and it may or may not happen in the future.

3
4 Co-Chair Diegel reported that he has looked for areas where the asphalt has crumbled from the
5 edge of the road and has fallen into the creek. He saw a few fist-sized pieces that have broken off
6 but has a hard time imagining that two years of heavy construction will not result in a fair amount
7 of gravel and dirt in the creek if not asphalt. He expressed concerns about this kind of approach.

8
9 Mr. Zalles asked about the position of Mayor Silvestrini. Co-Chair Diegel believes that Mayor
10 Silvestrini likes the idea of the project and that there is \$19 million being focused on the canyon.
11 He spoke in favor of the FLAP grant at the County Council Meeting in the winter. Generally
12 speaking, it seems that the Mayor is supportive of the work. Co-Chair Diegel discussed the
13 decision not to add a bicycle lane to the top of the canyon when there is an opportunity to do so.
14 It was reiterated that there will not be a bicycle lane after Elbow Fork. Co-Chair Diegel expressed
15 concerns about safety for bicyclists in the canyon without that lane available.

16
17 Co-Chair Diegel pointed out that FHWA chose to make the lanes 10 feet wide to the top, with a
18 few exceptions. There is no need to have 10-foot lanes, as the FHWA standard for rural roads is
19 9 feet. Instead of 10-foot lanes, there could be a 3-foot bicycle lane and two 9-foot lanes. However,
20 FHWA has chosen to have 10-foot lanes each way with traditional striping.

21
22 Mr. Zalles noted that during the CWC Board Meeting, there were discussions about horse use and
23 horse trailers. That may have been a possible rationale for the 10-foot road lanes. It was stated
24 that Mayor Monica Zoltanski made comments about horses and room for horse trailers. The new
25 parking area would accommodate a horse trailer, but it was noted that there are far more cyclists
26 than there are horse users in the canyon. It makes sense to consider bicyclists as well. Chair
27 Draper encouraged those interested to submit a comment on the Forest Service draft decision.

28 29 **Millcreek Canyon Shuttle Discussion**

30 31 **1. Committee Members will Discuss a Proposal for a Potential Shuttle in Millcreek** 32 **Canyon and the Reactions to the Proposal from the US Forest Service.**

33
34 Chair Draper asked for additional comments about a potential Millcreek Canyon shuttle. Mr.
35 Zalles wanted to know if it is possible to advocate for the shuttle to other authorities, rather than
36 assuming that the Forest Service is the ultimate authority. Chair Draper explained that the way
37 the shuttle discussions originated was that Salt Lake County had some money to run a pilot
38 program for a shuttle. It is ironic that the Forest Service, which will not be funding the shuttle, has
39 so many concerns about the impact of one. It would take someone like Salt Lake County to
40 advocate for a shuttle, and even then, there would likely be a fight with the Forest Service.

41
42 Mr. Zalles wanted to better understand the resistance from the Forest Service. Co-Chair Diegel
43 explained that the Forest Service has a lot of power and authority about what happens. Mr.
44 Marshall stated that the Forest Service objects to the shuttle because they feel it is their land and
45 they must provide certain infrastructure, like restrooms for visitors. Additionally, there are
46 concerns about damage, similar to what has occurred in other National Parks and one National

1 Forest where there was a shuttle without appropriate infrastructure. He does not know how much
2 damage was caused in the other areas, but that is one of the Forest Service's objections. Another
3 objection is that the Forest Service would lose some of the money that is currently being received.
4 Salt Lake County and the Forest Service normally try to work collaboratively.

5
6 Discussions were had about collaboration and funding. Co-Chair Diegel pointed out that the CWC
7 offered to fund an Environmental Assessment for the shuttle. Chair Draper reported that the Forest
8 Service stated that unless there was a financial plan and a parking plan in place for the shuttle,
9 there was no desire to conduct a study. Co-Chair Diegel was not certain why the funding
10 mechanism was being used to prevent an assessment from being done. Once there were approvals,
11 the funding discussions could start to take place. He reiterated his frustrations about the process.

12
13 Co-Chair Diegel was surprised that Mr. Whittekiend was so dismissive of the parking and funding
14 proposals. He pointed out that Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen put a lot of work into a
15 feasibility document. In addition, a lot of work was done to determine potential parking locations.
16 Chair Draper confirmed that the information has been conveyed to the Forest Service. It seems
17 the Forest Service continues to find reasons not to acknowledge the various parking options.

18
19 Committee Members discussed who can submit a protest to the Forest Service draft decision. Mr.
20 Zalles pointed out that other Stakeholders Council Members may have submitted comments. It
21 might be possible to reach out to Council Members about the draft decision protest period.

22 Other Updates

23 **1. Committee Members May Hear Updates on Other Matters Impacting Millcreek** 24 **Canyon.**

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26
27
28 Mr. Marshall shared an update about the cleanup work along Millcreek Road. At the end of last
29 year, he had been working with Scott Frost, who was the Assistant District Ranger in the absence
30 of Bekee Hotze. Everything was set at that time. However, in May, he learned that Mr. Frost left
31 the Ranger District and moved to the Supervisor's Office. The Forest Service has a new fuel
32 reduction person, and the project has been put out to bid. There is now a wait for the bids to come
33 back. In the meantime, the County was scheduled to cut the grasses, but at the Stakeholders
34 Meeting, Ms. Hotze objected to that County work on the basis that it would spread invasive weeds.
35 The County has held off on that work, but he received a call on Friday and was informed that there
36 have been additional discussions with the Forest Service. Since the cutting would only occur in
37 the lower canyon, the Forest Service has agreed to allow that work to move forward.

38
39 Fire prevention and fuels reduction is an important matter and something everyone who uses the
40 canyon should be interested in. Mr. Marshall expressed disappointment that he has had to
41 continually bring up this issue. He was also disappointed that fuels reduction was not mentioned
42 to the CWC Board during the presentation to them. Mr. Marshall hopes everyone will continue to
43 pay attention to this issue in the future. Co-Chair Diegel noted that it was an oversight and offered
44 to share information with the CWC Board at the next opportunity. Mr. Zalles asked about the
45 previous work done in Millcreek Canyon. Mr. Marshall reported that last year, the Forest Service

1 did a project in Lambs Canyon at the top of Millcreek Canyon. Debris was collected in those
2 areas, and it was stacked before being burnt in the winter when the fire risk was extremely low.
3

4 **Closing**

5
6 1. **Chair Draper will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Millcreek Canyon Committee**
7 **Meeting.**
8

9 **MOTION:** Tom Diegel moved to ADJOURN the Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting. Ed
10 Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.
11

12 The Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 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 on Monday, June 17, 2024.*

3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____