

**Weber County
Friends of the Fairgrounds Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, September 18th, 2025
Golden Spike Event Center Conference Room**

Members Present: Tiffany Christiansen, Susan Clontz, Lee Dickemore, Korry Green, Shae Hill, Sharlan Holmes, Lora Parker, Michelle Taite, Stephanie Solomon, David Widdison

Staff Present: Duncan Olsen, Duane Kearsley, Ashton Wilson, Gabby Eisenbarth, Todd Ferrario, Emily Scoville, Kim Salas

Welcome:

Chair Connie Robinson opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. The meeting came to order at 12:27 pm.

Approval of Minutes:

Connie Robinson motioned to approve the minutes from the July 19th, 2025 meeting. So moved. The motion carried.

Weber County Report & Welcome: (Connie Robinson)

Connie welcomed the group.

Golden Spike Event Center Report: (Duncan Olsen)

Duncan mentioned some of the upcoming events at Golden Spike Event Center, such as the Cardboard Exchange, which is a new event. He highlighted some of the capital improvements to the Golden Spike Event Center property, including the new loping area to the North of the Riding Arena. He noted that this new area has been well received by the equestrian community. He also mentioned a new portable floor that was purchased to cover the Golden Spike Arena floor, which provides a hard floor space for groups such as expos and sporting events, providing more diverse opportunities to bring in group to the Golden Spike Arena and increase the centers economic impact to the community. A new event called Glow in the Dark Wrestling may be coming to the Golden Spike Event Center, partially in part to the roll out floor. He noted that this floor really elevated the experience for the livestock auction at the Weber County Fair this year. Duncan went on to let the group know about new security cameras that have been added around the property. Duncan then moved on to address concerns that some in the community have expressed regarding the changes being made to the Racetrack/Cross Country Course area. There are updates being made to allow for motocross and like events to be able to utilize the space, in addition to equestrian events. Duncan showed a news clip regarding the changes to the track and concerns being expressed by the Wasatch Pony Club about limiting their use. Duncan expressed his concerns about what he felt were partial truths and exaggerations being made during this news clip. He noted some facts that he wanted the group to be clear on, such as that Golden Spike Event Center will continue to host Wasatch Pony Club events, including their Pumpkin event being hosted on 9/27/25. He noted that the Wasatch Pony Club's numbers have been steadily declining, now have only 16 members total, 6 members in Weber County and that they have cancelled 2 out of 3 of their events this year due to lack of participation and funding. He added that the club will still be able to practice at Golden Spike Event Center, just with a more limited space. Duncan mentioned that due to lack of funding, Weber County has been subsidizing them in order to keep the club going. Duncan went on to express to the group that his

intention in allowing these changes is to bring more diverse groups and added revenue to the event center, such as truck pulls, monster truck races, and motocross events. Because of these changes, Golden Spike Event Center has contracted 3 new events in 2025 and expects to see at least 12 new events in 2026. The primary goal of the decision to make changes to the course was to improve the event centers economic impact to the County. Duncan continues by providing an example of this economic impact, an event called Whiskey Throttle which brought in \$16,000 in revenue in just one weekend, as compared to the Wasatch Pony Club events that do not bring in that much revenue in 10 of their events. Duncan expresses to the group that Golden Spike Event Center still wants to strengthen the equestrian community, but not by discounting the needs of other groups that bring more economic impact to the community. He added that Golden Spike Event Center will still have a cross country course and that the motocross course is just an adaptation of the current course and it can be adjusted with the needs of each event. Todd Ferrario added to this discussion by noting that it was a conscious choice to keep the racetrack and continue to support equestrian events. He said, Yes, we affected the jump course but the money coming in will only improve the race track and 80% of what the event center does will still be equestrian based. Shae Hill then added that she feels it is important to educate the public so they understand that no facility can financially sustain with equestrian events alone and the true story does not get told enough. Todd responded by saying that Government entities are not always the best at social media and have to consider the political backlash that comes when posting on social channels. He added that sometimes things have to be done quietly and Visit Ogden is a great help to get the right messages so responses are less divisive. Duncan then continued the conversation by letting everyone know that the infield is no different than Golden Spike Event Center indoor arenas in the fact that they are set up and altered for each event and then turned over for equestrian events. Just like, for example, a hard floor can be added and then removed in an indoor arena, the track can be altered and then changed back to suite different groups. He added that Golden Spike Event Center is here to drive tourism, to improve economic impact and to provide diverse events for the community to enjoy. Todd then expressed to the group the fact that there is an interlocal agreement for the track but there is no lease in place and the event center still has a job to do as a County entity.

Weber County Fair Report: (Ashton Wilson)

Ashton began by letting everyone know that the Fair evaluations is not yet ready but will be by the next meeting. She mentioned to the group that the biggest complaints she received this year were regarding the cost of food and the variety of vendors. Ashton told everyone that she recently went to the Utah State Fair and noticed that the food prices were much higher than at the Weber County Fair. She then went on to announce that the theme for the 2026 Weber County Fair will be America's Patriotic 250th Birthday.

Committee Discussion: (Ashton Wilson)

Ashton asked for feedback from the group in regard to the Weber County Fair. Michelle Tate said her experience with the jousting event in particular was difficult to enjoy due to the heat and lack of shade in that event area. She suggested adding shade in that event area if possible. Duncan and Ashton both agreed that jousting, though a fun concept and family friendly event, was both hot and not very exciting to watch. Susan Clontz expressed her concerns about the new food tent location, saying that many people thought it was too far to walk from where they purchased their food. She also noted that the bubble tower was too close to the food booths and was getting bubbles on the food. Susan went on to let Ashton know that people had asked her where the hypnotist was this year and her opinion that this attraction was a good addition for teenagers and should be brought back.

Susan suggested adding picnic tables throughout the grounds. David Widdison expressed his dislike for the magician and suggested that the 4H pick up area and premium pick-up area be placed in different locations to avoid confusion. Stephanie Solomon suggested that there be a ticket sales location available near the north entrance. Ashton responded by saying that was not possible this year but can be improved by adding more lights and signage. Stephanie also suggested that the golf games in the Recreation Hall be moved closer to a wall because the balls flow towards people. Ashton agrees to look into making that change. Duncan said that he does plan to buy more picnic tables. Shae Hill suggested that small bounce houses be added, in addition to the bounce houses geared towards older kids so there is more for smaller children to do.

Discussion/Action Items: (Chair Connie Robinson)

Ashton will be reviewing the feedback both from the community and vendors, as well as the feedback provided in the meeting today to see how she can make improvements for 2026. Duncan will be looking into purchasing additional picnic tables, which is already included in the master plan.

Old Business/New Business: (Chair Connie Robinson)

Nothing to report.

Adjourn:

The meeting concluded at 1:26pm. Chair Connie Robinson Motioned. So moved. The motion carried.