



8
9 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) STAKEHOLDERS**
10 **COUNCIL ECONOMY SYSTEM COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY,**
11 **FEBRUARY 11, 2026, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-**
12 **PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM. THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS THE CWC**
13 **OFFICES, LOCATED IN THE BRIGHTON BANK BUILDING AT 311 SOUTH STATE**
14 **STREET, SUITE 330, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.**

15
16 **Committee Members:** John Adams, Chair
17 John Knoblock, Co-Chair
18 Brendan Smith
19 Scott Hotaling
20 Hilary Arens
21 Kim Doyle

22
23 **Staff:** Will McKay, Communications Director
24

25 **OPENING**
26

27 **1. Chair John Adams will Open the Public Meeting as Chair of the Economy System**
28 **Committee of the Central Wasatch Commission Stakeholders Council.**
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 January 14, 2026, Meeting.**
34

35 Chair Adams reported that at the last Economy System Committee Meeting, there was discussion
36 about the previous Stakeholders Council Meeting. When the ideas from the Stakeholders Council
37 breakout session are compiled by CWC Staff, he asked that the document be shared. Communications
38 Director, Will McKay, offered to speak to the Director of Operations about the status of that work.
39

40 Chair Adams summarized some of the discussions from the last Economy System Committee
41 Meeting. Becca Gerber mentioned the need for additional conversations about a sustainable
42 economy. She sent out an email to the Chair and Co-Chair this week with ideas. Chair Adams
43 reported that at the Central Wasatch Symposium, Dr. Jordan Smith spoke about putting dollar
44 amounts on outdoor recreation for those not visiting a for-profit business. Chair Adams explained
45 that he tried to reach out to Dr. Smith for additional information, but had not heard back from him.
46

47 **MOTION:** Hilary Arens moved to APPROVE the January 14, 2026, Meeting Minutes. John
48 Knoblock seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

1
2 Chair Adams took a moment to welcome a new Committee Member, Brendan Smith, from Solitude
3 Mountain Resort. Mr. Smith explained that he has a background in many different aspects of resort
4 operations and has a degree in Sustainability Studies from Colorado Mountain College. His role is
5 Safety and Sustainability at Solitude Mountain Resort. Chair Adams reported that there are other ski
6 resort representatives on the Economy System Committee, including Hilary Arens from Snowbird
7 and Kim Doyle from Brighton. There is strong representation from the Cottonwoods ski resorts.
8

9 Chair Adams reported that Ed Marshall, who was representing Log Haven on the Stakeholders
10 Council, has stepped down. In the near future, he will no longer serve on the Stakeholders Council
11 or the Economy System Committee. Committee Members took a moment to introduce themselves.
12 Scott Hotaling reported that he is at Utah State University and is a Professor in the Department of
13 Watershed Sciences. He largely studies climate change in mountains and the impact that has on
14 natural resources. John Knoblock explained that he is the Chair for the Bonneville Shoreline Trail
15 Committee and Trails Utah. Kim Doyle introduced herself and stated that she is with Brighton Ski
16 Resort. Chair Adams stated that while he works at Solitude, he does not represent Solitude on the
17 Stakeholders Council or Economy System Committee. He serves as a Cottonwood Heights resident.
18

19 **CANYON FUNDING NEEDS DISCUSSION**

20 21 **1. The Committee will Discuss Requesting an Economic Report on the Ski Industry from** 22 **the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute to Help Identify Potential Sources of Ski Industry** 23 **Revenue that Could be Allocated Back into the Canyons.** 24

25 Chair Adams reported that there has been some discussion about the Economic Contributions of
26 Utah's Ski Industry report that the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute released. There is information
27 about the skier visits, the dollars spent, and the tax revenue generated. It looks at 15 resorts in the
28 State of Utah. The Economy System Committee previously suggested looking into specific numbers
29 for Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood Canyon. Chair Adams noted that the new report
30 showed that over a two-year window there was a drop of half a million skier days, but half a billion
31 dollars more in spending. There was almost a doubling in tax revenue. It would be beneficial to see
32 the raw data used for the report. The Chair and Co-Chair of the Economy System Committee have
33 discussed the possibility of commissioning something, as it could be informative for the CWC work.
34

35 Mr. Knoblock reported that he reached out to the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute and asked if it was
36 possible to have the information separated out between the Wasatch Front and Wasatch Back. He
37 was told to reach out to Nathan Rafferty, who stated that only State-wide numbers are shared because
38 there is a desire to protect the privacy of individual businesses. Chair Adams noted that there is still
39 a lot of useful information in the report. It is interesting that the last updated report showed the
40 spending from out of State visitors dropped, but the percentage that in-State visitors spent increased.
41

42 Mr. Knoblock asked if there is anything the Economy System Committee can do to advocate for year-
43 round sustainable business at the ski resorts. Ms. Arens offered to think about this and report back to
44 the Committee. Ms. Doyle mentioned the boundaries. She pointed out that it is difficult to drive
45 growth without expansion, but she is not certain the Committee can assist with that. Chair Adams
46 mentioned the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act ("CWNCR"). He
47 knows that the CWNCR is still being worked on, but he assumes that the intention is for the local

1 businesses to thrive without an expansion of boundaries. Mr. Knoblock clarified that there was some
2 language about a Brighton expansion, which has to do with the inclusion of Hidden Canyon.

3
4 Ms. Arens stated that the CWC and Snowbird could align better when it comes to transportation,
5 especially as the litigation associated with the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) Little
6 Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) moves forward. It would be
7 meaningful to have alignment on transportation. Mr. Smith agreed that transportation can be a barrier
8 to economic growth. The traffic and congestion on the road compared to the ski lift congestion do
9 not match. As an example, it might take an hour to reach the resort on the road, but the lift lines are
10 five minutes. He is used to the opposite in Colorado, where there were shorter travel times and longer
11 lift lines. With the Cottonwood Canyons ski resorts, there are infrastructure limitations. He agrees
12 that transportation has an economic impact. Additional discussions were had about ski lift line times.

13
14 Mr. Knoblock mentioned the Economy System Group from the Mountain Accord process. At that
15 time, there were discussions about the role of that group and how to make a difference while still
16 considering the other systems. Chair Adams discussed the history of the Mountain Accord and noted
17 that there is not room for unlimited growth in the canyons. The CWC was created to move the
18 Mountain Accord forward. He pointed out that Big Cottonwood Canyon and Little Cottonwood
19 Canyon are confined, have a sensitive ecosystem, and provide watershed drinking water. There can
20 be additional discussions about the revenue that comes from the economy and whether some of that
21 can be directed back to support the environment the businesses depend upon for their business model.

22
23 **2. The Committee will Discuss the Tourism, Recreation, Culture, and Convention**
24 **(“TRCC”) Funding as a Potential Source of Funding for the Canyons.**

25
26 Mr. Knoblock reported that Ms. Gerber shared some insights on potential sources of funding for the
27 canyons, as she deals directly with the Tourism, Recreation, Culture, and Convention (“TRCC”) fund.
28 If she is able to attend the next Economy System Committee Meeting, there can be additional
29 information provided. Mr. Knoblock mentioned an appropriations bill that funded a Cottonwood
30 Canyons Transportation Fund. Within that fund, there is over \$200 million that can be used to
31 improve transportation. The Legislature has been generous in appropriating funds to address the
32 existing transit issues. Now that the Big Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Assessment (“EA”) is
33 done, it is possible to start moving forward with some of the plans for Big Cottonwood Canyon.

34
35 As for the TRCC fund, it is unlikely that they would want to take the tax money and put it into a
36 separate pot for something like a Canyons Trust. However, if there are projects within the canyons
37 that need funding, it is possible to submit an application to the TRCC fund. Mr. Knoblock reported
38 that the application process starts in June. The TRCC Board reviews all of the applications and selects
39 projects to fund. He explained that it makes sense to use existing processes to fund canyon projects.

40
41 Chair Adams reported that when he brought up the idea of a Cottonwood Canyons Trust, Mayor Erin
42 Mendenhall had the idea to potentially create a foundation entity of the CWC. He explained that this
43 would not necessarily solve the transportation issues that exist, but a foundation would make it
44 possible to address other needs in the canyons. There are some smaller foundations within the
45 Cottonwoods already, so he would like to do some research to determine how those are managed.

46
47 Mr. Hotaling asked about baseline data that might show the traffic times and the ski lift line times.
48 There might be data like that from the private businesses, but he wondered whether the Economy

1 System Committee could obtain baseline data as well. He expressed frustration about the Kem C.
2 Gardner Policy Institute report, because it shows the overall numbers, but does not share the actual
3 data. Chair Adams agreed that it would be meaningful to have that kind of baseline data, but noted
4 that there might be difficulties obtaining it given the privacy concerns that have been communicated.
5 The ski resorts will not share certain information about skier counts or their definition of capacity.

6
7 Mr. Knoblock shared comments about the Central Wasatch Dashboard. In the past, there were
8 discussions about including transportation data under the Human Element. Mr. McKay reported that
9 some of the other subcommittees have discussed the Central Wasatch Dashboard. It is expected that
10 there will be updates implemented next month. Committee Members further discussed the Central
11 Wasatch Dashboard. Chair Adams has not personally approached UDOT to ask for data, but has
12 heard of others who have. Based on what he has heard, UDOT is fairly guarded about its data.

13
14 Mr. Knoblock noted that the economic health of the ski industry State-wide could be a reasonable
15 measure. The ski resorts in the CWC study area constitute the majority of the State ski industry data.
16 It might be possible to use the existing data from Ski Utah and the reports that have been released.
17 There could be some trend lines added to the Human Element of the Central Wasatch Dashboard.

18
19 Mr. Knoblock offered to look into this further and bring something back at the next Economy System
20 Committee Meeting. Chair Adams explained that one of the reasons he wanted to speak to Dr. Smith
21 is because during the Central Wasatch Symposium presentation, he spoke about putting dollar
22 amounts on the decision to be healthy and recreate outdoors without visiting one of the for-profit
23 businesses. Chair Adams discussed the need to find an appropriate balance with the different systems.
24 He expressed support to further discuss potential additions to the Central Wasatch Dashboard.

25
26 Chair Adams asked for additional information about RRC Associates, which was mentioned in the
27 Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute report. Ms. Arens had not heard of RRC Associates but offered to
28 look into this further. She asked that the full report be shared with Committee Members. Chair
29 Adams offered to share the report and explained that the latest report was from the 2024-2025 ski
30 season. The report that was released before that was from the 2022-2023 ski season. Mr. Hotaling
31 stated that he found some of the traffic data that informed the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS.

32
33 The Economy System Committee discussed future action items. Mr. Knoblock reported that when
34 he spoke to Ms. Gerber recently, she asked how to ensure that the small businesses in the area are
35 sustainable. He is not sure how the Economy System Committee can best assist small businesses.
36 He pointed out that it is hard to know which businesses, shops, and restaurants in the resort areas are
37 actually owned by the resorts and which businesses have leased space within the resorts. Committee
38 Members discussed guides who work in the Central Wasatch. It was noted that permit acquisition
39 can be a pain point in the guiding industry. While this kind of business does not compare to something
40 like the ski industry, it is an example of a smaller kind of business that takes place in the canyons.

41
42 Mr. Knoblock asked about next steps the Economy System Committee can take. It was determined
43 that there can be work done with CWC Staff to make sure relevant transportation data is included on
44 the Central Wasatch Dashboard. Chair Adams pointed out that it is possible to add some of the
45 information included in the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute report. Mr. Hotaling asked whether it is
46 appropriate to add that information when there is uncertainty about some of the specific data. It is
47 important to be mindful about what is added to the Central Wasatch Dashboard. Chair Adams agreed
48 with that perspective. He reported that during the Central Wasatch Symposium, there was discussion

1 about the Central Wasatch Dashboard potentially providing tracked data. He explained that tracking
2 data over time can be meaningful, especially when it comes to decision making.

3
4 **OTHER ITEMS AND NEXT MEETING AGENDA**

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6 1. **The Committee may Raise Other Topics, if desired.**

7
8 2. **The Committee will Discuss Topics for the Next Meeting Agenda.**

9
10 Chair Adams asked that Committee Member suggestions be shared with the Chair and Co-Chair
11 ahead of the next meeting. Mr. Knoblock reported that CWC Staff often encourages sharing
12 information outside of the scheduled meetings, so that can continue to be done. He clarified that
13 Executive Director, Lindsey Nielsen, or Director of Operations, Sam Kilpack, should be included in
14 those emails to fulfill the open meeting requirement. Chair Adams commented that he is willing to
15 set the Economy System Committee Meeting agendas, but appreciates input from Committee
16 Members about what should be included. He asked that Committee Member suggestions be shared.

17
18 Mr. Smith wanted to better understand what actions should be taken ahead of the next Economy
19 System Committee Meeting. Ms. Arens also wanted to understand the actions that should be taken.
20 She mentioned the survey that Ms. Kilpack sent out recently, which asked about the role that is served.
21 Ms. Arens represents Snowbird and the ski industry and she is available to answer questions, but
22 sometimes, she does not feel that she adds as much value to the Economy System Committee
23 discussions. Mr. Smith asked about the successes that have come out of the Committee so far.

24
25 Chair Adams reported that the CWC exists to move the Mountain Accord forward. The different
26 System Committees were created to mirror the work done during the Mountain Accord process. Each
27 of the System Committees focuses on a different focus area: economy, environment, recreation, and
28 transportation. Everything the Economy System Committee does is intended to be focused on
29 economy related work, but the Committee should still consider the other interconnected systems.
30 Chair Adams noted that approximately six months ago, CWC Staff asked Committee Members to re-
31 read the Mountain Accord document. He reiterated that the intent is to move those items forward.

32
33 **CLOSING**

34
35 1. **Chair Adams will call for a Motion to Adjourn the Economy System Committee**
36 **Meeting.**

37
38 **MOTION:** John Knoblock moved to ADJOURN the Economy System Committee Meeting. Scott
39 Hotaling seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

40
41 The Economy System Committee 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 on Wednesday,*
3 *February 11, 2026.*

4

5 Teri Forbes

6 Teri Forbes

7 T Forbes Group

8 Minutes Secretary

9

10 Minutes Approved: _____