

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) PRESERVATION COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021, AT 12:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM WITH NO ANCHOR LOCATION.**

**Present:** Chair Carl Fisher, Vice Chair Megan Nelson, Ann Floor, Chris Adams, Alex Schmidt, Dave Barry, Deeda Seed, Barbara Cameron, Jan Striefel, Jenna Malone, William McCarvill, Emanuel Vasquez

**CWC Staff:** Executive Director Ralph Becker, Deputy Director Blake Perez, Communications Director Lindsey Nielsen, Office Administrator Kaye Mickelson

1. **OPENING**

Chair Carl Fisher called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 p.m.

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

‘In view of the current COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting will occur only electronically, without a physical location, as authorized by the Governor’s Executive Order, dated March 18, 2020, and related legislation enacted by the Utah Legislature since that date. See the included here letter of determination of the Chair of the Preservation Committee that conducting this meeting with a physical anchor location presents a substantial risk to the health and safety of those who may be present at the anchor location. The public may remotely hear the open portions of the meeting through live broadcast by connecting to the following Zoom meeting.’

Chair Fisher welcomed those present to the first meeting of the Central Wasatch Commission’s (“CWC”) Preservation Committee. He asked all participants to introduce themselves and describe their vision for the preservation of the Wasatch.

* Chair Fisher (Executive Director of Save Our Canyons)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: Treat the Wasatch like the ecosystem and landscape that it is, rather than managing it as divided political subdivisions.
* Co-Chair Megan Nelson (Director of Government Relations for The Nature Conservancy)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: A mountain range that thrives for people in nature. That includes a healthy forest and watershed as well as access for visitors.
* Blake Perez (CWC Deputy Director)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: A thriving ecosystem not just for users but also for animals, flora, and fauna. Also, a focus on the prevention of impacts to the watershed.
* Lindsey Nielsen (CWC Communications Director)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: Work to preserve and protect the mountains with a holistic view that considers all interests and factors.
* Kaye Mickelson (CWC Office Administrator)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: The mountains are a gift and they need to be preserved.
* Ralph Becker (CWC Executive Director)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: To preserve this incredible and unique natural place as well as provide for visitor enjoyment today and in the future.
* Chris Adams (Board President of the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: Make sure the canyons are used in multi-use ways that are fair, protect the environment, and protect the flora and fauna. Additionally, that there is plenty of public access.
* Alex Schmidt (Campaigns Coordinator of Save Our Canyons)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: Restoration, connectivity, and landscape preservation.
* Ann Floor (Utah Resident)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: Recognize the fragility of Little Cottonwood Canyon in particular and understand what it can and cannot take on. Also, an added focus on what needs to be protected and what comes first.
* Dave Barry (Utah Resident)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: Protection and preservation should be entirely based on science and fact. Public outreach and education are also essential.
* Deeda Seed (Center of Biological Diversity)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: Ecosystem preservation and biological diversity.
* Emanuel Vasquez (Data Advisor for Save Our Canyons)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: To teach users about the environment and the importance of both preservation and protection.
* Barbara Cameron (Big Cottonwood Community Council)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: The Big Cottonwood Community Council has focused on wildfire prevention and mitigation as well as beaver restoration habitat. There is a desire for public outreach so users can understand and appreciate the canyons.
* Jan Striefel (League of Women Voters)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: The League of Women Voters has reached a consensus on positions related to planning in the Wasatch Mountains as well as the preservation of environmental resources, such as watershed.
* Jenna Malone (Council Member for the Town of Brighton)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: Preserve and conserve the Wasatch as there is a danger of loving the canyons to death. Interest in policy that helps to protect the watershed, preserves varied interests and uses, and protects public lands.
* William McCarvill (Wasatch Mountain Club)
	+ Vision for the Wasatch: Turn around the actions, ideas, and beliefs and see a higher emphasis on the natural environment. There is importance in addressing engineering, education, and enforcement.
1. **PURPOSE, VISION, AND GOALS**

Chair Fisher opened up discussions related to the purpose, vision, and goals of the Preservation Committee. He wanted to keep the Committee on-task to deliver meaningful input to projects happening in the Wasatch. Chair Fisher shared a preliminary purpose statement:

* The advancement of preservation and protection policies, concepts, and ideas for the Central Wasatch Mountains.

Co-Chair Nelson liked the statement. She felt there was a range of things the Preservation Committee can focus on besides legislation and land use codes. The Committee could open the door to areas that had not been focused on before. Ms. Cameron suggested adding in Mr. McCarvill’s list of engineering, education, and enforcement. Chair Fisher believed those could be incorporated as components of the Committee messaging. However, he wasn’t certain that they fit in with the purpose statement for the Preservation Committee.

Ms. Malone expressed concerns related to access. The canyons provide a great way for visitors to spend time outdoors in an affordable way. She felt it was important to encourage access but also to increase education and leave no trace principle of ethics. It was also important not to limit visitation in a way that is biased against specific groups. Chair Fisher agreed that inclusion was important. Ms. Cameron suggested that it could be one of the Preservation Committee goals.

Mr. Vasquez discussed groups like Latino Outdoors, which is focused on engaging people to use the outdoors. The group also wanted outdoor use to be safe and welcoming for all. Ms. Cameron wondered if safety should be included on the list of goals for the Committee. Chair Fisher believed safety for users was important as was user education and stewardship. Ms. Malone suggested taking an approach that will protect the people from the park and protect the park from the people. She was in support of responsible recreation.

Chair Fisher noted that the Preservation Committee would try to fine-tune the suggestions during the next meeting. He read back the following suggestions that were captured:

* Purpose of the Preservation Committee:
	+ The advancement of preservation and protection policies, concepts, and ideas for the Central Wasatch Mountains. This would include engineering, education, and enforcement.
* Goals for the Preservation Committee:
	+ Concerned with the balance between inclusion, environmental justice, and access with preservation and protection. (Suggestions: free-year round busing combined with limited visitation through measures like tolling and widespread education);
	+ Importance of inclusion for diverse and underserved populations;
	+ User education, stewardship, and responsible recreation;
	+ Safety for all users; and
	+ Protecting the people from the park and protecting the park from the people.

Chair Fisher asked that any additional ideas or suggestions be sent via email. The Preservation Committee would try to refine the list during the next meeting.

1. **PROPOSED FORMAT OF MEETINGS**

Chair Fisher discussed the proposed format for future meetings of the Preservation Committee. Each meeting would be 90 minutes in duration and include a 30-minute presentation from a speaker or thinker in the community. The information from the presentation would be synthesized and shared with the broader Stakeholders Council. Presenters could include members of the Committee or land and watershed managers. The remaining hour of each meeting would be spent focused on the Committee's body of work and deliverables.

Chair Fisher asked for feedback on the idea of the presentations. He also wanted to start a list of potential presenters to speak to the Preservation Committee. Mr. McCarvill liked the idea and felt that the presentations would be valuable. He stressed the importance of focusing on the specific goals and deliverables as the Committee must get things done. Ms. Seed also liked the idea of the presentations. She felt they would help to inform the conversations. Additionally, the presentations would make it possible to understand the policy options available.

Discussions were had about when to hold meetings. Chair Fisher suggested that the Preservation Committee meet monthly. Ms. Seed felt that holding the meetings on a recurring date would be easiest. A question was raised about the Committee:

* Is the purpose of the Preservation Committee to look at the items in front of the CWC Commissioners through the lens of preservation and protection?

Chair Fisher noted that the question would be discussed further in the next agenda item. However, he felt that the idea was to provide streamlined feedback that would be beneficial to both CWC Commissioners and staff. Providing the perspective of preservation and protection was the core goal of the Preservation Committee.

Suggestions were shared for potential presenters, such as the Sawtooth Society. Chair Fisher felt it was a good idea to branch outside of the Central Wasatch area and even the State of Utah to learn what others are doing elsewhere in the country. Chair Fisher wondered if it would also be beneficial to hear about proposed projects from agencies. The Committee discussed the best approach to take. Chair Fisher also liked the idea of reaching out to Yellowstone at some point to learn more about the autonomous shuttles. While that was related to transportation, he believed transportation would play a role in the protection of the Wasatch. Other presentation suggestions included Salt Lake City Public Utilities and the U.S. Forest Service.

Mr. Becker reported that CWC staff regularly finds examples of how different places in the country and around the world are addressing issues similar to what the Wasatch faced. Staff reviews and discusses those examples on a regular basis. Mr. Becker offered to share any relevant information with the Preservation Committee. He referenced an article about the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and commented that he could pass it along to members of the Preservation Committee. Chair Fisher felt that information would be valuable.

Ms. Mickelson noted that there is a group that focused on outdoor education and they worked on futuring exercises for recreational and wilderness areas. She suggested that futuring exercises may be interesting to look at for the Wasatch. Chair Fisher liked the suggestion. He commented that the Preservation Committee could prioritize possible presenters at the next meeting.

1. **POSSIBLE TASKS**

Chair Fisher reported that the next item on the agenda related to possible tasks and deliverables the Preservation Committee could work on. He noted that there were concepts, ideas, and proposals happening in the Wasatch. The Preservation Committee could look into those and potentially comment, refine, or augment some of those ideas. Chair Fisher shared possible tasks as follows:

* Resource Library:
	+ The Preservation Committee should constantly be innovating, developing, and vetting new ideas. A resource library, either on the CWC website or on Google Drive, would allow Committee Members to look at relevant ideas and resources.
* Policy Recommendations:
	+ The Preservation Committee could provide support to relevant CWC Committees, such as the Legislative/Land Tenure Committee.
* Local Land Use Planning or Ordinances:
	+ There are many different jurisdictions in the area. The Preservation Committee could seek alignment for the landscape by defining what alignment could look like and reaching out to help different communities achieve alignment.
* Environmental Dashboard:
	+ The Environmental Dashboard was one of the most agreed-upon elements of the Mountain Accord. The Preservation Committee could look into areas to help.
* Funding Opportunities:
	+ The Preservation Committee may be able to look for opportunities for funding or grants to aid the CWC in the advancement of preservation-minded outcomes.
* Visioning for the Wasatch:
	+ Important decisions are facing the Central Wasatch Mountains. The Preservation Committee could help people understand the nuances of the different choices and also provide some advocacy.

Mr. McCarvill discussed the need for pre-trailhead education. He noted that there is trailhead education with educational signs but he wondered if there is education occurring in schools to discuss environmental ethics, water preservation, etc. Mr. McCarvill suggested that the Preservation Committee focus on pre-trailhead environmental awareness. Chair Fisher noted that there might be an opportunity for Mr. Schmidt to talk about what Save Our Canyons had been trying to do with the children’s programs. Their focus had been to work with Title 1 schools throughout the Salt Lake Valley. Mr. Schmidt commented that he would be happy to discuss that work at a future meeting. Another possible presenter could be the Utah Society for Environmental Education (“USEE”).

Chair Fisher referenced a comment related to visitor capacity. He noted that there is already a Visitor Management Subcommittee. The intention of the Preservation Committee was to provide support where needed. Mr. McCarvill explained that the Visitor Management Subcommittee will meet with CWC staff and the contractor for the Visitor Use Study on a periodic basis. He could share updates with the Preservation Committee in the future. Ms. Mickelson reported that the contractor for the Visitor Use Study was Utah State University. In the Utah State University proposal, there were a number of scheduled group meetings. Those meetings would be public and open to all participants.

Discussions were had about the Environmental Dashboard. Chair Fisher asked how the Preservation Committee could be of assistance. Ms. Nielsen reported that the Environmental Dashboard is being handled by Jim Ehleringer and Phoebe McNeally from the University of Utah. In Phase 1, Dr. Ehleringer and his team reviewed the data to determine what data is outdated, what data can be updated, and identify gaps. The Environmental Dashboard is now in Phase 2. Dr. McNeally and her team were working to build out the frameworks for each of the five elements of the Environmental Dashboard:

* Soils and Geology;
* Water Quality;
* Air Quality and Climate;
* Wildlife Communities; and
* Vegetation Communities.

The first of many meetings with the team at Esri would soon take place. Ms. Nielsen reported that they are working on templates to display each of the five elements. From there, Dr. McNeally and her team would reach out to technical and group experts so they could review the beta templates. After the beta is approved by staff, the CWC Board and all of the technical and group experts, the beta would be released for public review and comment in late summer to early fall. Ms. Nielsen believed the Preservation Committee would be able to help with outreach.

Mr. Becker added that Esri is donating six figures worth of services to help build out the hub function of the dashboard. It would be somewhat interactive, have different layers of information, a good search function, and available on a website. Additionally, the Environmental Dashboard could be used by a wide range of people. However, staff recently learned that Esri was unable to provide the hub service itself on a website for anyone who does not subscribe to their program. The CWC had not budgeted the $10,000 needed to host the hub and make it available to the public. That was something the CWC would need to look into. Ms. Nielsen noted that fundraising for this purpose may be an action item for the Preservation Committee.

Ms. Mickelson explained that the Environmental Dashboard is intended to be complete in December 2021. She noted that in the future there will be a need for ongoing updates to keep the Environmental Dashboard current. Staff was looking into the possible costs related to that. A full plan was to be completed shortly.

1. **COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Chair Fisher shared a high-level breakdown of the CWC structure. He explained that the CWC is made up of a 10-person Commission, represented by local jurisdictions on the Wasatch Front and the Wasatch Back. CWC Staff handles a lot of the work that is directed by the Commission. Additionally, there is a Stakeholders Council, which the Preservation Committee is a subcommittee of. Stakeholders Council Meetings are open to the public but involve largely the Council Members who spoke. Chair Fisher believed that the benefit of a subcommittee is that it allows both Council Members and members of the public to work together to advance priorities. He explained that anything the Preservation Committee does will move through the Stakeholders Council for approval and then the CWC Board.

Discussions were had about other possible Committee Members. Chair Fisher suggested reaching out to Latino Outdoors and other diversity-focused organizations and invite their participation on the Preservation Committee. It was also suggested that someone from a University might be able to provide insight on data and could also round out the Committee.

1. **NEXT MEETING DATE**

The Preservation Committee discussed a possible meeting schedule. It was determined that the Preservation Committee would meet on the third Thursday of each month at 2:00 p.m.

Chair Fisher wondered if there was a specific presenter the Committee Members would like to host during the next meeting. It was suggested that the Preservation Committee reach out to the Sawtooth Society first. Chair Fisher noted that the remainder of the next meeting would focus on finalizing the goals, values, vision, and purpose of the Preservation Committee.

1. **OPEN DISCUSSION**

There was no further discussion.

1. **ADJOURNMENT**

The Central Wasatch Commission Preservation Committee Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:51 p.m.

***I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Preservation Committee Meeting held Thursday, April 29, 2021.***

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes

T Forbes Group

Minutes Secretary

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