

Alta Planning Commission Meeting Summary
Our Lady of the Snows, Alta, Utah
April, 4th 2016, 4PM

IN ATTENDANCE:

Planning Commissioners: Joan Degiorgio (chair), Jon Nepstad (vice-chair), Roger Bourke, Rob Voye, Dave Abraham and Mayor Tom Pollard (ex-officio).

Town of Alta staff: Chris Cawley and Rich Mrazik (counsel).

Members of the public: Onno Wieringa, Connie Marshall, Dave Eichel, Jen Clancy, Todd Collins, Maura Olivos, Brent Bateman (State of Utah Office of the Property Rights Ombudsman, presenting.)

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Planning Commission Chair **Joan Degiorgio** opened the meeting and introduced the meeting agenda.

1:25 UPDATE ON RECENT EVENTS-STAFF

Chris Cawley reported on the Town of Alta's efforts during the 2016 Utah Legislation Session to retain a "hold harmless" from a past redistribution of local sales tax revenue, which had been set to expire in 2016, which would have reduced the amount of sales tax revenue Alta receives.

Chris reported that the Alta Post Office had been damaged by a passing snowplow and that while the post office had reopened, the staircase leading to the Alta Community Center/Library would be closed until it could be repaired in early May.

Chris reported on various aspects of Mountain Accord, including phase II transportation studies, negotiation of a special federal designation for the Central Wasatch being pursued by Mountain Accord stakeholders, and potential changes to the structure of the committee managing Mountain Accord.

Roger Bourke asked **Chris** whether this meant that the Town of Alta would no longer be engaged in the executive committee. **Joan DeGiorgio** observed that the goal of changing the management structure of Mountain Accord is to enable the program to make progress on its goals. **Mayor Pollard** described that he has lobbied to be included in the future management structure of Mountain Accord, and added that it there had not been a final decision on the matter. **Joan** opined that changes to the Mountain Accord management structure were not intended to deliberately exclude individual organizations. **Mayor Pollard** added that the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) would be much more heavily involved in phase II of Mountain Accord, and indicated the Town of Alta would be deeply engaged in the transportation element of phase II. **Jon Nepstad** asked **Chris** who was most likely to be included on the new Mountain Accord executive committee, and **Chris** described that Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Sandy, Cottonwood Heights, UDOT and Park City were the agencies who may be on a future committee. **Roger Bourke** opined that it is unfortunate a representative of the Cottonwood Canyons may not be included on the future management structure of Mountain Accord. **Joan** opined that aspects of Mountain Accord will include ample public input, and **Mayor Pollard** agreed that the Town of Alta will have its' voice heard.

Chris added that the sunset provision in 2015 legislation enacting a Mountain Planning District in mountainous, unincorporated Salt Lake County had been removed during the final hour of the 2016 session, and that the Mountain Planning District Planning Commission would continue to function as the land-use planning and regulatory body for the area surrounding the Town of Alta.

15:45 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 1, 2016 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Chris Cawley indicated that **Roger Bourke** had commented on an error in the draft minutes, and that the final draft would reflect **Roger's** comments. **Roger** opined that there the minutes do not always reflect answers to questions asked during planning commission meetings, or solutions offered for issues that are raised. **Chris** noted **Roger's** comment. **Joan** asked for a motion to approve the minutes to the February 1, 2016 planning commission meeting; **Dave Abraham** made a motion, **Roger** seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

18:50 UPDATE ON THE COMMERCIAL CORE PLANNING EFFORT

Chris Cawley indicated that **Mark Vlasic** of Landmark Design was prepared to present the guiding principles and plan alternatives generated by the project team, and that the alternatives would be available digitally on the project website following the public workshop scheduled for 4 PM, Thursday, April 7th at Our Lady of the Snows.

Mark Vlasic described an illustration of “opportunity zones” in which to illustrate land use concepts included in the range of alternatives. **Mark** then introduced the 5 alternative plan concepts and the cross-section illustrations associated with those alternatives. **Mark** recommended that the planning commission send more detailed comments to the project team after the meeting, and indicated that the final plan may represent a combination of elements from various alternatives.

Joan asked the commission for their comments on the alternatives and on the project in general at this point. **Rob Voyer** indicated he had attended the project Advisory Committee meeting on March 29th, and that he'd had time to contemplate the alternatives. **Rob** suggested that an important goal with the project should be to improve the function of public transportation service to Alta destinations, and agreed that the concept of a transportation corridor between the Wildcat and Albion Bases downslope or south of SR 210 would provide this function, although it would introduce other logistical and aesthetic concerns for the lodges. **Rob** also agreed that the lodges are much more attractive from below each property than from viewpoints along SR 210. **Rob** opined that building parking structures as a way of reducing the sprawl of parking areas across Alta could be advantageous as long as it does not detract from the visual experience of Alta.

Roger Bourke opined that the absence of cost figures associated with most elements of each plan was a weakness, and suggested that the cost estimates for structured parking are large enough they should be removed from consideration. **Roger** also suggested that regardless of efforts to improve public transportation use within, to, and from Alta, private vehicles are likely to remain the most common means for accessing Alta, and reducing the amount of parking available in Alta will be a burden to the community.

Dave Abraham asked how the project team created the “opportunity zones” graphic associated with the alternatives. **Mark Vlasic** indicated that the opportunity zones represent land within the commercial

Numerical annotation within section headings generally corresponds with audio recordings of Town of Alta meetings, which can be accessed at <https://soundcloud.com/townofalta>.

core that was not owned by the existing lodges; and land that did not present environmental constraints such as wetlands, steep slopes, and heavily forested areas.

The commission discussed future meeting dates with **Mark**, and decided to meet for a work session prior to the upcoming, final project Advisory Committee meeting on April 20th. **Roger** opined that the project had not fully engaged the reality of Alta's seasonality; summer visitors have almost entirely different needs and interests than winter visitors, and the economic climate is almost entirely different. **Chris Cawley** observed that while the schedule of the project did not allow for real-time study of summer visitation and trends, the project team had engaged commercial core stakeholders to learn about the seasonality of their own business operations, and studied information about summer visitation to Albion Basin in the context of Alta's transportation system. **Chris** added that the project schedule includes an "adoption period" which will potentially extend into the summer months and that this could allow for some modification of the final product, although the adoption period will not include further study. **Jon Nepstad** asked **Roger** whether he felt the project should include more outreach to summer visitors, or whether the final plan should continue to be revised during the summer months in order to be more thoroughly vetted by the community. **Roger** suggested that both would be advantageous but that conducting a focused assessment of summer users would be most valuable. **Jon** opined that there had been sufficient previous studies of the summer economy and that those studies have generally reached similar conclusions. **Onno Wieringa** and **Chris Cawley** agreed with this suggestion. **Mayor Pollard** observed that the advisory committee was largely composed of year-round Alta residents and of representatives from Alta's primary businesses, and indicated that the project would include additional opportunities for public input. **Jon Nepstad** asked whether there would be an implementation "chapter" in the final plan, and **Mark Vlasic** indicated that there will be high-level recommendations for how to move forward with recommendations contained in the final plan.

Joan invited **Onno** and **Maura Olivos** of the Alta Environmental Center to introduce a memorandum regarding Alta Ski Area's focus on sustainability as a guiding principle for decision-making. **Onno** opined that the Alta Environmental Center had created a very functional and widely-utilized sustainability program which could be a model for the Town of Alta's approach to planning and zoning. **Maura** observed that the "triple bottom line" approach to sustainability, which compares social, economic, and environmental issues impacts, is becoming very common in large corporations and government entities, and recommended the Town of Alta consider various municipal planning documents focused on aligning public actions with the principle of sustainability.

Joan asked the audience for any additional comments. **Roger** commended **Maura** and **Onno** on the prevalence of sustainability principles in Alta Ski Area's operations, marketing, and company culture. **Onno** indicated that the ski industry is concerned about climate change and that peer pressure has led to the proliferation of sustainability in ski area operations across the industry. **Mark Vlasic** agreed that sustainability has become central to the planning outlook of local communities. **Maura** recommended that the plan alternatives be analyzed for their ability to capture summer business, but reminded the commission that Alta's economy will continue to be focused on winter for the foreseeable future. **Roger** asked whether summer or winter visitors created more environmental impacts. **Onno** confirmed that summer visitation creates more environmental impacts, and **Maura** observed that the winter snowpack protects the landscape from visitor impacts.

Onno lamented that the project has not included more analysis of economic factors such as summer business, and the pressure that Snowbird will exert on Alta's economy as Snowbird grows. **Mark Haik** asked whether the project team had considered the effects of Snowbird and other neighbors on Alta, and **Mark Vlastic** indicated that there had not been focused analysis or comparison of other communities.

1:16:50 ADDRESS FROM BRENT N. BATEMAN, LEAD ATTORNEY, UTAH OFFICE OF PROPERTY RIGHTS OMBUDSMAN: UTAH OPEN MEETINGS LAW AND LAND USE OVERVIEW WITH GENERAL QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION WITH THE COMMISSION

Mr. Bateman began his presentation by introducing internet-based resources for information about State of Utah land use regulations. **Mayor Pollard** asked Mr. Bateman whether emails between the members of a public body could be considered meetings. **Mr. Bateman** suggested that the law is not clear on this subject, and suggested that public bodies should always tend toward transparency. **Mr. Bateman** added that a meeting is being conducted when a quorum is present, and when public business is being conducted, and acknowledged that it is sometimes argued that text messages and emails in which public business is being discussed should be considered meetings. **Mr. Bateman** added that such exchanges could not be considered meetings unless a quorum of a given body was engaged on an email, and reiterated that public agencies should always tend toward transparency.

Mr. Bateman discussed the requirements for providing notice of meetings. Public bodies must: post a notice at the location of the meeting, post a notice to the State of Utah public notice website, and send a copy of the notice to "the newspaper." **Mr. Bateman** indicated that agendas must provide reasonable specificity regarding topics being discussed. **Chris Cawley** and **Mr. Bateman** discussed the difference between action items and general discussion, and **Mr. Bateman** clarified that a public body cannot take action on a matter unless the item was listed on a published agenda. **Mr. Bateman** indicated that a recording must be posted on the Utah public notice within 3 days of a meeting, and that minutes for a meeting must be available to the public 30 days after a meeting, although those minutes do not need to be posted online.

Mr. Bateman indicated that a closed meeting may only be declared if: 2/3 of a quorum in a public meeting agrees to enter a closed meeting, and if discussion is limited to: an individual's character, professional competence, or physical or mental health; collective bargaining strategy; pending or reasonably imminent litigation; security personnel, devices or systems; allegations of criminal misconduct; or strategy regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or sale of property or water rights. **Mr. Bateman** added that no action may be taken during a closed meeting, and that minutes and audio recordings must be taken during closed meetings, except for when matters of an individual's character, professional competence, or physical or mental health, or when security personnel, devices or systems are being discussed. **Jon Nepstad** asked whether a closed meeting must be noticed in an agenda, and **Mr. Bateman** indicated that while a closed meeting should be noticed, it was not required and could be declared by 2/3 quorum in the course of a public meeting.

Mr. Bateman indicated that public bodies must have an electronic meetings policy, and at least one person must be present at a public meeting place if other members are attending electronically. Emergency meetings can be declared in the case of an emergency, but not simply because a meeting

was not properly noticed. **Mr. Bateman** indicated that violations of the Open and Public Meetings Act should be taken seriously, as some are considered criminal acts.

Mr. Bateman presented an additional slide of common land use topics, and the planning commission requested that the slide be provided as a reference.

The planning commission discussed holding a working session to discuss the plan alternatives prior to the scheduled advisory committee meeting on April 20th. The planning commission discussed options and decided to meet on Monday, April 18th.

Roger Bourke opined that within some sort of general plan for the Alta Commercial Core, the planning commission ought to consider, for conceptual purposes at least, the Shallow Shaft, Photohaus, and Community Center Parcel as a single “node” of development to be planned as a harmonious unit. **Roger** recommended that the planning commission consider including the owners of those private properties in the discussion.

1:46:32 DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next regular Alta Planning Commission Meeting will be on May 2nd at 4 PM, at Our Lady of the Snows.

1:35:47 MOTION TO ADJOURN

Jon Nepstad made a motion to adjourn the planning commission meeting, **Rob Voye** seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

The content of the minutes is not intended, nor are they submitted, as a verbatim transcription of the meeting. These minutes are a general overview of what occurred at the meeting.

These minutes were passed and approved on May 2nd, 2016.

S/ Chris Cawley
Assistant Town Administrator