



8
9 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
10 **COUNCIL ECONOMY SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY,**
11 **MARCH 12, 2025, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON**
12 **AND 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:** John Adams, Chair
16 Mike Marker
17 Ed Marshall
18 Hilary Arens
19 Kim Doyle

20
21 **Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director
22 Samantha Kilpack, Director of Operations

23
24 **Others:** John Knoblock

25
26 **OPENING**

27
28 **1. Chair John Adams will Open the Public Meeting of the Economy System Committee.**

29
30 Chair John Adams called the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Stakeholders Council Economy
31 System Committee Meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. and welcomed those present.

32
33 **2. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the February 12, 2025, Meeting.**

34
35 Ed Marshall referenced Line 46 on Page 5 and asked that the word “activity” be changed to “form of
36 recreation.” He explained that “form of recreation” is consistent with his position.

37
38 **MOTION:** Ed Marshall moved to APPROVE the February 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes, as amended.
39 John Adams seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

40
41 It was previously suggested that there be a calendar of action items created after each Economy
42 System Committee Meeting. Chair Adams would ideally like to have the calendar in the Google
43 Drive folder that Committee Members can access. He offered to work with CWC Staff on this.

44
45 One action item discussed at the last meeting was a visual to represent the interconnectedness of the
46 different systems. Chair Adams reported that a visual representation will be reviewed by the
47 Committee later on in the meeting. At the last Economy System Committee Meeting, there were also

1 discussions about economic activity, where the money goes, and how to track that information. Linda
2 Johnson offered to look into that as did Patrick Shea. That action item can be added to the calendar.

3
4 **FEDERAL FUNDING AND STAFFING CUTS DISCUSSION.**

- 5
6 1. **The Committee will Discuss the Impact of Federal Cuts to the Forest Service.**
7
8 2. **The Committee will Discuss the Impact of Federal Cuts on Wildfire Mitigation Efforts.**
9
10 a. **Fuels Reduction Ability.**
11 b. **“Resilience Fund” Project.**
12
13 3. **The Committee will Discuss the Concept of a “White Paper” Looking at the Effects of**
14 **Federal Cuts on the Goals of the Mountain Accord.**
15

16 Chair Adams explained that the impact of the Federal cuts to the U.S. Forest Service was discussed
17 during the last Stakeholders Council Meeting. The Economy System Committee can further discuss
18 what is happening with the Forest Service as well as the impacts on the wildfire mitigation efforts.

19
20 Mr. Marshall reported that he recently spoke to Lance Kovel and Adam Shaw from the Forest Service.
21 He reminded Committee Members that Mr. Shaw is the new District Ranger. According to
22 Mr. Kovel, the forest as a whole has lost 48 employees as a result of the discharges and resignations.
23 Mr. Shaw stated that the Salt Lake Ranger District lost 10 employees. The cuts made were not
24 supposed to impact firefighting, but there is less clarity when it comes to fuel reduction. Fire
25 suppression is done by people who have primary firefighting certificates. Mr. Shaw stated that none
26 of those people were lost to the cuts. That being said, there were losses in the support area. Many
27 others in the Forest Service have certificates that allow them to support the primary firefighters. Some
28 of those employees have been lost, but according to the Forest Service, the situation is fluid and could
29 change.
30

31 Mr. Marshall reported that a few hours before the Economy System Committee Meeting, he read an
32 article from Wildfire Today. There was an announcement that the Merit Systems Protection Board,
33 an independent Federal court that focuses on government employee complaints, issued a stay order
34 against the United States Department of Agriculture. The United States Department of Agriculture
35 was ordered to reinstate the 6,000 probationary employees by March 12, 2025. Late yesterday, the
36 United States Department of Agriculture announced that they were reinstating those employees with
37 back pay, but only for the 45-day period that the stay order is in effect. The status of those employees
38 will continue to be uncertain in the future. The basis for this order was that the mass firing without
39 any type of identification of the workers being fired was likely illegal. He suspects the United States
40 Department of Agriculture will follow the appropriate process in the next month and more will be
41 known at that time. Mr. Marshall noted that these actions could affect the supplemental firefighters.
42

43 Mike Marker wanted to understand how vulnerable the area is as far as risk mitigation and resources.
44 Mr. Marshall reported that the different forests often send help when there is a large fire. For example,
45 when the California fires occurred, Utah and other States sent firefighters to assist. Without secondary
46 backup, events like that could reduce the local force that is available, so there are certain risks.
47

1 Hilary Arens echoed the comments shared. She spoke to Dave Fields about this issue earlier that
2 morning. Based on that conversation, it seems the most immediate impacts in the Wasatch-Cache
3 will be related to trail maintenance and restroom maintenance. There will need to be creative planning
4 efforts to address those needs. She noted that Snowbird helps manage and clean the White Pine
5 restrooms, and the Town of Brighton does a fair bit, as does Solitude. Ms. Arens shared information
6 about wildfire mitigation. The previous plan was to focus on Parley's Canyon, Big Cottonwood
7 Canyon, and then Little Cottonwood Canyon for forest thinning. Her understanding is because of the
8 reduction in staff, that might be delayed. Snowbird will have to look into doing more wildfire
9 mitigation and management on their own rather than relying on the Forest Service to provide that.

10
11 John Knoblock believes work will continue to be done in Millcreek. He explained that there has been
12 work happening in Millcreek on fuels reduction. The hope was to be able to move into Big
13 Cottonwood Canyon, but the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") is not done yet to do that.
14 There are also staffing limitations. As a result, the work will continue to take place in Millcreek.
15 Something else he believes is happening with respect to the trail work is that the Town of Brighton is
16 donating money to the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. The Cottonwood Canyons Foundation will
17 then work with the Forest Service trails crew on the summer trail work that needs to be done.

18
19 Chair Adams asked about the work that Snowbird is looking to do. He wanted to know if it has to do
20 with creating a defensible space or is more general. Ms. Arens clarified that most of the buildings
21 have a defensible space, as there are not a lot of trees that come up right next to the buildings. As a
22 result, she would imagine it has more to do with forest thinning. She offered to speak to her colleagues
23 to better understand what that work will look like. She can then report back to the Committee.

24
25 Chair Adams is curious about the perspective of the resorts, especially if certain work might have to
26 become more privately funded. Ms. Arens reported that Snowbird owns approximately 50% of the
27 land that is operated on. The other 50% is Forest Service land. If there is forest thinning that needs
28 to be conducted on the runs, that will be on Forest Service land. Chair Adams asked if these kinds of
29 discussions are happening at Brighton Resort as well. Kim Doyle confirmed this. She attended the
30 Town Council Meeting last night and there were discussions about paying the Cottonwood Canyons
31 Foundation to work on trails. The Forest Service is asking for restroom maintenance assistance.

32
33 Mr. Marker pointed out that the Federal government is cutting back support and services with the idea
34 that this is what the public wants. However, many are questioning the decisions that have been made.
35 While there is a need to take some sort of action to address the cutbacks, the question is whether it is
36 sustainable. Once the public and communities start being responsible for maintenance, then
37 ownership starts to shift. Communities are not designed to provide this kind of long-term support for
38 public areas. Mr. Marker reminded those present that there have been struggles to implement a shuttle
39 service in Millcreek Canyon, as there has been past resistance from the Forest Service. There is now
40 a negotiating tool. If the Forest Service needs assistance, it might be worth asking what will be
41 received in return. Mr. Marker asked the Committee to think about potential long-term solutions.

42
43 Mr. Knoblock noted that there is the Cottonwood Canyons Transportation Investment Fund that has
44 been approved. The State Division of Outdoor Recreation also has a budget for trail work for various
45 recreational projects throughout the State. If the CWC needs money to continue restroom
46 maintenance work, it is possible to do some outreach. It is important to look into the different options.

1 **CANYON PURPOSE TRUST DISCUSSION**

2
3 **1. The Committee will Discuss the Concept of a Canyon Purpose Trust.**

4
5 Chair Adams explained that he suggested a Canyon Purpose Trust at the last Stakeholders Council
6 Meeting. He wants to discuss the idea of a trust and how it would fit into the Mountain Accord and
7 protect the livelihood of the canyons in the future. He asked for Committee feedback on the idea.

8
9 The Millcreek Canyon fee booth was discussed. This has made it possible to rejuvenate some of the
10 camp areas and focus on restroom maintenance there. Mr. Marshall reported that the system went
11 into effect in the late 1990s, so it has been in place for almost three decades. It generates quite a bit
12 of revenue for the Forest Service each year. That revenue is supposed to be spent in Millcreek
13 Canyon, where the money is generated. The revenue used to be approximately \$600,000, but then
14 there was a toll increase a few years back. The fee then became \$5, which he believes should have
15 increased the revenue to the Forest Service to approximately \$900,000. Mr. Knoblock noted that the
16 County budget projects the fee booth revenue at \$1 million. Out of that \$1 million, an estimated
17 \$100,000 goes back to run the fee booth and pay the employees. The Forest Service prepares a budget
18 and that budget is presented to the County. The County then transfers the money to the Forest Service
19 so the Forest Service can spend it accordingly. Something similar to that in Big Cottonwood Canyon
20 and Little Cottonwood Canyon might be a way to resolve some of the current issues.

21
22 Mr. Marshall asked about the fees proposed for Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood
23 Canyon. He wanted to know if the litigation will impact the timeline for tolling. Mr. Knoblock noted
24 that there are three different fees out there. One is a trailhead fee, which is related to the Federal
25 Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, where fees are charged for parking at trailheads. The Uinta-
26 Wasatch-Cache National Forest has fees at Cardiff, Spruces, and Silver Lake. This summer, there
27 will be fees in other areas as well. He believes that money stays within the Salt Lake Ranger District.
28 If there is tolling in the canyons, that will be done through the Utah Department of Transportation
29 (“UDOT”). He clarified that the money would remain with UDOT for road work. If the Central
30 Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act (“CWNCRA”) is able to move forward, the
31 fees would remain with the land manager, which would be the Salt Lake Ranger District.

32
33 Chair Adams pointed out that there are challenges that face the canyons as a result of population
34 growth and increased visitor numbers. There are positives, in the fact that growth can help support
35 the economy, but there are other impacts to consider as well. If the Forest Service loses Federal
36 funding, then some of the money that supports the work is lost. If tolls are put in, those will be put
37 in by different entities that control the money for their purposes. He asked if the idea of a Canyon
38 Purpose Trust might fit in as a possible solution to the issues that have been outlined. Mr. Knoblock
39 referenced the Tourism, Recreation, Culture, and Convention (“TRCC”) fund which is made up of
40 sales tax, transient room tax, rental car tax, and airport tax. It is collected by the State and then
41 returned to the counties in proportion to where it was generated. For Salt Lake County, approximately
42 half of the TRCC funding is used to support the Parks and Recreation Department. The rest of it is
43 distributed to projects in the County. He pointed out that certain projects could be submitted for
44 TRCC funding.

45
46 Chair Adams pointed out that all of the wealth starts with natural capital. The canyon itself provides
47 natural capital to generate income for employees, businesses, and business owners. The natural
48 capital continues to be drawn on to build income. The idea of a Canyon Purpose Trust is to use some

1 of that income to preserve the wealth of the canyon. It is important to understand that the economy
2 has embedded itself within the natural environment. The latest In The Wasatch podcast episode
3 featured an interview with Morgan Mingle, where there were discussions about what is happening in
4 Park City. Ms. Mingle was asked what makes a thriving tourism business and she replied that a
5 thriving tourism business needs to balance the environment, economy, and social needs.

6
7 Chair Adams shared images to illustrate how the economy resides within society and within the
8 environment. He reviewed an image that has arrows to represent the different inputs into the system
9 that support the economy. It also shows the different outputs and unintended consequences. Some
10 examples of unintended consequences include air pollution, water impacts, traffic, and unsupported
11 restrooms. He reiterated the comments shared by Ms. Mingle during the In The Wasatch podcast
12 about balancing environment, economy, and social needs. The image is a visual representation of
13 this. In order for the economy to thrive, it must reinvest in the natural resource, which is the canyons.

14
15 Chair Adams reviewed additional presentation slides with the Economy System Committee. Mr.
16 Knoblock challenged the wording, “regeneration versus extraction.” He feels the resorts do a good
17 job of trying to ensure the resource is protected while still providing a recreational opportunity for
18 members of the public. People come from all over to participate in the experiences the resorts provide.
19 It is not solely extractive. Chair Adams clarified that he has since changed the wording to
20 “leveraged.” Mr. Marker explained that the ski resorts need to be sustainable and provide value to
21 guests. If resorts do not think about guest experience, do not create a sustainable experience, and do
22 not act as good stewards of the land, then the revenue suffers because guests go elsewhere. There
23 needs to be a balance, as the canyons are not being supported financially relative to the economic
24 value that they are bringing to the State. He stressed the importance of sustainability.

25
26 Mr. Knoblock asked about next steps to move the Canyon Purpose Trust discussion forward. Chair
27 Adams believed there should be some outreach about different sources of revenue, such as the TRCC.
28 He would also like to discuss the way tax revenue in Park City is used for sustainability.
29 Mr. Knoblock suggested identifying the needs and the costs. Once those are known, it becomes
30 possible to request funding. Additional discussions were had about a Canyon Purpose Trust and how
31 something like that could be used. Chair Adams shared comments about the Millcreek Canyon fee
32 booth. He likes knowing that the money collected is going back into the canyon. As for the Canyon
33 Purpose Trust, he will continue to look into this. He liked the suggestion from Mr. Knoblock to think
34 about the funds that might be available and the needs. It would be beneficial to receive input from
35 the resorts about that. Ms. Doyle offered to reach out to Chair Adams after the meeting to share ideas.

36
37 Mr. Marshall asked Committee Members to think about where it might be possible to obtain the
38 revenue generation information mentioned previously. It can then be determined if that information
39 is subject to a GRAMA request or a Freedom of Information Act request. In order to file something
40 like that, there needs to be clarity about who has that information. Chair Adams offered to look into
41 some of the potential action items that have been discussed by the Economy System Committee.

42 **ENVIRONMENTAL DASHBOARD DISCUSSION**

43 **1. The Committee will Discuss Contributing to the Human Element of the Environmental** 44 **Dashboard.**

45
46
47
48 The above item was not discussed.

1
2 **SYSTEMS THINKING VISUAL**

- 3
4 1. **The Committee will Discuss Developing a “Canyon Systems Diagram” to Visualize the**
5 **Interconnectedness of Systems.**

6
7 The item was not discussed.

8
9 **OTHER ITEMS**

- 10
11 1. **The Committee May Raise Other Topics Not Previously Discussed.**

- 12
13 2. **The Committee will Discuss Potential Agenda Items for the Next Meeting.**

14
15 There were no additional discussions.

16
17 **PUBLIC COMMENT**

18
19 There were no public comments.

20
21 **CLOSING**

- 22
23 1. **Chair Adams will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Economy System Committee**
24 **Meeting.**

25
26 **MOTION:** John Knoblock moved to ADJOURN the Economy System Committee Meeting. Ed
27 Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

28
29 The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 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 System Committee Meeting held Wednesday,*
3 *March 12, 2025.*

4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

9

10 Minutes Approved: _____