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2
3 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION BOARD MEETING HELD**
4 **MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2020 AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED**
5 **ELECTRONICALLY WITHOUT A PHYSICAL LOCATION, AS AUTHORIZED BY THE**
6 **GOVERNOR’S EXECUTIVE ORDER DATED MARCH 18, 2020.**
7

8 **Present:** Chair Chris Robinson, Co-Chair Jenny Wilson, Mayor Andy Beerman,
9 Commissioner Jim Bradley, Mayor Jeff Silvestrini, Commissioner Marci
10 Houseman, Mayor Dan Knopp (joined the meeting at 4:00 p.m.), Mayor Harris
11 Sondak, Ex Officio Member Carlton Christensen
12

13 **Staff:** Executive Director Ralph Becker, Deputy Director Blake Perez, CWC
14 Attorney Shane Topham (joined the meeting at 4:00 p.m.), Communications
15 Director Lindsey Nielsen, Office Administrator Kaye Mickelson
16

17 **Others:** Laura Briefer, Mike Reberg, Bobby Sampson, Helen Peters, Ned Hacker,
18 Megan Nelson, Barbara Cameron, Allen, Steve VanMaren, Kyle Maynard,
19 Patrick Nelson, Tamara Prue, Abi Holt, Allison Aafedt, Annalee Munsey, Carl
20 Fisher, Hanna Meecham, Brian Tick, Dave Fields, Kim, Chip Smith, K,
21 Kimball, Mimi, Dennis Goreham, Holly Lopez, Marian Rice (those with no
22 last names were listed as attendees in participants listed on zoom as noted
23 here),
24

25 **Absent:** Mayor Mike Peterson and Mayor Erin Mendenhall
26

27 **OPENING**
28

- 29 1. **Commissioner Christopher F. Robinson will Conduct the Meeting as Chair of the Board,**
30 **(the “Board”) of the Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”).**
31

32 Chair Chris Robinson called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m.
33

- 34 2. **Chair Christopher F. Robinson will Read his Written Determination Regarding an**
35 **Electronic Meeting Anchor Location for this Meeting, Pursuant to Utah Code Ann. 52-**
36 **4-207(4).**
37

38 The Legislature, pursuant to Section 52-4-207(4), required the Board to make a determination, which
39 was as follows:
40

41 “I, as the Chair of the Board of Commissioners, the Board of the Central Wasatch Commission hereby
42 determine that conducting board meetings at any time during the next 30 days at an anchor location

1 presents a substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be present at the anchor location.
2 The World Health Organization, the President of the United States, the Governor of Utah, the Salt
3 Lake County Mayor, and the Health Department have all recognized that a global pandemic exists
4 related to the new strain of the Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. Due to the state of emergency caused by
5 the global pandemic, I find that conducting a meeting at an anchor location under the current state of
6 public health emergency constitutes a substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be
7 present at the location. According to the information and from State epidemiology experts, Utah is
8 currently in an acceleration phase, which has the potential to overwhelm the State's health care
9 system.”

10
11 **3. The Board will Consider Approving the Minutes of the July 13, 2020, Board Meeting.**

12
13 **MOTION:** Mayor Silvestrini moved to approve the minutes of the July 13, 2020, Board Meeting.
14 Commissioner Bradley seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the
15 Board.

16
17 **RESOLUTION 2020-19 APPROVING AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH SALT**
18 **LAKE COUNTY FOR FUNIDNG OF THE DESOLATION TRAIL REROUTE.**

19
20 **1. The Board will Consider Approving Resolution 2020-19 Authorizing Entry into an**
21 **Interlocal Agreement whereunder Salt Lake County will Distribute \$20,000 of the**
22 **Regional Transportation Choice Funds (4th Quarter) to the Central Wasatch**
23 **Commission for the Re-Route of a Section of the Desolation Trail from Mill D North**
24 **Trailhead to Dog Lake.**

25
26 Executive Director, Ralph Becker reported that the Council appropriated an additional \$20,000 to
27 help with the Desolation Trail project. Those funds had been assigned to the Central Wasatch
28 Commission. Mr. Becker noted that the Commission played a similar role in past projects, including
29 the bus service improvements from last year. He stated that the Commission had become a funnel
30 for monies from various sources for projects in the mountains. Mr. Becker believed this was due in
31 large part to processes and protocols that allowed the Board to be a central place for such projects.
32 The \$20,000 would go towards building a bridge on the Desolation Trail at the Dog Lake section.
33 Mr. Becker stated that while the trail was not yet open, he had already seen a dramatic improvement
34 compared to the old trail, which was steep and badly eroded. He felt this was an important project as
35 it is a heavily used trail in Wasatch.

36
37 Mayor Wilson asked if the Desolation Trail was the previously discussed project where some of the
38 4th Quarter Revenue Funds had been allocated. Deputy Director, Blake Perez confirmed that that was
39 the case. Mayor Wilson acknowledged that this is an important project. Commissioner Bradley
40 commented that the County had been responsive to the project and Mayor Wilson had been creative
41 and effective in ensuring that services were provided and the needs are taken care of.

42
43 Mayor Sondak noted that the agreement presented to the Commission looks complicated and with
44 CWC Attorney, Shane Topham not present, he wanted to make sure the Commission has an
45 opportunity to review the agreement. Mayor Silvestrini believed it was a standard local agreement
46 that is necessary when funds are transferred between entities. He did not feel the language was
47 unusual, given the nature of the agreement. Chair Robinson did not believe there was a high risk of
48 a claim being brought against the County.

1
2 **MOTION:** Mayor Sondak moved to approve the adoption of Resolution 2020-19, approving an
3 Interlocal Agreement with Salt Lake County for funding of the Desolation Trail Re-Routing. Mayor
4 Silvestrini seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.
5

6 **CWC COMMITTEE REPORTS:**
7

8 **1. Executive Committee: No Meeting in July.**
9

10 Chair Robinson reported that there was no Executive Committee Meeting in July.
11

12 **2. Transportation Committee: Chair Mike Peterson, on behalf of the Transportation**
13 **Committee.**
14

15 In Mayor Petersons/Mayor Knopp absence, Mr. Becker reported on the activities of the
16 Transportation Committee. He noted that the Transportation Committee has been focused on
17 developing alternative modes of transportation. They also formed a Technical Committee, comprised
18 of experts, to advise the Transportation Committee. It included agencies within the Utah Department
19 of Transportation (“UDOT”) and Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) as well as mode and demand
20 management experts from rail, aerial, bus, and roadway along with local transportation experts. Mr.
21 Becker reported that the first step with the experts was to identify corridors from valleys to mountains
22 to backside valleys to determine what modes of transportation could potentially be used in those
23 various corridors. He noted that they looked at different segments to determine which modes would
24 fit without causing issues. The segments included Salt Lake Valley, Big Cottonwood Canyon, Little
25 Cottonwood Canyon, the Wasatch Back, and connections between Big and Little Cottonwood
26 Canyons. The work was reviewed by the experts and was being finalized by the Transportation
27 Committee.
28

29 Mr. Becker reported that there would be a presentation of alternatives made to the public. The
30 Transportation Committee planned to have a panel discussion where experts would discuss potential
31 alternatives for the different segments of a Mountain Transportation System. The tentative date for
32 the panel discussion was Wednesday, September 16, 2020, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Mr. Becker
33 noted that there would be a panel, introductory comments by the Chair and Vice-Chair, a presentation
34 on modes and alternatives, and a question and answer section. Mr. Becker reported that UDOT
35 recently reviewed the Alternatives Reports for Little Cottonwood Canyon and over 6,000 public
36 comments were received. He noted that the Transportation Committee will be prepared to summarize
37 a similar number of comments.
38

39 Mr. Becker reported that Mr. Perez worked with the Design Your Own Transit System Program when
40 he was with Salt Lake County Transportation. This program would allow for the public to design a
41 transportation system to see what the implications would be if one mode of transportation was selected
42 over another. Mr. Becker believed this would be beneficial as it would allow the public to understand
43 how a transportation system works as well as the impacts associated with the alternative choices.
44

45 Mr. Becker reported that in the fall, the Transportation Committee will get stakeholders,
46 Commissioners, and experts around a virtual table to arrive at proposed alternatives. Those
47 alternatives will likely come before the Commission toward the end of the year. He also reported that

1 the Transportation Committee had been developing various sets of maps. The Wasatch Front
2 Regional Council (“WFRC”) was contributing all of the mapping work to the Committee for free.

3
4 Commissioner Bradley asked if the Commissioners would have an opportunity to see the proposals
5 prior to their public release. Mr. Becker confirmed that they would. Mr. Perez reported that the next
6 Transportation Committee Meeting is scheduled for the end of the month. That would give the
7 Committee the opportunity to workshop some of the proposals and concepts a few weeks before it is
8 opened up to public comment. Once the proposals have been worked through with the Transportation
9 Committee, they will be shared with the Commission. Mr. Becker added that the Board Members
10 were welcome at any of the Transportation Committee Meetings.

11
12 Mayor Knopp, having checked into the meeting, reported that the Technical Working Group had
13 been working on several mountainous transportation concepts. Draft versions would likely be ready
14 by early September. The Transportation Committee would have the opportunity to review and
15 workshop them at the next meeting. He noted that the transportation panel discussion was scheduled
16 for September 16, 2020, but the event would be finalized in the coming days. The panelists would
17 include mode and demand management experts from rail, aerial, bus, and roadway. Goals for the
18 event were to:

- 19
- 20 • Educate the public about tradeoffs between modes and demand management;
- 21
- 22 • Introduce the Design Your Own Transit System online game; and
- 23 • Open the 30-day public comment period.
- 24

25 Mr. Perez reported that the next Transportation Committee Meeting will be held on Wednesday,
26 August 26, 2020, between 10:30 a.m. and 12:00 p.m.

27
28 **3. Legislative Land/Tenure Committee: No Meeting in July.**

29
30 Chair Robinson reported that there was no Legislative Land/Tenure Committee Meeting held in July.

31
32 Mayor Wilson thanked Chair Robinson, Mr. Becker, and Mike Reberg for holding one-on-one
33 meetings. She believed good information was coming out of the meetings and noted that there would
34 be a report coming. Mr. Becker commented that in the summer months scheduling was a challenge,
35 but the Legislative Land/Tenure Committee held meetings with two General Managers in the Little
36 Cottonwood Canyon. They had meetings scheduled with Kim Mayhew from Solitude Mountain
37 Resort and Randy Doyle from Brighton Ski Area. Mr. Becker reported that the purpose of the
38 meetings was to discuss alternatives to a land exchange solution to get the public lands protected.
39 Other discussions had to do with getting ownership realigned and exploring steps that could be taken
40 legislatively or otherwise to better serve the needs of the resorts through work the Committee was
41 doing. He felt that the meeting held on July 16, 2020, with Mr. Reberg had been a productive one.

42
43 Mr. Reberg reported that the Legislative Land/Tenure Committee planned to have several one-on-one
44 meetings. He noted that they intend to meet with the Save Our Canyons and Wasatch Backcountry
45 Alliance as well. Mr. Reberg stated that the goal of the meetings is to gain information, discuss
46 alternatives to the land exchange, and discover what people need to support draft legislation. All of
47 that information would then be brought back to a Committee Meeting in September. He hoped a

1 conversation could be had about potential alternatives and a consensus reached about moving forward
2 with potential changes to the draft legislation.

3
4 **4. Short-Term Projects Committee: No Meeting in July.**

5
6 Commissioner Bradley reported that all of the programs the Short-Term Projects Committee funded
7 were moving forward. He noted that there was not a Committee Meeting in July.

8
9 **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

10
11 *Walter Stewart* submitted a comment electronically that expressed frustration towards ski resort
12 owners. He felt they wanted to turn the wilderness into a theme park to bring in more profits. He
13 believed this had been shown through trial balloons, such as interconnection ski-lifts, which had taken
14 out sections of wilderness, and a rollercoaster ride up the side of Superior. Mr. Stewart noted that
15 some people wanted to enjoy the wilderness in its pristine condition. He stated that backcountry
16 skiers pose no changes and asked that the wilderness areas be left alone.

17
18 *Steve VanMaren*, a Sandy resident, commented that his Congressman notified him of progress made
19 on land swaps intended to complete the Bonneville Shoreline Trail along the Wasatch Front. This
20 included everything proposed as part of the land exchange in the draft legislation. Mr. VanMaren
21 was not aware that the legislation had been moving forward and was surprised to hear the report. He
22 wanted to know if the Central Wasatch Commission had contributed to the legislation.

23
24 Chair Robinson stated that Congressman Curtis had dropped a Trails bill that made adjustments to
25 wilderness boundaries. The bill would affect Central Wasatch on the West Flank. It was not
26 accomplishing the land exchanges and other protections that the Central Wasatch Commission had
27 sought in the Act creating the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area
28 (“NCRA”). The Committee was aware of the situation. The Commission tried to get a consensus
29 among membership and stakeholders on the bill but were unable to do so. Chair Robinson reported
30 that the Central Wasatch Commission was neutral on the issue and noted that the bill would have to
31 go through the process that all Congressional bills do.

32
33 There were no additional public comments. Chair Robinson closed the public comment period.

34
35 **COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

36
37 Mayor Sondak brought up issues impacting the Alta Ski Area for the Board Members to consider.
38 The first was related to the increase in ski touring businesses in the Canyons. He believed that whether
39 or not the commercial ski area is operational, there will be an explosion of visitors. Mayor Sondak
40 also wanted to bring potential parking issues to the attention of the Transportation Committee. He
41 reported that Alta Ski Lifts was concerned that they would lose about 200 parking spaces to non-
42 customers who are backcountry skiing, however, Mayor Sondak believed that number could be much
43 higher.

44
45 Mayor Sondak discussed transportation issues and stated that he believed bus capacity would not be
46 the same due to COVID-19. Concerns were also expressed regarding running the Alta resort shuttle
47 vans, which traditionally brought people from the western part of town into the ski area. Mayor
48 Sondak also noted that the financial impacts to the Town of Alta were serious, especially if the ski

1 area is not operating at full capacity. He believed the ski lodges would not be fully booked as people
2 would rather stay away from communal types of lodges or dorm rooms. This could lead to additional
3 traffic in other areas. Last, Mayor Sondak shared concerns about restrooms. If the ski areas are not
4 open during the winter season, backcountry skiers will need toilets, which could create issues.

5
6 Board Member Christensen believed there could be issues with buses. He referenced the challenges
7 brought up by Mayor Sondak regarding ski buses. He noted that there are only so many ski buses. A
8 normal bus could not be run up the canyon due to intended use, size, and the lack of special chain
9 equipment to tackle icy or stormy weather. He believed that unless something changes, there will be
10 limited capacity on the buses. Mr. Christensen reported that work was being done with the ski resorts
11 but while they were doing their best to find solutions and make transportation as safe as possible,
12 COVID-19 created situations that had not been seen before.

13
14 Mayor Sondak reported that the main issue with running a ski area relates to the need for social
15 distance on chair lifts. He noted that in Australia, they are running chair lifts where two people are
16 filling a four-person chair. This decreases lift capacity by 50% and creates issues with capacity and
17 line management. Mayor Sondak reported that when he prepared his budget, he included a sales tax
18 revenue of 75% of the ski area's usual return. He noted that this was done at the time because a lower
19 number would have required him to lay people off in order to balance the budget. He felt it had been
20 premature to do so. The ski area reported to Mayor Sondak that they did not expect to get 75% of
21 their usual revenue. They also stated that there was a point where they would lose less money by
22 being closed than they would by being operational.

23
24 Mayor Sondak reported additional concerns about toilets. They pose an issue as it is important to
25 limit the touching of surfaces, however, restrooms still need to be provided to visitors. Mayor Sondak
26 reported that the cost of portable toilets is being split with the ski resorts. This was possible due to
27 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ("CARES") Act money from Mayor Wilson. Mayor
28 Sondak reported that the portable toilets will be sanitized daily with chemicals and serviced bi-
29 weekly. He noted that it will be difficult to continue that process throughout the winter months with
30 lower revenues.

31
32 Chair Robinson reported that Laura Briefer commented in the chat and stated that the changes in
33 recreation use pose the need for several agencies to evaluate watershed and natural resource
34 management strategies. She felt it would be helpful to get those entities together to devise potential
35 strategies that would adapt to the evolving situation.

36
37 Ms. Briefer commented that it could be helpful to bring Salt Lake County, the U.S. Forest Service,
38 Salt Lake City, and other entities together to better define the issues. She brought up the following
39 questions:

- 40
41 • What kind of issues have we seen this summer?
- 42
43 • What kind of issues are we potentially anticipating?
- 44
45 • How can we develop a Continuity of Operations Plan with respect to changes in recreation?
- 46

47 Ms. Briefer believed there should be considerations around the community spread of COVID-19,
48 protecting workers and the public, managing overflowing trailheads, and tackling restrooms and

1 sanitary issues effectively. She noted that certain areas are beyond capacity in watersheds and other
2 places that are not protected watersheds in the Central Wasatch. Ms. Briefer believed that a
3 Continuity of Operations Plan would be helpful. Chair Robinson asked if Mr. Beaker could
4 implement an outline similar to what Ms. Briefer described. Mr. Becker agreed and suggested that
5 Big Cottonwood Canyon and Alta be included as well. Mr. Christensen requested that UTA also be
6 included in the outline. Ms. Briefer noted that the Wasatch is not unique and similar problems are
7 occurring in National Parks and other National Forests. She stated that it could be beneficial to speak
8 to people on a regional or national level about how they are managing these types of impacts.

9
10 Chair Robinson read a comment from Carl Fisher in the chat section. He stated that the transportation
11 problems previously discussed are diverse and nuanced. He believed that instead of spending time
12 and energy looking at gondolas, trains, and alternative transportation solutions, it would be beneficial
13 to focus on additional buses. On the topic of bathrooms, Mr. Fisher noted that Save Our Canyons
14 was approached by the U.S. Forest Service earlier in the year when visitor ship increased due to
15 COVID-19. They were helping fund bathrooms at a cost of \$5,000 per month. He noted that Save
16 Our Canyons was happy to partner with the U.S. Forest Service to find the needed funding for these
17 operations. He noted, however, that the organization could not find money quickly and such
18 processes take time to plan.

19
20 **ADJOURNMENT**

21
22 **MOTION:** Mayor Silvestrini moved to adjourn. Mayor Wilson seconded the motion. The motion
23 passed with the unanimous consent of the Committee.

24
25 The Central Wasatch Commission Board 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 Board Meeting held Monday, August 3, 2020.*

3

4 Teri Forbes

5 Teri Forbes

6 T Forbes Group

7 Minutes Secretary

8

9 Minutes Approved: _____