 **MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) BOARD MEETING HELD MONDAY, MAY 3, 2021, AT 3:30 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED ELECTRONICALLY VIA ZOOM WITH NO ANCHOR LOCATION.**

**Board Members:** Chair Chris Robinson, Mayor Erin Mendenhall (joined meeting at 4:00 p.m.), Mayor Jenny Wilson (joined meeting at 3:45 p.m.), Mayor Mike Peterson, Mayor Harris Sondak, Mayor Jeff Silvestrini, Mayor Dan Knopp, Councilor Jim Bradley, Councilor Marci Houseman, Councilor Max Doilney, Ex-Officio Member Carlton Christensen

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

**Others:**  Laura Briefer, Robert Sampson, Catherine Kanter, Pat Shea, Jessica Kirby, Jenna Malone, Eric Sorenson, Lynn Pace, Helen Peters, Abi Holt, Carl Fisher, Dennis Goreham, Kirk Nichols, Kody Fox, Michael Marker, Tara Tannahill, Nathan Rafferty, Annalee Munsey, Bruce Wood, Evelyn Everton, Gary Jackson, Lisa Hartman, Gay Lynn Benson, George Vargas, Julianna Christine, Kim Mayhew, Steve Van Maren, Alex Schmidt, Brian Hutchinson, Mike Allegra, Ned Hacker, Bruce Wood, Chris McCandless, Mimi Leavitt, Marian Rice, Kara Trevino, Patrick Nelson, Lance Kovel, Mike Maughan, Bekee Hotze, Brian Hutchinson, BK, Steve\_\_\_\_\_

**OPENING CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION BOARD MEETING**

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

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

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

‘I, as the Chair of the Board of the Central Wasatch Commission hereby determine that this meeting will occur only electronically, without a physical location, as authorized by the Governor’s Executive Order, dated March 18, 2020 (the “Governor’s Order”), and related legislation enacted by the Utah Legislature since that date. 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.’

1. **The Board will Consider Approving the Minutes of the April 5, 2021, Board Meeting.**

**MOTION:** Mayor Silvestrini moved to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2021, Board Meeting. Mayor Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

There was discussion regarding rescheduling the July 5, 2021, Central Wasatch Commission (“CWC”) Board Meeting to July 12, 2021. Mayor Silvestrini noted that he may need to leave the meeting early on July 12 but had no objection to changing the date.

**MOTION:** Mayor Peterson moved to change the regularly scheduled CWC Board Meeting date from July 5, 2021, to July 12, 2021. Councilor Doilney seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

**COMMITTEE AND PROJECT REPORTS**

1. **Executive Committee: Minutes of April 19, 2021, Executive Committee Meeting Included in Packet. Chair Robinson will Review and Answer Questions.**

Chair Robinson reported the Executive Committee Minutes from April 19, 2021, were included in the packet.

1. **Budget/Finance Committee: Minutes of April 13, 2021, Budget/Finance/Audit Committee Meeting Included in the Board Packet. Commissioner Silvestrini will Present the Tentative 2021/22 Budget, Establishing a Timeframe for Public Hearing, and Budget Approval Timeframe. Date for Submission to Utah State Auditor’s Office – 6/22/21.**

Mayor Silvestrini reported that there was a resolution before the CWC Board to adopt a Tentative Budget for the 2021/2022 fiscal year. The resolution would also set a public hearing on the budget for the June 7, 2021, CWC Board Meeting. This would allow time to hear public comments on the proposed budget electronically prior to the meeting. It would also allow time to hold a public hearing on the budget at the June 7, 2021, CWC Board Meeting. The budget could then be adopted in time to file it with the State before the deadline later in the month. (June 22, 2021)

The Tentative Budget had been reviewed previously. Mayor Silvestrini reminded the Board Members that it included a few changes from the previous budget. For instance, it included the return of 100% membership contributions. It also included increased compensation for two CWC staff members and reduced compensation for Office Administrator, Kaye Mickelson, who would move to part-time employment. Those discussions would continue further during the Closed Session portion of the meeting. Mayor Silvestrini reported that the Tentative Budget also funded some short-term projects. He noted that there may be amendments for the current fiscal year related to short-term projects based on recommendations from the Short-Term Projects Committee. However, amendments could be discussed at the next CWC Board Meeting after the Tentative Budget is adopted.

Chair Robinson asked that the Excel spreadsheet be shared. He believed the budget included the monies appropriated by the Legislature as well as the Utah Transit Authority’s (“UTA”) contribution. It also included funding for the Visitor Use Study and the Environmental Dashboard. Chair Robinson reiterated that there will be a Budget Hearing on June 7, 2021, at the CWC Board Meeting.

Mayor Sondak noted that many municipalities have fiscal year budgets similar to the CWC. As a result, it may be difficult for municipalities to commit to the 100% membership contribution before the CWC adopts its budget. Chair Robinson understood and explained that any revenue issues in the future could be addressed through a budget amendment.

**MOTION:** Mayor Silvestrini moved to adopt Resolution 2021-06, which will set a public hearing for the June 7, 2021, CWC Board Meeting. Mayor Wilson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

1. **Transportation Committee: No Meeting in April 2021.**

Chair Robinson reported that no Transportation Committee Meeting was held in April 2021.

1. **Short-Term Projects Committee: Minutes of the April 27, 2021, Short-Term Projects Committee.**

Councilor Bradley reported that there had been a productive meeting of the Short-Term Projects Committee. He thanked Councilor Houseman and Councilor Doilney for their input and effort. He explained that there had been 26 total applications for short-term projects. CWC staff was tasked with reducing that number to include only the applications that meet the criteria. There were 15 finalists in all for a total request amount of $192,000.

The Short-Term Projects Committee discussed each of the finalists and decided on eight projects. Of the eight projects, three could only be partially funded. The decision to partially fund some projects had to do with what the applicants were asking for and whether the partial funds would be meaningful enough to assist their efforts.

After deciding on the eight projects, additional information had been received. For instance, the U.S. Forest Service was prepared to handle one of the bridge projects themselves. As a result, the allocated $10,000 could be spent elsewhere. The Willow Heights Pond Beaver Project submitted by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources had jurisdictional issues. They asked to postpone the funding and would resubmit the following year. That meant that the allocated $6,000 could also be spent elsewhere. The suggestion was to equally divide the $6,000 between the three projects that had been partially funded. This would not fulfill the full requests but would come much closer.

The total requested amount for short-term projects was $67,500. The budget for short-term projects was $60,000 and the Short-Term Projects Committee requested that the CWC Board consider taking the additional $7,500 out of reserves. Councilor Bradley felt that the remaining six projects were all reasonable and necessary.

Mayor Sondak appreciated the work done by the Short-Term Projects Committee. He also appreciated the fact that the selected projects seemed to be consistent with the goals of the CWC. Mayor Peterson expressed gratitude for the hard work of the Committee. He noted that when the CWC was first created, there were concerns about projects that would have an immediate impact. He felt that the short-term projects showed immediate impact, improvement, and effort.

Mayor Silvestrini believed an oral amendment would need to be made to the budget at the next CWC Board Meeting to accommodate the $7,500 increase. Ms. Mickelson explained that the $60,000 Short-Term Projects Budget was actually included in the current fiscal year budget. Those funds would be expended by June 30, 2021, and would not impact the 2021-2022 tentative budget. As for the request for an additional $7,500, that could be handled in a few different ways. For example, they could look into a line-item savings or the $7,500 could be removed from reserves. Ms. Mickelson noted that booth could be done without a budget amendment.

**MOTION:** Councilor Bradley moved to approve the allocation of $67,500 to fund the short-term projects as recommended by the Short-Term Projects Committee. Mayor Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

1. **Legislative/Land Tenure Committee: No Meeting in April 2021.**

Chair Robinson reported that no Legislative/Land Tenure Committee Meeting was held in April 2021.

1. **Environmental Dashboard: Verbal Update.**

Associate Director/Communications Director, Lindsey Nielsen shared updates related to the Environmental Dashboard project. She reported that the Environmental Dashboard Project Team continued to work through data and on templates for the beta version of the Environmental Dashboard. CWC staff and the University of Utah project team planned to meet with the team from Esri on May 7, 2021, to build out a framework for the beta dashboard. Ms. Nielsen explained that the Environmental Dashboard was on schedule and anticipated to be up and running by the end of the year.

1. **Stakeholders Council Information: Minutes of the April 21, 2021, and April 28, 2021, Stakeholders Council Meetings are Included in the Packet. The Minutes of the Stakeholders Council Trails Committee of April 8, 2021, and the Stakeholders Council Preservation Committee of April 29, 2021, are Posted on the Public Notice Website. The Millcreek and Visitor Use Committees did not Meet.**

Chair Robinson reported that there were two Stakeholders Council Meetings held in April 2021. One was a regularly scheduled meeting and the other was a Special Meeting held one week later. The action item on the agenda related to the amendment of the rules and procedures for the Stakeholders Council. Chair Robinson noted that all information was included in the packet.

Deputy Director, Blake Perez shared the redline version of the Rules and Procedures document with the CWC Board. He explained that most of the recommended changes were brought forward by Committee Leadership from the Stakeholders Council. Those changes were then reviewed by the Stakeholders Council and voted on. The item had since moved forward to the CWC Board for formal approval. Most of the changes had to do with the advisory committees. Additional language was added for participation, purpose, how often the committees would meet and how often they would be evaluated by the Stakeholders Council. Chair Robinson felt the changes were reasonable.

**MOTION:** Councilor Bradley moved to approve Resolution 2021-07 to approve and ratify the amended Rules and Procedures for the CWC Stakeholders Council. Councilor Houseman seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

Chair Robinson further discussed the Stakeholders Council. He reported that Stakeholders Council Chair, Dr. Kelly Bricker would be moving on from the Council. Executive Director, Ralph Becker commented that Dr. Bricker had been a tremendous participant of the CWC and they would be sorry to see her go. However, she had received an offer for employment out of state. Chair Robinson also noted that Kim Mayhew from Solitude will no longer be involved with that organization. Chair Robinson was grateful for her involvement in the CWC.

1. **SYSTEM – The Commission will Continue Discussion Regarding Items and Information for the Mountain Transportation System.**

Chair Robinson reported that the CWC Board last met on April 5, 2021, and there was a good conversation related to the Mountain Transportation System (“MTS”). An attempt was made to reconvene in a special meeting later in the month. However, that attempt was unsuccessful. In lieu of that, CWC staff met with all Commissioners to further the dialogue on an individual basis. Mr. Becker explained that staff met with Commissioners to further discuss objectives that the CWC Board had previously prioritized for an MTS. He hoped those discussions would help to shape the conversation during the current meeting.

Chair Robinson posed several questions to CWC Board Members related to next steps:

* Should we give the Utah Department of Transportation (“UDOT”) guidance prior to the issuance of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Draft Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”)?
* If so, what might that recommendation look like?
* If not, what should be done instead?

Councilor Bradley believed that given the amount of time, energy, and study that had been dedicated to transportation, most Board Members were moving toward a preference. He noted that the preferences may not all be the same. If Board Members were willing to reveal that preference and begin more honest discussions, it would be beneficial. Councilor Bradley added that he was prepared to share his preferred transportation mode and the reasons behind that decision. Chair Robinson commented that Board Members may not be able to agree on one transportation mode, but they may be able to agree on other important conditions. He asked for feedback on the approach.

Mayor Wilson suggested that a document could come out of the CWC. That document could outline each preference and a summary of the reasons for that particular preference. She agreed that there were likely important conditions that Board Members could agree on. Chair Robinson asked that each member of the CWC Board share their reasons and potential transportation preferences.

Councilor Bradley explained that coming to a conclusion about a transportation mode would require examining different values. He outlined some of his perceived needs for a transportation mode including the cost and who will pay for the MTS, the congestion created at the mouth of the canyon, the type of users that would benefit, and the efficiency of the transportation system. While he was open to conversations about other transportation modes, Councilor Bradley felt that buses seemed best able to address those needs. He noted that there could be further discussions about whether the buses would use the existing road layout or whether an additional lane would be added.

Mayor Peterson believed there were several consensus points, such as the need to focus on the congestion created at the mouth of the canyons. He felt that buses would be a critical part of any transportation alternative selected. However, in order for buses to be effective in Cottonwood Heights, adjustments would need to be made to Wasatch Boulevard. Mayor Peterson reported that the Wasatch Boulevard Master Plan, which included a flex lane, had been submitted to UDOT. He was still open to the idea of the cog rail and aerial gondola system but noted that there were still unanswered questions related to the environment, cost, parking, and unintended consequences.

Mayor Knopp felt that increased buses were important. He did not believe they were the long-term solution. Relying on buses and personal vehicles would leave things the same in terms of congestion. He preferred the cog rail system and felt that it was the cleanest transportation solution. Mayor Knopp added that there were now just as many vehicles in the summer as there were in the winter. The only difference was that the summer use was more spread out more throughout the day. Whatever transportation mode was selected would need to take year-round use into account.

Mayor Wilson shared some of the following common themes that she had heard from fellow Board Members:

* The need to emphasize visitor capacity. Regardless of the transportation mode selected, there seemed to be an interest in capacity limitations;
* The broader need to manage traffic and impose traffic management strategies, such as tolling and limited access;
* The need to look at the public benefit and potentially spread those benefits out beyond the canyon and the jurisdictions at the mouth of the canyon; and
* The need to prioritize land preservation. The transportation solution could be coupled with federal legislation as a way to focus on preservation and the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area.

Mayor Silvestrini commented that buses are part of the answer. However, he did not feel they would be able to solve all of the transportation issues unless there is an enhanced bus strategy that adds another lane to the road and puts snowsheds in the canyon. The impact of those additions would be as extreme as an aerial gondola or cog rail system. Mayor Silvestrini noted that while buses will always be part of the solution, there will likely be more transportation discussions in the future unless another mode is explored. He favored the aerial gondola system because it seems less impactful to the physical environment than a cog rail system. The gondola is also quieter and can solve the immediate problem of moving visitors to the ski resorts.

Councilor Doilney stated that buses are a relatively short-term option and need to be part of any solution. He discussed the number of people moving to Park City and into the State. Due to the increase in population, he did not see how buses would be a long-term solution given the number of people that want to use the canyons. As a result, he preferred one of the mass transit options. Councilor Doilney did not like the idea of the view corridors being blocked by the gondola but it seemed like the most reasonable way to get visitors out of their vehicles. He liked the idea of buses in the relative short-term but noted that a transportation option that moves more people at a higher rate of speed would be critical for the canyons to survive.

Mayor Mendenhall stressed the importance of protecting the canyons to the greatest degree possible while still addressing the transportation issues. The biggest and best transportation mode would not necessarily be the most appropriate choice for the canyons. She reported that Salt Lake City supported the bus alternative based on the current information. Choosing a transportation mode beyond buses would be difficult without more information. Mayor Mendenhall felt that if the CWC decided to issue a recommendation to UDOT, it would need to be conditional based on the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area happening. Connectivity with the rest of the transportation system outside of the canyon would also need to be prioritized further.

Ex-Officio Member Christensen noted that UTA had not taken a formal position. He commented that certain things could be done within the next year or so, such as access management to the canyons. It may be possible to service the canyon more effectively. Ex-Officio Christensen expressed concerns about a significantly expanded bus system. He noted that long-term, a fixed transportation mechanism that could handle larger crowds would need to be refined.

Councilor Houseman appreciated the desire to focus on identifying areas of consensus. She felt there was also a consensus around the idea of removing more vehicles from the road. While she understood the scope of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS, Councilor Houseman felt it was important to prioritize removing more than 30% of the vehicles from the road. The second area where there seemed to be consensus was around prioritizing the watershed.

Sandy City saw transportation as both a phased approach and a stacked approach. The transportation solution needs to be coupled with additional layers of incentives and disincentives. When that happens, behaviors will start to change. Councilor Houseman brought up the argument that certain transportation solutions were only targeted toward skiers. She believed that if the transportation challenges are solved for skiers, they would also be solved for everyone else. Councilor Houseman also discussed the importance of prioritizing the transportation experience.

Councilor Houseman explained that regardless of the recommendation that came out of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS, Sandy City would like to see the immediate launch of an additional study with a broader scope. This study could partner with UDOT and UTA to think about a transportation solution that goes beyond the mouth of the canyon. She explained that Sandy City was equally worried about solutions that would get people to the canyon as they were with solutions that would get people up the canyon. Councilor Houseman looked forward to the Visitor Use Study as it could be part of identifying the long-term solution. While buses could be a short-term solution, she did not believe they were an appropriate long-term solution. Councilor Houseman believed:

* The long-term solution would need to prioritize the watershed; and
* The long-term solution would need to reduce the number of vehicles on the road.

Mayor Sondak noted the importance of reducing vehicles from the road. He also mentioned visitor capacity and stated that parking limitations were often able to limit the number of visitors. Mayor Sondak discussed the seriousness of avalanches and the need for safe egress. Additionally, he felt that the Alta Ski Area needs to be treated equitably. For instance, a cog rail system that services Snowbird and requires a change of mode to continue to Alta was not something he or his community would support. The community of Alta also would not support a train on the south side of the road. Mayor Sondak felt that the aerial gondola system and enhanced bus system were still viable. However, he noted that both options still have serious issues to consider.

Catherine Kanter was supportive of the comments made by Mayor Mendenhall. She believed that Salt Lake County was leaning toward the possibility of an enhanced bus transportation solution. Ms. Kanter liked the idea of certain consensus points or pillars. Those concepts could be agreed upon regardless of the selected transportation mode. She felt it would be useful for the CWC Board to continue to focus on those areas of consensus as it would be more productive than continuing to discuss the pros and cons of each particular mode.

Laura Briefer noted that her views were also reflected in the comments made by Mayor Mendenhall. She added that the mountains were facing many challenges, including climate change, development pressures, and recreation pressures. She expressed gratitude that the CWC Board Members had put so much thought and consideration into the transportation discussions. Ms. Briefer explained that whatever transportation option was selected, it would be transformational to the area in some way. She overviewed the four pillars of the Mountain Accord and stated that any transportation alternative would need to include a balance of those four pillars.

Chair Robinson felt it was important to share a document with UDOT that outlined the areas that the CWC Board agreed upon. He did not believe that buses were a viable long-term solution. There needed to be a method that would more effectively remove vehicles from the road. The scalability of the buses failed whereas the cog rail and aerial gondola system has more scalability without a lot of additional costs. However, there were issues with both mass-transit options. Chair Robinson believed it would be beneficial to communicate to UDOT and the State that the CWC did not endorse any of the five alternatives but there were certain elements the CWC felt should be taken into account. Those elements may require a supplement to the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS.

Mr. Becker suggested that staff summarize where there had been agreement and where there had been a desire for more information. Chair Robinson wondered if it would be possible to work on a document that would synthesize areas of consensus instead. Mayor Peterson believed the document would be worth the effort but made note of the short timeline. Chair Robinson stated that the Executive Committee could try to come up with a document that expresses the areas of consensus.

Councilor Houseman commented that there seem to be many shared priorities. She believed there was a general consensus around the need to move beyond buses and move towards a long-term solution. The CWC Board could include that in the document. Mayor Silvestrini stressed the importance of sharing something with UDOT before the release of the UDOT Little Cottonwood Canyon Draft EIS. He was concerned that if the CWC did not say something ahead of time, they would not have any influence. This was their opportunity to be heard.

Mayor Mendenhall felt that the best path forward was a document or letter. She wondered if it should include information about why the CWC was not endorsing or recommending one specific transportation mode. Chair Robinson suggested that the Executive Committee could meet, come up with a draft of the document, circulate it via email and then schedule a Board Meeting to go over the document line by line. Councilor Bradley felt it was critical to have another Board Meeting before the meeting that was scheduled for June 7, 2021.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Chair Robinson opened up the public comment portion of the CWC Board Meeting. He noted that three comments were received via email from Kirk Nichols, Todd Stewart, and John Knoblock. Ms. Nielsen reported that she would send the comments to CWC Board Members for further review.

*Brian Hutchinson* felt it would be helpful for the CWC Board to read the text of the motion that was passed at the special meeting of the Stakeholders Council. It was as follows:

***‘Patrick Shea moved that the Stakeholders Council recommend that the Central Wasatch Commission take no position on the three transportation alternatives until and unless a complete examination of alternatives, including an enhanced valley bus system, have been thoroughly reviewed. Brian Hutchinson seconded the motion. The motion passed 12-to-11.’***

Chair Robinson asked if the CWC Board’s idea to not take a position on a specific mode but to recommend areas of consensus was consistent with the Stakeholders Council motion. Mr. Hutchinson explained that his understanding of the motion was that no mode should be selected until there has been consideration of enhanced valley transit. Chair Robinson commented that enhanced valley transit was important. He felt it would be one of the pillars outlined in the document.

Ms. Kanter offered to work on a draft of a “Pillar Consensus Document.” Chair Robinson asked that any CWC Board Members with comments or suggestions share them with CWC staff.

**THE BOARD WILL ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION**

**MOTION:** Mayor Wilson moved to adjourn to Closed Session for the purpose of personnel matters. Mayor Mendenhall seconded the motion. Vote on motion: Mayor Wilson-Aye; Councilor Bradley-Aye; Councilor Houseman-Aye; Councilor Doilney-Aye; Mayor Knopp-Aye; Mayor Mendenhall-Aye; Mayor Silvestrini-Aye; Mayor Peterson-Aye; Mayor Sondak-Aye; Ex-Officio Christensen-Abstain. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention.

**The Board will Adjourn the Closed Session.**

**Board Reconvenes.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Councilor Doilney moved to adjourn. Mayor Peterson seconded the motion. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

The Central Wasatch Commission Board Meeting adjourned at 5:33 p.m.

***I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Board Meeting held Monday, May 3, 2021.***

**Teri Forbes**

Teri Forbes

T Forbes Group

Minutes Secretary

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