MINUTES
ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
Wednesday, July 10, 2024, 4:00 PM
Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

PRESENT: Mayor Roger Bourke
Councilmember Carolyn Anctil (attended virtually)
Councilmember John Byrne
Councilmember Elise Morgan
Councilmember Dan Schilling

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Cawley, Town Manager
Mike Morey, Town Marshal
Jen Clancy, Town Clerk (attended virtually)
Molly Austin, Deputy Town Clerk
Craig Heimark, Treasurer

ALSO PRESENT: Polly McLean, Legal Counsel
John Guldner, Cottonwood Lands Advisory (attended virtually)

NOT PRESENT:

1. **CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

00:00:00

Mayor Bourke called the July 10th, 2024 Alta Town Council meeting to order.

2. **CITIZEN INPUT**

00:00:30

Dan Leifson, a firefighter with Unified Fire Authority, introduced himself and provided an update on fire restrictions. Leifson reported that the state had moved into stage 1 of stage 2 fire restrictions. These restrictions mean no fires would be allowed in unincorporated areas except in improved campgrounds or picnic areas. Residential fires are permitted if contained in a permanently constructed fire pit with a water source, and not left unattended. Smoking is prohibited outside of designated areas, and activities like grinding and welding were restricted in vegetated areas. Leifson noted that while these changes do not directly affect the Town of Alta, they would apply to surrounding unincorporated lands. Leifson also mentioned that if fire danger increased, the restrictions might increase. Mayor Bourke acknowledged the relevance of the restrictions for protecting the town from fires started elsewhere, given its location in a box canyon.

Polly McLean suggested that the town could adopt an ordinance to align with the county's restrictions if needed. Although such a decision could not be made immediately due to its absence from the current agenda, the town could hold a special meeting or address it in the following month's meeting if the fire danger level increased. McLean also mentioned the importance of monitoring any updates from the Forest Service, as there was significant Forest Service land in the area.

Margaret Bourke said she was very pleased to have read in the consent agenda that the town would be getting a new website.

3. **SNOWBIRD UPDATE, DAVE FIELDS**

00:04:50

Dave Fields, President and General Manager of Snowbird, provided an update on recent and upcoming changes related to SR 210 and parking in and around Snowbird. Fields presented a map highlighting several areas impacted by these changes. Fields noted that Snowbird had implemented new no-parking zones along the north side of SR 210, including in front of Snowbird, below entry one, and above entry four. Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) planned to install cantilever signs this summer to improve visibility and durability. On the south side of the highway, in the green-highlighted areas between entry one and entry four, Snowbird intended to work with UDOT to widen the shoulders to enhance pedestrian safety. Fields also mentioned they would be using snow cats to create access paths from the highway to the village, which aimed to reduce pedestrian traffic along the roadway. Fields stated that chip seal was also applied to the Bypass Road and entry two to improve traffic flow during inclement weather.

Fields highlighted the challenges associated with managing parking areas affected by avalanche conditions, particularly the superior lot and the green areas along the road. These areas, representing about 400 of Snowbird's 2,500 parking spots, are managed based on real-time avalanche safety assessments and weather conditions making them difficult to include in a reservation system. Fields expressed concerns about adopting similar parking reservation systems as those implemented at Alta, Solitude, and Brighton due to the complex nature of Snowbird's parking areas and the risk of increased congestion if reservations were not managed effectively. Fields emphasized the potential inefficiencies and complications, particularly if reservations had to be canceled due to safety issues.

Fields mentioned that Snowbird would not park the north side of SR 210 during Oktoberfest and was still deciding on parking arrangements above entry four, depending on ongoing construction and road closures.

Dan Schilling expressed satisfaction with the safety improvements at Snowbird, specifically the green shoulder widening and cat tracks. Schilling praised these measures for enhancing safety and appreciated the no-parking zones on the north side of SR 210. Fields mentioned that Jake Brown from UDOT was working on the safety improvements, including the implementation of no-parking signs. Fields noted that while these changes would not be in place by the start of the season, efforts would continue to prepare for their eventual use. Elise Morgan noted that not parking on the north side of SR 210 during Oktoberfest would likely improve access for emergency vehicles. Fields confirmed they are pushing for the installation of no-parking signs by August 10.

John Byrne raised concerns about parking on both sides of the road around the Bypass Road loop, especially near the firehouse. Fields clarified that parking would be restricted on the right side of the bypass road, and efforts would be made to address parking issues near the bridge. Fields acknowledged challenges with parking near the bridge and mentioned that a little triangle area had been problematic. Fields indicated plans to manage this better. Morgan inquired about ongoing projects at Snowbird. Fields explained that they were remodeling the parking structure, replacing the Wilbur chairlift with a fixed-grip quad, and working on the mid-Gad restaurant replacement.

Fields also provided an update on the UTA 953 replacement, noting that it was out to bid and would likely involve a private vendor for van service. Fields expressed support for this development as it would benefit Snowbird's employees and guests.

Mayor Bourke suggested Fields attend future meetings and appreciated the updates.

4. **UTAH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE ON THE SUPERIOR MOUNTAIN REMOTE AVALANCHE CONTROL SYSTEMS (RACS) PROJECT, STEVEN CLARK**

00:21:05

Steven Clark, UDOT's Avalanche Program Manager, provided an update on the avalanche mitigation project in the canyon. Clark highlighted that the project aimed to replace the use of military artillery with more modern systems to enhance safety and reduce overhead fire. Specifically, the project would replace 90% of the overhead fire with Wyssen towers, installing 16 towers in total—14 on Mount Superior and 2 replacing unreliable O'bellx systems. Clark reported that construction began on July 8 and was expected to continue until October. Clark said the project involved significant public outreach, including signage and notifications to local businesses to minimize disruptions to critical summer events. Clark noted a challenge with the project's logistics due to the unavailability of a smaller helicopter, which would likely extend the project's duration. The construction area on Mount Superior was closed to the public starting July 7, with high traffic observed before the closure. Clark also mentioned ongoing issues with maintenance of the rapid Gazex exploders, highlighting a recent malfunction that required additional work during the closure. Clark acknowledged that maintaining such equipment across a large area would be challenging and would necessitate more closures and helicopter time. Clark concluded by offering to provide further updates and encouraged individuals to contact Clark or the communications team for more information.

Clark confirmed that the Peruvian Ridge Howitzer on Mount Superior would be retired once the Wyssen towers are fully operational. However, the Howitzer at Snowbird would remain in use for the foreseeable future. Clark noted that artillery programs might have only about ten years of ammunition left before facing significant cost increases for new supplies. Byrne asked whether the new Wyssen towers would help keep the mainline open during storms. Clark responded that the towers would likely improve operational efficiency and reduce the duration of closures, though Clark did not anticipate a drastic change. Clark said the Wyssen towers are highly effective, but some closures will still be necessary for worker safety. Dan Schilling inquired about the effectiveness of Wyssen towers compared to artillery, given that artillery offers more flexibility. Clark assured the council that Wyssen towers are very effective. Clark also noted the reload frequency for Wyssen towers, noting a mid-

season reload might not be necessary under average winter conditions. Clark said each tower holds 12 shots, and while adjustments might be needed as they gain experience, the current setup should suffice. Morgan asked if malfunctioning Gazex systems might be replaced with Wyssen towers, to which Clark responded that replacing equipment with Wyssen towers is a significant investment, and UDOT plans to maintain existing systems as long as possible. Clark estimated the cost of a Wyssen tower to be around $120,000 for the equipment, with total installation costs approaching $180,000 due to challenges such as helicopter access. Byrne noted that helicopter flight paths this year have improved, with less flights over Alta compared to last year.

Mike Morey inquired about the radar system used for avalanche detection, which continuously monitors Mount Superior and can detect people in the area. Clark acknowledged the radar's high cost and highlighted its effectiveness, especially in adverse weather conditions where other radar systems fall short.

Carolyn Anctil thanked UDOT for their efforts to mitigate noise disturbance and their sensitivity to affected residents. Morgan suggested having Clark return for an update at either the September or October meeting.

5. **ALTA SKI AREA UPDATE, MIKE MAUGHAN**

00:40:55

Mike Maughan provided an update on various summer projects and activities in the town of Alta. Maughan reported the summer road and campground were open, though a water leak issue has delayed the availability of water at the campground. This is expected to be resolved by the end of the week or early the following week. Maughan reported the Sugarloaf patrol building project is progressing with cement poured for footings and foundation walls scheduled to be completed soon. Additionally, work has begun on the High Traverse project and they are expecting to start work on the entrance to the Ballroom Traverse soon.

Maughan said the installation of two new conveyors at the Albion Base is pending final approvals from the Forest Service, with work likely to commence in August. On the employment front, Maughan said Scott Chaplin, the manager of the Watson Shelter will not be returning next year and interested candidates should apply through Alta's website.

Maughan responded to specific questions about the Supreme Lift. Maughan said the aluminum sheeting for attaching the chair pads had cracked, but is being replaced. All other components of the lift have been inspected and will be fine for the upcoming season. Long-term solutions, such as a straight lift alignment or addition of an angle station and modifications to the comfort chair, are being explored with Poma, and a plan is expected within the next month.

Maughan explained that the dirt being hauled up the summer road is for several projects. Some of the dirt is used to improve the connection from the top of Sunnyside down to the Alf's area by detuning a sharp berm near the Catherine's Trailhead. Dirt is also being used to smooth a steep corner at the end of the Sleepy Hollow cat track. This work should be completed within two weeks, after which dirt

hauling will stop. A separate snowmaking utility project is planned for September, but efforts are being made to minimize traffic disruption during the peak summer period.

6. **QUESTIONS REGARDING DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

00:47:30

Mayor Bourke said traffic citation are increasing and asked Morey to address. Morey explained that traffic in the winter is self-regulating since there are more cars on the road versus in the summer when it's quieter.

7. **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: JUNE 20, 2024, MEETING MINUTES, STAFF AND FINANCE REPORTS**

00:50:30

Mayor Bourke

MOTION: Elise Morgan motioned to approve the consent agenda including the June 20, 2024 town council meeting minutes, and staff and finance reports. Dan Schilling seconded.

VOTE: All were in favor. The June 20, 2024 meeting minutes, and staff and finance reports were approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

8. **MAYORS REPORT**

00:55:00

Mayor Bourke noted that there was no astronomy report last month due to a crowded agenda, but this month would include a double report. Mayor Bourke recounted a recent tabletop emergency preparedness exercise and shared information about a planetary defense community exercise involving a potentially hazardous asteroid. Mayor Bourke explained that while redirecting such an asteroid is a potential solution, the likelihood of such an impact is low, as Earth is continuously hit by smaller space materials.

Mayor Bourke then reported that Chris Otto, previously in the town office, took a senior management role in Salt Lake County's Parks and Recreation and that Molly Austin would be moving into the position of Assistant Town Manager. Mayor Bourke also noted that Bekee Hotze, the Forest Service District Ranger, was moving to a higher position in the Teton National Forest. Both individuals were noted to have a positive regard for the town, and an event was planned to say farewell to Bekee.

Mayor Bourke also announced an upcoming event on July 18 where mayors from the Salt Lake Valley would visit Alta. Mayor Bourke aimed to highlight the town's natural beauty.

Next council meeting would be Wednesday, August 14, 2024.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

01:04:50

Elise Morgan thanked the town staff for setting up the town park.

10. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO COMMENCE A CLOSED MEETING TO DISCUSS A MATTER AUTHORIZED BY UTAH CODE SECTION 52-4-205(1)(d)**

01:05:40

MOTION: Elise Morgan motioned to commence a closed meeting to discuss a matter authorized by Utah code section 52-4-205(1)(d). Dan Schilling seconded.

ROLL CALL VOTE: John Byrne – yes, Carolyn Anctil – yes, Mayor Bourke – yes, Elise Morgan – yes, Dan Schilling – yes, a closed meeting was unanimously approved.

RESULT: APPROVED

CLOSED MEETING COMMENCES AND THEN ADJOURNS

(Carolyn Anctil left the meeting)

THE MAYOR REOPENS THE REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING (second recording)

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Mayor Bourke called the meeting back to order

MOTION: John Byrne motioned to adjourn, and Dan Schilling seconded.

VOTE: All in favor. The meeting was unanimously adjourned.

RESULT: APPROVED

Passed this 14th day of August, 2024

Jen Clancy, Town Clerk