



**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS COUNCIL ECONOMY SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC OFFICES, LOCATED AT 311 SOUTH STATE STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**

**Committee Members:** John Adams, Chair  
John Knoblock, Co-Chair  
Becca Gerber  
Scott Hotaling

**Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director  
Sam Kilpack, Director of Operations  
Will McKay, Communications Director

**OPENING**

**1. Chair John Adams will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Economy System Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**

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

**2. Review and Approval of the Minutes of the November 12, 2025, Meeting.**

Chair Adams reported that there have been previous Economy System Committee discussions about canyon funding needs and the possibility of a Cottonwoods Commons Trust. Before there were more resources put into that work, it was decided that the idea would be shared with the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee. The information was presented to the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee, who then determined that it would be brought to the full CWC Board for consideration. The last CWC Board Meeting took place on Monday, and information was shared with Board Members. Chair Adams explained that there was high-level support, but there were timing concerns.

**MOTION:** John Knoblock moved to APPROVE the November 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes. Becca Gerber seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

## **REVIEW OF IDEAS**

### **1. The Committee will Review Ideas Discussed at the November 12, 2025, Meeting and Determine Whether any Should be Further Explored.**

Chair Adams reported that during the Stakeholders Council Meeting that was held in November, there was a breakout session. At that time, there was a discussion about the Central Wasatch and what the Stakeholders Council could work on in 2026. There were a lot of ideas shared at that time, and it might be beneficial for the Economy System Committee to review some of the relevant suggestions.

John Knoblock asked if the breakout session notes had been summarized by CWC Staff. Director of Operations, Sam Kilpack, denied this but explained that the notes are available for review. There are four sets of notes, but those have not been consolidated at this time. Chair Adams asked if there is a plan to consolidate the notes and distribute them to the Stakeholders Council. Ms. Kilpack confirmed that it is on the to-do list, but that task has not been completed at this point. Mr. Knoblock stated that those notes could be consolidated and then broken out into potential action items. That would be a meaningful way to inspire the Stakeholders Council to continue to focus on outcomes.

Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, reported that the breakout session notes can be summarized and sent out to the Stakeholders Council Members via email. Chair Adams noted that the Economy System Committee can review the summarized notes and discuss action items at a future meeting. There were meaningful ideas shared during the breakout session, so once the summarized list has been prepared, Committee Members can review it to determine whether there are possible action items.

## **CANYON FUNDING NEEDS DISCUSSION**

### **1. Chair Adams will Discuss the Status of the Canyon Trust Concept.**

### **2. The Committee will Discuss Next Steps for its List of Canyon Funding Needs.**

Chair Adams reported that the idea of a Cottonwoods Commons Trust was brought to the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee. He was able to spend some time with the Committee Members reviewing the rationale for this kind of trust. There was initial support for the idea, and it was put on the CWC Board Meeting agenda. Chair Adams attended the recent CWC Board Meeting to share information, but those meeting agendas are quite full due to a shift to quarterly meetings. If the Economy System Committee is interested in listening to the CWC Board Meeting recording, it has been posted on the Utah Public Notice website. The trust discussion starts one hour and 32 minutes into the recording. He went back and listened to the recording to better understand the responses.

During the CWC Board Meeting, there was high-level support for the idea, but the current focus of the CWC Board seems to be related to transportation and the Central Wasatch National and

1 Conservation Recreation Area Act (“CWNCRA”). Ms. Kilpack reported that the CWNCRA is  
2 envisioned to include transportation solutions and it is in the process of being revived. Chair  
3 Adams noted that the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) presented during the CWC  
4 Board Meeting. He asked if there was a connection to the UDOT work. Ms. Nielsen clarified that  
5 the Legislation is not linked to the UDOT work, but there are ways that the Legislation itself  
6 addresses transportation barriers. For example, in iterations of the Legislation, specific slivers of  
7 Wilderness were removed in order to allow for transit and transportation solutions when needed.  
8 When comments are made to state that transportation is addressed in the Legislation, that is what  
9 is being referred to.

10  
11 Chair Adams explained that when he listened to the responses about the trust, there was  
12 terminology about transportation being linked with the CWNCRA. He thanked CWC Staff for  
13 their clarification, because there was some difficulty trying to interpret some of the responses.  
14 Several CWC Board Member comments were highlighted for the Economy System Committee.  
15 Chair Adams reported that he provided a summary of the idea during the meeting, which included  
16 the fact that there is revenue generated from businesses in the canyons, and it is possible that some  
17 of that could be reallocated back into a trust that would support the preservation and protection of  
18 the canyons.

19  
20 During the meeting, CWC Board Chair Erin Mendenhall stated that this would be a State  
21 Legislature fiscal decision. She mentioned that this might be similar to the LeRay McAllister  
22 Working Farm and Ranch Fund, which is a trust to preserve productive farmland. There was some  
23 confusion expressed by Ex-Officio Member, Carlton Christensen, about how this would differ  
24 from the transportation fund. At the meeting, it was clarified that the idea of a Cottonwoods  
25 Commons Trust is not to fund more transportation solutions, but to look at the unintended  
26 consequences of additional visitation. Mayor Monica Zoltanski mentioned the idea of a land trust,  
27 where property is purchased to protect the land. She felt the CWC was the right place to discuss  
28 something that focused on the preservation and protection of the canyon. It was noted that this  
29 could potentially be discussed at a later time.

30  
31 Commissioner Christopher Robinson seemed fairly supportive when this idea was initially  
32 presented to the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee, but during the CWC Board Meeting, he did  
33 not feel this project was right at the current time. He is the one who mentioned the fact that the  
34 CWC is attempting to address certain issues in the Central Wasatch, such as transportation and the  
35 Federal Designation.

36  
37 Chair Mendenhall reiterated support for the concept but stated that she felt it was premature in the  
38 order of operations that the Legislature would want to see. She stated that if the CWC was able to  
39 help with a transportation solution, that would be evidence that the CWC could potentially be the  
40 stewards of a trust in the future. It seemed the main response from the CWC Board was that the  
41 focus is currently on transportation and the CWNCRA. Success there could potentially put the  
42 CWC in a position to manage this trust or look for resources to fund a trust like this at a different  
43 time.

44  
45 Mayor Scotty John expressed support for the idea and was interested in a conversation about  
46 different ideas. At the end of the discussion, Chair Mendenhall brought up an idea about

1 theoretically creating a foundation entity of the CWC. She admitted that this would be extra  
2 bureaucracy for the CWC, but if there was an opportunity for private funds from businesses or  
3 individuals, a foundation that would legally be able to receive those funds could be explored.  
4 Those funds could then be used for the purposes discussed. It was noted that Mr. Knoblock also  
5 attended the meeting. He shared ideas about where funds could come from, such as the Tourism,  
6 Recreation, Culture, and Convention (“TRCC”).

7  
8 Mr. Knoblock asked if there is anything in the CWNCRRA that establishes a fund that could be used  
9 for land purchases. Ms. Nielsen denied this. The only funding language is in the very last line of  
10 the Legislation, which requires Congress to designate funding to the CWNCRRA after passage of  
11 the act. The standard process for a bill is that if it is approved, it then moves to an Appropriations  
12 Committee. She reiterated that there is no language specific to a land acquisition fund, but there  
13 would be appropriations attached to the CWNCRRA if it was eventually passed. Mr. Knoblock  
14 shared information about the Salt Lake County TRCC fund. Ms. Nielsen noted that during the  
15 CWC Board Meeting, there was a comment made by Chair Mendenhall about this suggestion. She  
16 was unsure that the CWC was eligible to apply for TRCC funding. Each jurisdiction that applies  
17 has a certain amount, and she was unsure whether jurisdictions would be willing to decrease the  
18 amount individually received. It is possible to follow up and have continued TRCC discussions  
19 in the future.

20  
21 Ms. Nielsen offered to have a conversation with Mr. Knoblock about a fund for land acquisition.  
22 She shared additional information about a potential land acquisition program. It is not a matter of  
23 desire, but a matter of finding the funding to start that kind of program. Mr. Knoblock pointed out  
24 that different sources could be explored and reiterated the existing TRCC fund.

25  
26 Becca Gerber shared a comment about the CWC Board Meeting discussion. It was stated that the  
27 focus of the CWC Board seemed to be on transportation and the CWNCRRA. She asked if that is  
28 the sole purpose of the CWC at this time. Ms. Nielsen denied this. The CWC Board is not only  
29 interested in transportation and the CWNCRRA. The CWNCRRA is essentially the Mountain Accord  
30 charter. She reminded those present that the Mountain Accord endeavored to take a systemic  
31 approach to the issues of the mountains, which is the reason the Economy System Committee talks  
32 about the economy of the area. If there is a sense that the CWC Board is uninterested in economic  
33 issues, that is good information for CWC Staff to have, because the CWC Board cares about all of  
34 the different systems. She reiterated that the CWNCRRA takes a holistic approach to the issues that  
35 are facing the area.

36  
37 There was discussion about the role of the Economy System Committee. Chair Adams reported  
38 that during the Central Wasatch Symposium, there was a breakout group with the original  
39 stakeholders and their challenges were outlined. The economic group from that time was asked to  
40 consider how to grow the economy in the canyons while maintaining a systems approach. At the  
41 time, there was an idea to create the Environmental Dashboard. Care was taken to call it a  
42 dashboard rather than a scorecard. The idea was to provide information, so it was possible to track  
43 changes over time. The original stakeholders felt the idea of limits should be brought into the  
44 conversation. Chair Adams noted that growing the economy without limitations is simple.  
45 Something he likes about the Economy System Committee is that the focus is not on simply

1 increasing hotel bookings or bringing more skiers to resorts but achieving a balance. There are  
2 some limitations to growth, but those are not defined.

3  
4 Chair Adams stated that the Economy System Committee has been able to discuss how to make  
5 sure the economy thrives, while understanding there are some limitations. That was where the  
6 idea of a trust came from, because it might be possible to reinvest some of the money earned into  
7 the canyons.

8  
9 Chair Adams shared comments about transportation. He noted that traffic solutions are essentially  
10 solutions that bring more people into the canyon at one point in time. It is important not to lose  
11 sight of the interconnected systems. Ms. Gerber stated that there is more to a thriving economy  
12 than simply bringing more people into an area. This is something that has been discussed in  
13 Summit County. One idea is to move away from peaks and valleys and instead create more  
14 consistent patterns. She mentioned the importance of diversifying the economy in the mountains,  
15 which includes the CWC study area. She stated that there is a need to disperse the use. The  
16 Committee can discuss what the economy looks like and what there is an intention to accomplish  
17 outside of adding more visitors.

18  
19 Mr. Knoblock reported that the Mountain Accord area includes Summit County, the Wasatch  
20 Back, and Parley's Canyon, in addition to the tri-canyons. This is a large area and dispersed use,  
21 both geographically and with respect to timing, would be meaningful. Chair Adams liked the idea  
22 of focusing on dispersed use. His earlier comments about transportation were meant to highlight  
23 that when there are certain transportation solutions are implemented, it enables more people to be  
24 in the area. It is difficult to continue to enable more visitation without knowing what the impacts  
25 might be. He mentioned what happened with the Great Salt Lake and the reactive response that  
26 occurred. Chair Adams would like proactive action to be taken rather than there be reactive  
27 responses.

28  
29 Chair Adams encouraged the Economy System Committee to listen to the recording of the CWC  
30 Board Meeting. He also suggested that there be a brainstorming session about some of the ideas  
31 that have been shared. The idea of a trust, funded by tax money and supported through the CWC,  
32 appears to be off the table right now based on the priorities of the CWC Board. However, there  
33 can still be other ideas explored. This is something the Economy System Committee can put some  
34 thought into.

35  
36 Scott Hotaling believed there is general agreement that preserving land is valuable. The timing  
37 component, and it could happen, is slightly more complicated. He had not previously heard of the  
38 TRCC fund or some of the other mechanisms that already exist. It seems something like this could  
39 be done outside of the CWC. That being said, he does not necessarily want there to be an  
40 environment created where there are offshoots competing with the goals of the CWC. Something  
41 impressive about the CWC is that there is a shared voice. He appreciates that right now,  
42 transportation and the CWNCR are the focus, but he does not believe those should be the sole  
43 focus of the CWC. As someone who is relatively new to the CWC, he did not leave the Central  
44 Wasatch Symposium thinking that the CWC cared about much more than transportation at the  
45 current moment. That was clearly the thread that was running through everything. The Economy

1 System Committee further discussed the funding needs in the CWC study area and the tax revenues  
2 that are being generated.

### 3 4 **CENTRAL WASATCH SYMPOSIUM RECAP**

- 5
- 6 1. **Chair Adams will Discuss the 2026 Central Wasatch Symposium.**
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- 8 2. **The Committee will Discuss Impressions and Ideas from the Central Wasatch**  
9 **Symposium.**

10  
11 Chair Adams reported that during the CWC Board Meeting, Chair Mendenhall asked meeting  
12 attendees to share comments about the Central Wasatch Symposium. There was a lot of praise for  
13 CWC Staff. One of the highlights included the keynote address from Darren Parry. Chair Adams  
14 explained that Darren Parry spoke about the current relationship with the land and the need to  
15 change that relationship in order to preserve the land. He stated that the current relationship that  
16 exists with the canyons is something that will be passed to the next generation, which calls for a  
17 change.

18  
19 During the Central Wasatch Symposium, Dr. Jordan Smith spoke about putting dollar amounts on  
20 the decision to be healthy and recreate outdoors without visiting one of the for-profit businesses.  
21 That was an interesting perspective and is something that he would like to learn more about. There  
22 is a certain economic value, even if it is not as easily shown as financial profits. Jack Stauss from  
23 Save Our Canyons had a slightly different take, and he spoke about changing how wilderness is  
24 defined. The intention was to place economic value on the use of public land. Discussions were  
25 had about the Central Wasatch Symposium. Mr. Hotaling shared information about the rock  
26 glaciers presentation.

### 27 28 **OTHER ITEMS AND NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

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- 30 1. **The Committee May Raise Other Topics, If Desired.**
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- 32 2. **The Committee Will Discuss Topics for the Next Meeting Agenda.**
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34 Ms. Kilpack introduced the new Communications Director, Will McKay, to Committee Members.

### 35 36 **CLOSING**

- 37
- 38 1. **Chair Adams will Call for a Motion to Adjourn the Economy System Committee**  
39 **Meeting.**

40  
41 **MOTION:** Scott Hotaling moved to ADJOURN the Economy System Committee Meeting.  
42 Becca Gerber seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the  
43 Committee.

44  
45 The Economy System Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:32 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 on*  
3 *Wednesday, January 14, 2026.*  
4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

9

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