

MINUTES OF THE MILLCREEK CANYON COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2020 AT 3:00 P.M. IN THE MILLCREEK CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM LOCATED AT 3330 SOUTH 1300 EAST, MILLCREEK, UTAH

Present: Ed Marshall, Del Despain, Brian Hutchinson, Rita Lund, John Knoblock, Tom Diegel, Paul Diegel, Hillary Jacobs, Polly Hart

Staff: CWC Deputy Director Blake Perez
Office Administrator Kaye Mickelson

Chair Ed Marshall called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

- 1. Identify, Prioritize, and Assign Issues that this Committee Elects to Pursue, Subject to Criteria to be Agreed Upon such as:**
 - a. Relating Directly to Millcreek Canyon;**
 - b. Permitting the Committee to develop meaningful information or analysis; and**
 - c. Enabling the Committee to make persuasive suggestions to the Stakeholders Council, the CWC Board, the National Forest Service, and/or Salt Lake County.**

Chair Marshall explained that even though the issue of the shuttle was put on hold, he believed there were still issues relating to Millcreek Canyon that the committee can meaningfully address and potentially persuade the Forest Service and County to adopt similar viewpoints on those issues. The Millcreek Canyon Committee still has a purpose and can be useful.

Chair Marshall proposed that the Committee agree on criteria for issues that the Committee should focus on pursuing. He suggested criteria include suggestions in the meeting notice. The first qualifying factor that it was an issue relates directly to Millcreek Canyon. The second was that it allows the Committee to do something meaningful, whether that is gathering information or conducting an analysis. The third was that it is something the Committee has a real chance of persuading the Forest Service, County, or the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) to take action on. Chair Marshall asked for other suggestions to include in these criteria.

Tom Diegel asked about the meaning of the word “meaningful”. It was agreed that this term is more subjective than objective and could prove difficult to nail down when selecting issues to pursue. It was determined that the Committee will determine what is meaningful based on which individuals want to actively participate on the issue. If no individuals want to take action on a certain issue, that issue will be tabled.

Brian Hutchinson expressed concern that considering work that only relates directly to Millcreek Canyon fails to address issues on a global scale. He was interested in considering the relation of the Canyon to the broader community, including Millcreek City and other surrounding canyons.

Opposite viewpoints were expressed, with some committee members who were eager to only work on those issues directly relating to Millcreek Canyon and others who wanted to focus on the area as a whole. There was concern that if the Committee focuses on other areas besides Millcreek Canyon, it would essentially be performing the same function of the CWC.

Del Despain mentioned the Mountain Accord. He stated that any issue the Committee chooses to pursue should be examined to ensure that it is in line with the principles of Mountain Accord. The CWC is trying to implement these principles.

Ed Marshall presented a discussion outline for tonight's meeting that he prepared using information from a memo Mr. Despain sent to members of the Committee. Chair Marshall added four discussion items of his own for consideration. He noticed two themes that were apparent in Mr. Despain's memo. The first was the need to collect accurate information in order to perform an analysis and make good suggestions. The second was general principles with regard to how the Committee should consider issues such as Mountain Accord and new issues as they arise.

John Knoblock commented on the principles of Mountain Accord. The impetus for the CWC was to implement Mountain Accord. The CWC, however, takes a 100,000-foot view of the issue and this Committee needs to focus on details.

Chair Marshall distributed the discussion outline and asked for any items that could be added to the list. Winter grooming frequency was added as a point of discussion.

2. Obtain Information from the Forest Service and County in Order to Better Understand Millcreek Canyon Issues and to Evaluate/Propose Good Potential Solutions.

The Committee first addressed the issue of parking. It was mentioned that parking issues and needs are different in winter and summer, as well as on on-leash and off-leash days. There are often days where parking hits the limit and visitors go up the Canyon only to realize it is full and there is no place to park. Chair Marshall stated that often times there is parking, but Canyon visitors have their favorite places to park. Those places will often be full, while others will not.

- a. Understand current levels of usage and how the usage is trending. Get multi-year usage count for dogs, bikes, etc. Coordinate with Visitor Capacity Committee**

Chair Marshall asked Del Despain to speak to this issue. Mr. Despain did not have an exact answer with regard to usage levels. He had spoken to Wayne Johnson who runs the tollbooth in the Canyon and was told that there is not an exact number of how many people are using it. Currently, certain calculations are being done on the fee structure to determine the number of visitors, but there is no exact amount or a close estimate. Mr. Despain suggested there be a count four days out of the year to determine approximately how many people, cars, bikes, and dogs are in the Canyon.

It was noted that using counts solely from the tollbooth will not take into account individuals who enter the Canyon prior to the tollbooth being open, especially in the summer months. The fee structure at the tollbooth would also ignore bikes. The Committee will need to ask the County what information is available with respect to the number of visitors that enter the Canyon.

It was proposed that strips on the road be placed for the purpose of counting visitors. These strips can weigh the difference between cars and bikes and provide helpful data. This has been done in the past. Wayne Johnson does have access to two counters. It was also proposed that volunteers could pick certain days and count how many people are in the Canyon. This has been done before at Albion Basin and Secret Lake.

The Committee next discussed communication in the Canyon as it relates to parking. It would be ideal if communication between the top of the Canyon and the tollbooth could occur in order for those entering the Canyon to know if there is parking available at the top. A drawback to this plan is the requirement for manpower, which is expensive and not always available.

Chair Marshall mentioned the potential for a sandwich board to serve as a solution if the tollbooth can receive radio communication from someone up in the Canyon.

Chair Marshall reported that the County feels strongly about not changing the direction of the toll booth for many reasons. People coming in stop and ask a lot of questions, which results in a backup. This backup can extend into residential areas. It also wreaks havoc on the voucher system.

CWC Deputy Director, Blake Perez mentioned that there are still other issues to consider surrounding the toll booth. That could change and is valuable for the Committee to continue discussing. He used an example of an extra exit lane being added to the toll booth. It was noted that if a second lane is added, the toll booth will need to be moved. It is currently on private property and would be too expensive to engineer in its current location. Mr. Perez also mentioned the possibility of brochures being made available to visitors.

Rita Lund stated that visitors could obtain information and pay their usage fees at an alternate location, such as REI. This would reduce backup but still allow visitors to obtain information if they have never been to the Canyon before.

Funds from the Federal Lands Access Program (“FLAP”) grant were discussed. It was noted that if the FLAP grant is awarded, the tollbooth will be a high priority.

It was mentioned that the Wasatch Back Country Alliance has trailhead counters for use that could potentially be used in Millcreek Canyon. This type of counter is an infrared beam and could potentially differentiate between hikers, bikers, and cars.

- b. Where have revenues from collected tolls been spent in the past? What is the plan for the future? Is there a Forest Service wish list? Do Forest Service plans address parking and restrooms? Coordinate with the Trails Committee.**

The question of revenue had been a bit mysterious to the Committee in the past. The understanding was that the County collects money and controls when the money is released. After they deduct expenses, the revenue is turned over to the Forest Service. The Forest Service is then the entity that uses the funds. The Forest Service, however, doesn't use the funds for things like the bike lane, which are paid for separately by the County as the County owns the road.

A Committee member volunteered to talk to Colten Rogers in the Forest Service to determine what action items the Forest Service is prioritizing. It was mentioned that the FLAP grant is the Forest Service's wish list in terms of transportation. It includes the bike lane but not restrooms. Both parking and restrooms located near the stream needed to be relocated. Technically, new parking cannot increase the number of parking stalls, but they can count cars that park on the road and make the number of parking stalls reflecting that.

It was mentioned that there is an official trails committee now and it would be best to coordinate with them to discuss the cross-canyon connection.

- c. What communications alternatives are the Forest Service considering? Do they have any potential funding sources other than FLAP? We need to understand the issues and costs of cell service in MCC.**

The Committee discussed the importance of getting adequate cell service in the Canyon. There are many areas where such service is not available. Information should be gathered to determine the cost of fixing this problem. Before pursuing the issue further it is important to understand technically what the undertaking involves.

The Committee agreed that the lack of cell service is a safety issue. It may be possible for a cell phone expert to evaluate the Canyon and determine what needs to be done. There had been public pushback about the idea of towers, but if the road is to be redone with funds from the FLAP grant, it could be possible to place conduit under the road and eliminate the need for towers.

A definitive answer regarding the FLAP grant will likely be available in May. It was noted that there are two other applicants in the region who are in competition for the grant.

- d. Where is Millcreek Road on the County's list of repaving and improvement projects? What is the role of MSD now? How can we get better maintenance and repair?**

It was expressed that Millcreek Road needs to be repaved at some point in the near future. It was unknown, however, what the County's plan is. Perhaps the County is not making a plan until there is a definitive answer about the FLAP grant. It would be beneficial for a Committee member to contact someone with the County and better understand their thoughts regarding a road.

The technicalities regarding different municipalities were discussed. Areas that used to be unincorporated townships are now metro townships. These areas keep the revenue generated within their area. The main Municipal Services District ("MSD") board consists of mayors and designees from these metro townships.

Recently, the County accepted bids for the repaving of Millcreek Road. When the bids came in it was determined that the County needed nearly \$800,000 more in the budget to fund the road repaving.

- e. **How are the MCC tax revenues being spent? How much is used for MCC? What are the costs of normal services, such as road work and snowplowing?**

It was determined to be difficult to access information regarding where tax revenues from Millcreek Canyon are going. The County keeps this information private. It is needed, however, to lobby the County to fund the road repaving. It was suggested that Bart Barker be contacted. He is involved in MSD as a County member.

3. Monitor FLAP Grant Progress. As Appropriate Offer Input on Parking Issues, Plan for Narrow Roadway at Top of Canyon, Safety, and Communications.

This above item was discussed with the conclusion being that the FLAP grant will be available online in May.

4. Fire Prevention: Develop Recommendations to Supplement the Forest Service's Fuels Reduction Plan.

It was noted that fire prevention is a major concern in all canyons. The Forest Service is consulting with experts to establish a Fuel Reduction Plan. There is a committee for this area headed by Carl Fisher. It was reported that there is a tremendous amount of fuel accumulation in the Canyon. Some of this is needed for the natural habitat but not as much for habitat sustainability. The Forest Service plan includes allowing people to obtain permits to collect firewood along the roadside for picnics. The Forest Service remains conscious of public safety in this regard.

It was reported that the Forest Service will begin more active fuel reductions, beginning with a pilot program in Lambs Canyon. There was concern expressed about the safety of a controlled burn. The pilot program would not be a controlled burn, but to help remove dead firs that pose a fire risk. The hope was that the pilot will begin in Lambs Canyon and move south to Millcreek Canyon in the near future.

Experts from the Forest Service have also indicated that they will issue permits for Christmas trees in Millcreek Canyon to assist in thinning.

5. Develop and Propose an Acceptable Dog/Biker/Hiker/Skier Compromise Before County & Forest Service Impose a Solution of Their Own.

Chair Marshall stated that it would be advantageous to propose a compromise that is acceptable to the dog, hiking, biking, and skiing communities. Currently, a problem exists that is recognized by the County. Different schedules could be considered to accommodate different groups of people. It would be best to avoid the County proposing their own fix.

It was reported that there are currently schedules that are unenforceable by the Unified Police Department (“UPD”) because there are no ordinances backing them up. In the future, there need to be enforceable ordinances.

It was noted that dog owners, bikers, hikers, and skiers are often the same people. People enjoy doing activities with their dogs, therefore, there should not be a schedule where dogs are not allowed with certain activities.

Different bike groups were discussed so that a Committee member might meet with them to determine what their needs and desires are regarding Canyon access and scheduling.

6. Parking Solutions: Can We Help the Forest Service to Quickly Evaluate and Implement Some of the Non-Shuttle Parking Solutions in the Fehr and Peers Report?

The above item was added for discussion by Chair Marshall. The Committee discussed the possibility of individuals being stationed at the top of the Canyon to send reports to the tollbooth regarding parking availability. Possible solutions to the problem were tied to the problem of communication in the Canyon as well. With technology, the information could be in an app or on a website, while a non-technical solution requires manpower.

It was proposed that rearview mirror hangers be made available for cars going up the Canyon. They would be color-coded for different areas in the Canyon and assigned to different parking spots. When the hangers are gone, it means the parking spots are gone. It was noted that some Canyon visitors will try to get a spot anyway, and with the travel time from the tollbooth to the top of the Canyon some parking may potentially open up. It was determined that addressing the parking issue is better than the current situation where nothing is being done. This was an idea that could be tested in practice.

It was proposed that digital counters be used to track how many vehicles enter and exit the Canyon, to keep a running count. Having some sort of sign that tells individuals the number of parking spots may deter individuals from entering the Canyon on a day where there is inadequate parking.

The Committee discussed potentially adding another layer to the parking where visitors who carpool would be rewarded.

7. **Safety: Can We Propose Good Recommendations for Improving the Safety of Vehicles, Bikes, and Pedestrians?**

Chair Marshall addressed safety concerns in the Canyon and acknowledged that they have been discussed with other issues as they are often tied to areas of discussion. It is important to keep pedestrians off the road and the way to do that is with good trails.

8. **Del's General Principles For Dealing With MCC Issues.**

- a. _____ Bring the issue of a future shuttle into discussions of roadway/trailhead changes. These changes should align where possible with future shuttle plans.**

It was suggested that the Committee Members remember that there will be a future shuttle.

- b. _____ Review Mountain Accord principles periodically to evaluate how issues and proposed changes in MCC align or conflict with them.**

Chair Marshall stressed the importance of the Committee being focused on how it provides value to the Forest Service and the County.

- c. _____ Catalog other Millcreek issues as they arise.**

- d. _____ Stay involved with Forest Service, County, and Millcreek City on MCC issues.**

- e. _____ Become knowledgeable and be ready to work with them and to advocate as issues arise.**

9. **Transportation.**

Mr. Perez addressed the Committee regarding transportation. He reported that there has been a pause on the work regarding the Millcreek shuttle as the timing is not right. The Forest Service has asked for public comment regarding transportation in the Canyon via their website. They are looking for comments about the scope and have received over 120 comments about the mode of transportation. They want to first make sure that transportation is happening in the right places.

The Committee briefly discussed the potential of a Canyon carpool system.

10. Determine Whether there is a Better Regular Meeting Day for this Committee rather than the 3rd Monday of Each Month Since this Day will Come *After* the Quarterly Stakeholders Meetings in April and June.

It was determined that the Committee meetings in April and June will be held on the 14th for those months. This will make it possible for the Committee to meet before the Stakeholders Council Meeting to make sure reports are current. All other meetings will remain the same.

11. Other Business as may be Appropriate to be Brought Before the Committee.

a. Boy Scouts of America Bankruptcy.

The Committee discussed the changing nature of the Boy Scouts of America and how that will impact land usage and ownership in the Canyon. Boy Scouts of America filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy, which causes concern about the land they own in Millcreek Canyon. In talking with representatives from the Salt Lake Chapter, it was determined that the land is owned by the local chapter and not the national chapter of the Boy Scouts. There was concern with decreasing membership in the Boy Scouts and that the future of the land is uncertain. The idea of getting a conservation easement was discussed. It was agreed that it is wise for the committee to be aware of options before the land is no longer in the hands of the Boy Scouts if that is the case in the future.

b. Spelling.

In checking with the U.S. Geological Survey (“USGS”) it was determined by the Committee that the correct spelling when referring to the Canyon is “Mill Creek,” and when referring to the city is “Millcreek.”

12. Adjournment.

The Millcreek Canyon Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:42 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate and complete record of the Millcreek Canyon Committee held Wednesday, February 19, 2020.

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes
T Forbes Group
Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: _____