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9 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**  
10 **COUNCIL ECONOMY SYSTEMS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY, JULY 11,**  
11 **2024, AT NOON THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND**  
12 **VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES**  
13 **LOCATED IN THE BRIGHTON BANK BUILDING, 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE**  
14 **330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**

15  
16 **Committee Members:** Morgan Mingle, Chair  
17 Pat Shea  
18 John Adams  
19 Ed Marshall  
20

21 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director  
22

23 **OPENING**  
24

25 **1. Chair Morgan Mingle will Open the Public Meeting of the Economy System Committee.**  
26

27 Chair Morgan Mingle called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council  
28 Economy Systems Committee Meeting to order at noon and welcomed those present.  
29

30 **2. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the June 12, 2024, Meeting.**  
31

32 **3. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the February 8, 2024, Meeting.**  
33

34 **MOTION:** Pat Shea moved to APPROVE the June 12, 2024, and February 8, 2024, Minutes. Ed  
35 Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.  
36

37 **ECONOMY DISCUSSION**  
38

39 **1. The Committee will Discuss its Perspective and Definition of “Economy” and Define and**  
40 **Develop a Framework.**  
41

42 Chair Mingle explained that since the perspective of the Economy Systems Committee is still unclear,  
43 there is a desire to define some central ideas through a collaborative exercise. She asked each  
44 Committee Member to write down statements that could clarify the perspective of the Committee.  
45 Example statements include it is important to support small local businesses and it is important to  
46 generate tax revenue to address issues in the canyons. She asked that simple clarifying sentences be  
47 drafted independently to determine where there is overlap. This can create consensus and agreement

1 about the perspective of the Committee and establish a lens through which to look when considering  
2 issues.

3  
4 Committee Members were given two minutes to write down ideas and then those ideas were shared.  
5 John Adams believes it is important to include concepts of the economy that are not typically defined.  
6 This is for the purpose of moving the Mountain Accord forward. He also thinks it is important to  
7 acknowledge how the predominant mindset of the economy came to be. Looking back makes it  
8 possible to understand the systems that can guide future decisions. Chair Mingle believes that  
9 statement expresses a desire to acknowledge the current biases. Mr. Adams also suggested that the  
10 Committee consider whether the legacy mindset is still fit to serve the goals of the Mountain Accord  
11 or if adjustments need to be made based on factors such as growth and advanced technology.  
12

13 Ed Marshall shared the statements he drafted for the exercise. He believes it is important for the  
14 economy not to include only the ski resorts. Small businesses and private property owners are also  
15 important parts of the economy and should be considered as such. They provide important revenues  
16 for transportation and recreation. In addition, small businesses and private property owners help  
17 preserve the environment of the canyons and are actively involved in environmental issues. He  
18 pointed out that small businesses are also an important source of recreation for both locals and visitors.  
19

20 Mr. Marshall reported that the Mountain Accord had several phases. The first phase was open to  
21 everyone and the second phase had an Executive Committee with 35 members. The Executive  
22 Committee included the ski resorts, environmental groups, and governments, but it excluded all of  
23 the small business owners and private property owners. The Mountain Accord Executive Committee  
24 took the view that it was not subject to the Open and Public Meetings Act. As a result, small  
25 businesses and private property owners were not allowed to contribute at all. The CWC Stakeholders  
26 Council was intended to correct that issue, which it has. He noted that the third phase of the Mountain  
27 Accord is the CWC Board and the Stakeholders Council. Mr. Marshall explained that the reason he  
28 may sound defensive on behalf of private property owners and small businesses is because there was  
29 a previous exclusion from the process. He feels the definition of economy should be broadened.  
30

31 Chair Mingle wrote down language to state that small businesses and private property owners are an  
32 important voice to uplift as the Mountain Accord is moved forward. Mr. Marshall pointed out that  
33 there was no small business or private property owner asked to sign the Mountain Accord or allowed  
34 to sign the Mountain Accord. As a result, he does not feel that is necessarily a fair statement. He  
35 suggested that there be language drafted to state that small businesses and private property owners  
36 are an important voice in promoting the other goals of the Mountain Accord. He noted that there is  
37 favor for transportation, recreation, and the environment. Chair Mingle made that amendment.  
38

39 Pat Shea reported that the Meeting Minutes of the Mountain Accord Executive Committee were part  
40 of the public record. The idea of the Executive Committee was to have a smaller number of  
41 policymakers present so there was a clear path forward. Mr. Marshall understood that but pointed  
42 out that small businesses and private property owners were not given the opportunity to participate in  
43 that process. In terms of efficiency, not allowing them to speak might have made the Executive  
44 Committee more efficient, but that was not defensible, which was eventually recognized. The lawsuit  
45 that followed the Mountain Accord recognized that it was subject to the Open and Public Meetings  
46 Act.  
47

1 Mr. Shea asked Mr. Marshall whether he believed small businesses and private property owners were  
2 the denominator or numerator for the Central Wasatch. He clarified that the determining factor of a  
3 numerator is its relationship to the denominator. If someone determines small businesses and private  
4 property owners are the denominator, then that is the first filter through which things need to be  
5 examined. If someone determines small businesses and private property owners are the numerator,  
6 then there are many other numerators to consider. For example, visitation, ecology, and conservation.  
7

8 Mr. Marshall believes small businesses and private property owners are a numerator, as is everyone  
9 else, including the ski resorts. In terms of this Committee, if those factors are defined as the  
10 numerator, the denominator would be the entire economy. He noted that if the denominator is defined  
11 as the greater interests of the canyons, then every other aspect is part of the numerator, including  
12 small businesses and private property owners. Mr. Shea stated that the economy includes  
13 sustainability. For instance, if what there is now or what there was in the past is sustainable for the  
14 future.  
15

16 Mr. Shea reviewed the statements he drafted for the exercise. It seems to him that there needs to be  
17 a monetary model that shows where the profit centers are in both Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little  
18 Cottonwood Canyon. That information can be obtained through tax returns, 990 forms, and from the  
19 Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”). The ski resorts, specifically Snowbird and Alta, have  
20 not been willing to share that kind of information. He believes it might be possible for economists to  
21 cushion it so the actual net profit is not known, but the gross receipts are known. Mr. Shea also feels  
22 it is important to understand where the public is spending their money and what they are paying for.  
23 For example, whether members of the public are spending money on lift tickets, guides, or food.  
24 Through the 990s, it would be possible to determine what the cash flow is in terms of donation receipts  
25 for 501(c)(3) organizations and separate private donations made to for-profit entities in the canyon.  
26 He explained that the idea is to track what external donations assist in the fiscal model.  
27

28 Mr. Shea stated that the second area of interest has to do with demographic data. Understanding who  
29 is visiting and what age the visitors are is useful. He appreciates the difficulty of obtaining that  
30 information. However, it would be worthwhile to understand where money is being spent and during  
31 what season it is being spent. He pointed out that there has been a gradual shift in the use of the  
32 canyons. When he was growing up, the use was almost exclusively in October and November through  
33 March and April for the ski season. Some used the canyons in the late spring and summer as well,  
34 but ski use was more common. Now, it seems that the summer season has become equal, if not greater  
35 on some days, than the use in the winter season. There is not a coherent database with that  
36 information. Without that data available and accessible, it is not possible to manage appropriately.  
37

38 Mr. Adams pointed out that there needs to be some definition of what is actually being managed for.  
39 Chair Mingle noted that visitor characterization studies have a better understanding of seasonality and  
40 movement. That is data that can be used to manage visitation in order to maximize economic potential  
41 while reducing the overall impacts. She reported that this is something done in Park City.  
42

43 It is not possible to manage visitation in a way that promotes the long-term sustainability of the  
44 canyons unless there is a solid understanding of the following: what visitors are doing, where they  
45 are coming from, how they are spending money, and how those decisions might ultimately be  
46 influenced. Discussions were had about the capacity of the canyons. Chair Mingle explained that  
47 there are two different systems: the limits of acceptable change and a tourism-carrying capacity  
48 model.

1  
2 Mr. Shea asked Mr. Marshall whether he believed there was a capacity definition that could be  
3 achieved for Big Cottonwood Canyon, Little Cottonwood Canyon, and Millcreek Canyon. Mr.  
4 Marshall explained that he is not an expert in recreational use or in defining capacity. However, he  
5 knows that the U.S. Forest Service says capacity is determined based on impacts on the environment  
6 as opposed to a specific number of visitors. Those working on a visitor study or visitor management  
7 plan are likely to see that differently. As for private businesses, in the Cottonwood Canyons, the  
8 private businesses are having an impact on transportation with red snakes from the ski resorts. In  
9 Millcreek Canyon specifically, that transportation problem is not present and is not anticipated to  
10 occur.

11  
12 Mr. Shea noted that with a business like Log Haven, there is a capacity established. That capacity is  
13 determined by the Fire Code and the service that can be provided. He wondered whether the same  
14 kind of model should apply to the ski resorts as well, where there is some point where there are too  
15 many skiers on the hill. Chair Mingle reported that the ski resorts define their own capacity, but those  
16 numbers are not shared with others. She has asked Park City Mountain Resort for that data but was  
17 informed that it is proprietary. She reiterated that the ski resorts have their own visitor management  
18 because there is a desire to maximize profit without creating a negative visitor experience. In terms  
19 of the canyons, there are a number of models that can be examined to understand the limits of  
20 acceptable change and how adjustments to the system can allow for either more or less visitation.

21  
22 Mr. Shea pointed out that the ski resorts receive Federal money, even indirectly from the leases they  
23 have. As a result, a Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) request for the proprietary information  
24 would be appropriate. Chair Mingle reported that after the Economy Systems Committee Meeting,  
25 she will review all of the discussed items and synthesize some of the themes. A document will be  
26 sent out to Committee Members for review. The idea is to determine areas of consensus.

27  
28 Chair Mingle shared her statements from the brainstorming exercise. She feels it is important to  
29 ensure that small businesses can flourish and the right environment is created for those businesses to  
30 flourish. She stressed the importance of keeping workforce livability in mind as the economic power  
31 of the canyons is considered. It is necessary to understand that economic activity is a major driver  
32 for tax revenue for public projects that help to upkeep the canyons. In addition, it is important to  
33 understand that the success of businesses in the Central Wasatch is dependent on the quality of nature.  
34 This means that sustainability is inherently a priority for businesses that choose to be in natural areas.  
35 Those businesses have a vested interest in the holistic health of the Central Wasatch.

36  
37 One possible theme Chair Mingle noticed is whether or not the Mountain Accord actually serves the  
38 current needs. She also noted that there seems to be support for elevating the perspectives of small  
39 businesses, private property owners, and the workforce, as opposed to only focusing on the profits of  
40 the largest businesses that operate in the canyons. Chair Mingle likes that there is an emphasis on  
41 data to ensure that any actions advised have a basis in that data and modeling. She reiterated that  
42 after the Economy Systems Committee Meeting, she will write all of this down and send it out to  
43 members of the Committee. There can be comments received and then there can be one more iteration  
44 drafted. The goal is to create four or five bullet points that reflect the perspective of the Committee.

45  
46 Mr. Adams suggested adding the word “thriving,” as that can be applicable to all. What thriving  
47 means for a corporate business would likely be completely different from what it means for the

1 holistic health of the canyon. Chair Mingle thanked him for the suggestion and made note of that  
2 proposal.

3  
4 Mr. Adams reported that the University of Utah released their economic numbers for tourism in 2023.  
5 It was heavily focused on skiing, visitation, and tracking growth. Those numbers could be useful to  
6 consider. He reminded Committee Members that the business model for the ski resorts has changed  
7 dramatically. The way resorts make decisions is driven by the need to grow, as there is a fiduciary  
8 responsibility to do so. The resorts are a major driver of what happens in the canyons and must be  
9 considered when discussing the protection of the canyons and the environment. These are businesses  
10 that are either publicly owned or are owned by private investors looking for a return. This changes  
11 the overall dynamic and is something the Committee needs to keep in mind during these discussions.  
12

13 Mr. Shea stated that the Forest Service and National Park Service have created models. He reported  
14 that certain locations, such as the Grand Canyon, have visitation cut off when certain numbers are  
15 reached. He wondered whether anyone had translated those models into a resort area. Chair Mingle  
16 reported that some work to limit visitation has been done elsewhere, mainly through tolling roads.  
17 Those tolls have been made variable based on how busy a particular area happens to be. She believes  
18 that occurred in North Lake Tahoe. Chair Mingle offered to do some more research about that.  
19

20 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that all of the notes from the Mountain Accord process,  
21 including the Executive Committee, are accessible on the CWC website. Those interested in learning  
22 what happened and what was discussed at that time are welcome to review the information. Ms.  
23 Nielsen stated that representatives from the Salt Lake City Chamber were members of the Mountain  
24 Accord Executive Committee, as well as other representatives from business. Specific to the  
25 Mountain Accord lawsuit, she clarified that it was ultimately dismissed with prejudice in 2019. The  
26 judge never ruled that the Mountain Accord process had violated the Open and Public Meetings Act.  
27

## 28 **ECONOMY ACTION ITEMS AND CONCERNS**

- 29
- 30 1. **The Committee will Identify Current Action Items and Concerns and Relate Them to**  
31 **the Framework.**
- 32 2. **The Committee will Discuss How They Can Provide a Different Perspective from Other**  
33 **Committees.**  
34

35 Chair Mingle noted that the next item on the agenda relates to concrete action items for the Economy  
36 Systems Committee. However, she noted that there was not a lot of time left in the meeting. It was  
37 suggested that this item be tabled until the next meeting. Mr. Adams stated that during an  
38 Environment Systems Committee Meeting, there was a discussion about adding something economy-  
39 related to the Environmental Dashboard. He believes the Economy Systems Committee needs to  
40 move through this current process before anything like that is pursued. That being said, it is important  
41 to keep in mind what is being considered by some of the other Systems Committees.  
42

43 Mr. Shea shared information about the Mountain Accord process. Ultimately, it was determined that  
44 there was a desire to reach a common solution. The Mayor of Salt Lake County at the time recounted  
45 that there had been many previous efforts made. Mr. Marshall believes the first phase of the Mountain  
46 Accord process was strong, as is the third phase, which includes the work done by the CWC. The  
47 Mountain Accord itself was drafted in the second phase. He believes the economy statement of the  
48 Mountain Accord needs to be updated, but also that the Mountain Accord itself and the Central

1 Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act (“CWNCRA”) need to be updated. The  
2 land exchanges are no longer possible, which reduces support from the ski resorts. In addition, there  
3 is a greater risk of fire that needs to be taken into consideration. Setting aside areas that cannot be  
4 defended is not a wise decision, in his opinion, given everything that has occurred in recent years.  
5

6 Ms. Nielsen reported that the next Stakeholders Council Meeting will be an extension of what was  
7 done during the Stakeholders Council Retreat. She encouraged those present to attend that meeting  
8 in person if possible. Ms. Nielsen shared a wildfire and wilderness brief in the Zoom chat box for  
9 review. She also offered to email that information to Committee Members following the meeting.  
10

11 Ms. Nielsen reported that the CWNCRA specifically allows for the maintenance of facilities and fire  
12 mitigation work. In Wilderness, mechanized travel and mechanized means of management and not  
13 allowed. This includes mountain bicycling, chainsaws, and so on. The briefing paper expands upon  
14 how wildfire is specifically mitigated and managed within Wilderness areas. She reiterated that this  
15 will be sent out to Committee Members for review, but that information is also on the CWC website.  
16

17 Mr. Shea asked why the ski resorts are not participating in the Economy Systems Committee. He  
18 noted that there was representation during the first set of meetings. Ms. Nielsen reported that Nathan  
19 Rafferty resigned from the Stakeholders Council recently. She pointed out that the Economy Systems  
20 Committee was struggling to find its footing at first and members fell out of the routine of attending.  
21 That being said, it is always possible for Committee Members to reach out and request some input.  
22

### 23 **OTHER ITEMS**

24  
25 Ms. Nielsen reported that the next Economy Systems Committee Meeting is scheduled for August 8,  
26 2024, at 3:30 p.m. Mr. Marshall stated that he would likely be unable to attend that meeting.  
27

### 28 **CLOSING**

#### 30 **3. The Chair will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Economy Systems Committee Meeting.**

31  
32 **MOTION:** Pat Shea moved to ADJOURN the Economy Systems Committee Meeting. Ed Marshall  
33 seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.  
34

35 The Economy Systems Committee Meeting adjourned at 1:00 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 Thursday,*  
3 *July 11, 2024.*

4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

9

10 Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_