

MEETING MINUTES
ALTA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 3:00 PM
Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

ALTA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING – 3:00 PM

PRESENT: Jon Nepstad, Chair (virtual)
Jeff Niermeyer, Vice-Chair (virtual)
Paul Moxley (virtual)
Maren Askins (virtual)
Roger Bourke, Town of Alta Mayor

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Cawley, Town Manager
Molly Austin, Assistant Town Manager
Polly McLean, Town Attorney (virtual)

ALSO PRESENT: John Guldner, Cottonwood Lands Advisory (virtual)

NOT PRESENT: David Abraham

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Planning Commission Chair Jon Nepstad opened the August 27, 2025 meeting at 3:01 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comment received

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 15, 2025 MEETING

Planning Commission Chair Jon Nepstad introduced the main agenda item for this meeting as reviewing and approving the minutes from the July 15, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting. He stated that the July 15th meeting had been an important meeting that included a wide-ranging discussion and expressed gratitude that all commission members were in attendance. Nepstad agreed with Chris Cawley that the magnitude of that meeting warranted holding today's meeting so the minutes could be approved and added to the record. Nepstad asked members of the Planning Commission to share their comments on the minutes as drafted, starting with Jeff Niermeyer.

Niermeyer started by noting two small typos to be corrected:

- Page 11 of the minutes, item #3: 2004 should be corrected to 2014.
- Page 11 of the minutes, second to last paragraph: added clarification that the cap on water usage is 8,000 gallons per day.

Niermeyer then started more in-depth discussions about some of the final conditions listed on page 12 of the minutes.

Starting with item number #9, Niermeyer noted that the discussion regarding the building height was not fully captured in the current version of the minutes. He recalled a discussion led by David Abraham requesting that the height of the building was not to exceed the height of the Summer Road. After some dialogue about the sloped nature of the Summer Road, it was ultimately suggested by the applicant to consider the center line of the roof edge to be 8,850' in elevation.

Planning Commission chair Jon Nepstad asked if the height of any additional HVAC or other appurtenances that would be on top of the building was considered in determining the building height. It was clarified by both Jeff Niermeyer and Chris Cawley that the height of any appurtenances would be above the 8,850' mark, as it was not explicitly clarified by the Commission that those additions meet any height requirements.

Jeff Niermeyer then moved on to address condition #11 and suggested some revised language to better describe how the water system is intended to function.

Roger Bourke shared some context and background from the 2014 agreement about the location and function of the proposed water tank – highlighting that it was intended to gravity-feed 10 homes and provide emergency water for fire protection purposes. It was acknowledged that details about emergency water function were not articulated in the previous meeting.

Lastly, condition #4 was discussed to clarify whether the Commission's intent was to support the *process* of pursuing approval or to require the Estate to *obtain* approval for the alternate driveway. It was clarified that approval of the driveway was the condition.

John Guldner discussed condition #10 – requesting clarification that the building will maintain 3 workforce housing units, one of which will be a live-in caretaker unit with a minimum of 650 square feet, noting that the current language implies only one workforce unit had to be included.

Roger Bourke noted that in hindsight, it would have been helpful to have the conditions displayed for all to see during the meeting and hopes we can learn from that and do a better job in the future.

As a result of the discussions, the following red-line changes were made to the draft minutes:

- ~~4) Approval of alternative year-round access for a separate parallel driveway. The Town and the Estate will jointly support the Forest Service Special Use Permit application for a separate parallel driveway~~
- ~~4) — Consideration of joint support from the Town and Estate for alternative year-round access via a Forest Service Special Use Permit application for a separate parallel driveway.~~
- 5) Agreement regarding the construction, operation, and maintenance of public restrooms accessible via the Summer Road, to be provided by the Estate as a public benefit associated with the project.
- 6) Receiving updated utility will serve letters for the proposed condominium project.
- 7) Working out agreements with Alta Ski Lifts.
- 8) Height of the building is not to exceed 8 stories and will step-back two times within the top 3 stories.
- 9) Height of the building is not to exceed the height of the summer road, as represented by the applicant to be 8,850' in elevation.
- 10) One of the three workforce housing units will be a dedicated live-in caretaker unit built to a minimum size of 650 square feet.
- 11) ~~Water tank is gravity fed. Water tank will gravity-feed the water system as agreed in the 2014 stipulation~~

Jeff Niermeyer motioned to approve the minutes from the July 15, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting, as amended. Maren Askins seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

4. NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2025 at 3:00 PM.

Chris Cawley described that HB48, adopted in the 2025 Utah legislative session, requires municipalities to adopt the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) code by December 31 2025. The WUI code sets guidelines for defensible space, ignition resistant construction methods and materials, and fire flow requirements, amongst other things. Cawley noted there is some debate on whether or not this is officially considered a land use regulation, but as a best practice it is recommended to have it come before the Planning Commission. Cawley highlighted that some principles of the WUI code conflict with some of the regulations in Town Code regarding vegetation management. Given the timeline for adoption, staff will prepare a presentation and discussion on this topic for the September meeting.

Roger Bourke noted that this may require revisions to current Town Code regarding tree removal restrictions. Cawley acknowledged this conflict and shared that all of our peer jurisdictions have already adopted the WUI code, noting that the defensible space provisions are not “cookie-cutter” and can be tailored to the specific needs of the jurisdiction.

Jeff Niermeyer stated another potential conflict with existing water contracts relative to fire flows.

Next, a discussion ensued about the timeline and meeting schedule necessary to comply with the statutory timeline to adopt the WUI code. Polly McLean recommended bringing it to the Town Council in their November meeting and noted a planning commission public hearing will be required to make any changes to Town Code.

Niermeyer asked whether staff would provide proposed edits to Town Code in the September meeting, or if the September meeting would just include an informative presentation on the code requirements, followed by amending the Town Code in October. Cawley observed that we don't have a choice but to adopt the WUI code and we will have to do our best to resolve any conflicts with our current code. Cawley noted that the Town will have to adopt the WUI code by reference. Polly elaborated that it will be adopted as an attachment to our code.

Jon Nepstad stated he hopes to have a Public Hearing in October so we can get it to the council on time for the November council meeting and prefers that to having the Public Hearing in September so the public has more information to respond to following the discussion in September.

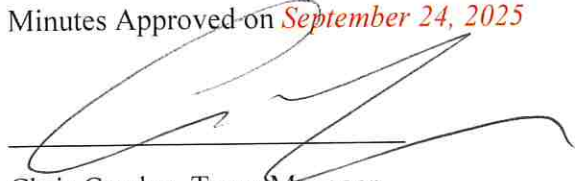
McLean noted that the Estate project is likely to go to the Town Council for a work session in September.

Jon Nepstad expressed his interest in having the Commission participate in a "walk about" or perhaps a "ski about" around Alta Ski Area (depending on time of year) to see some of the updates and capital projects the Alta Ski Area has been working on in recent months, noting they have had a very busy construction season. After further discussion, it was determined to target this tour for December 17 to align with the scheduled December Commission meeting.

6. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Planning Commission member Paul Moxley moved to adjourn the meeting. Planning Commission member Jeff Niermeyer seconded the motion, and the motion was passed unanimously.

Minutes Approved on *September 24, 2025*



Chris Cawley, Town Manager