

**MINUTES OF THE CENTRAL WASATCH COMMISSION (“CWC”) SHORT-TERM PROJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2023, AT 12:00 P.M. THE MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM.  THE ANCHOR LOCATION WAS PARK CITY, CITY HALL.**

**Board Members:** Chair Nann Worel

Mayor Mike Weichers

Mayor Roger Bourke

**Staff:** Lindsey Nielsen, Executive Director of Policy

**Others:** Eli Eroh

Carolyn Wawra

Aaron London

Grace Tyler

**OPENING**

1. **Chair of the Short-Term Projects Committee, Mayor Nann Worel, will Open the Meeting and Welcome Committee Members, as well as the Public.**

Chair Nann Worel called the Short-Term Projects Committee Meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

**SHORT-TERM PROJECT FINALIST PROPOSALS REVIEW**

1. **The Committee will Review the Pool of Finalist Project Proposals and Make Recommendations for Funding.**

Chair Worel reported that short-term project requests totaled approximately $92,000. The Short-Term Projects Committee allocated $50,000 to the short-term projects. Executive Director of Policy, Lindsey Nielsen noted that the end of the fiscal year is fast approaching and an additional $10,000 was identified for short-term projects. As a result, the total allocation available was $60,000. The Short-Term Projects Committee Members reviewed the applicant projects.

The first project was for Canyons Trail Maintenance and Invasive Weed Control. The request was for $15,000. Ms. Nielsen reported that the application is from the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation which works in Little Cottonwood Canyon and Big Cottonwood Canyon. If approved, this would be the second year that the program was funded. Mayor Mike Weichers asked what level the project was funded last year. Ms. Nielsen reported that the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation project was previously been funded at $20,000, which was one of the largest allocations. She clarified that the cap for projects was lower this year, as there was less to distribute.

Ms. Nielsen further discussed the request from the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. She explained that the organization did a lot of work that the U.S. Forest Service relied on in the canyons. A significant amount of work was completed without a lot of resources. Joanna Wheelton was on the CWC Stakeholders Council and is the Executive Director of the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation.

The next project was the Bonanza Flat Transit to Trail Shuttle. Ms. Nielsen explained that it was the second year that the project had been submitted. It was proposed by Utah Open Lands and a representative from Utah Open Lands, Eli Eroh, was present at the Short-Term Projects Committee Meeting. $15,000 was requested and the total project cost was $87,000. The shuttle would operate from July to December. It originated on Park City Main Street and went to the Bonanza Flat Trailhead. The project was funded by the CWC last year for approximately $13,000.

Additional information about the program was shared. Bonanza Flat is in Wasatch County, even though Park City owns the property. As a result, there needs to be some collaboration. Mayor Weichers asked about the shuttle service. It was noted that it ran Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Mayor Bourke asked where the typical rider is dropped off. Ms. Eroh reported that it drops off at three different trailheads consisting of Bonanza Flat Trailhead, Mid Mountain Trailhead, and the Bloods Lake Trailhead. The shuttle lets people off and then later picks them back up.

Ms. Nielsen reported that the next project was submitted by the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance. The CWC has funded several Salt Lake Climbers Alliance proposals since the Short-Term Projects Grant Program was formed. The proposal this year was for Anchor Maintenance. $7,500 was requested with a total project cost of $100,000. This was one of two proposals from the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance. The second was to offset the costs associated with a staff position. Ms. Nielsen further discussed the proposed Anchor Maintenance. Hardware was drilled into rock bases that was essential for specific types of rock-climbing routes. It is important work. There was discussion regarding the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance project that was funded last year.

The next project proposal was from Save Our Canyons. A representative from Save Our Canyons, Grace Tyler, was present at the Short-Term Projects Committee Meeting. She was attending the meeting via Zoom. Ms. Nielsen explained that Save Our Canyons participated in the grant program from the beginning. In the past, various projects from Save Our Canyons had been funded. This year, the request was for $10,000 for Trail Work, Invasive Weed Work, Education, and Outreach. Ms. Nielsen noted that $10,000 was the largest ask that had come from Save Our Canyons to date.

The next project was for Dumpster Days. Carolyn Wawra from Recycle Utah was present to answer questions related to the proposal. Ms. Nielsen reported that Dumpster Days is an event that has taken place for many years. It is a collection of noxious materials that would otherwise end up in Park City waterways. This was an environmental conservation event where Recycle Utah collects the materials in partnership with Park City Municipal and sustainably disposed of the materials. Ms. Wawra noted that there are events hosted in the spring and the fall. There is a fall clean-up for leaves and a spring clean-up with branches and grasses. Usually, the organization can cover the costs but there had been a lot of increases. The request was for $12,000.

Ms. Nielsen reported that the next project proposal was a Wasatch Backcountry Alliance Shuttle that ran during the winter. This was the second time that the proposal had been submitted from Wasatch Backcountry Alliance. Last year, it was funded at $15,000. It serviced Little Cottonwood Canyon, specifically the Grizzly Gulch let off for backcountry use. Aaron London from the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance was attending the Short-Term Projects Committee Meeting via Zoom. Mr. London reported that ridership is up over 200% from the previous year and the days of service were able to be doubled. More people are utilizing the service. He noted that service stopped on April 1, because that was the extent of the funds but users want it to run later. The ridership numbers were not finalized but the busiest day was February 18 with 80 riders. Most of the other days had 50 riders or more. Mayor Bourke believed the riders were not charged for the shuttle. That was confirmed. Mr. London explained that the organization was considering charging for the shuttle in the future but that had not been done. However, donations were requested.

Mayor Bourke asked if ridership is limited to members of the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance. This was denied. Mr. London reported that anyone can ride the shuttle. This includes backcountry skiers, snowshoers, hikers, sledders, and so on. Mayor Bourke wondered where the shuttle picks riders up. Mr. London stated that this year, it was centralized at the Butler Elementary School parking lot for both shuttles. That worked well because it prevented riders from getting stuck in traffic queuing for Little Cottonwood Canyon or Big Cottonwood Canyon. Four shuttles were run per day, weather and road conditions permitting. The schedule was 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 12:30 p.m. Mayor Weichers asked about the overall cost of the program. It was noted that the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance Board is all volunteer. All of the funds received from the grant would be passed directly to their partner to operate the shuttle service.

The next project proposal was reviewed. Ms. Nielsen noted that it was the second application from the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance. There was a request for monetary support for a staff position, which was a Climbing Access Technician, in partnership with the Forest Service. $5,000 was requested. The Salt Lake Climbers Alliance would then match the other half of that to offset $10,000 of the salary cost. It is a year-round position. Ms. Nielsen clarified that the staff person is already in place, but the desire was to fund an additional year of that position for the organization.

The Friends of Alta Junior Ranger Activity Book was the next project that was proposed. Ms. Nielsen reported that it was fully funded last year through the Short-Term Projects Grant Program. This year, the request was for the full amount. Originally, the request was for $3,000 but an updated quote was sent after the initial application was submitted. The new project cost had been adjusted. She noted that the project was a summer outdoor education booklet that was distributed to children.

Ms. Nielsen reported that the next project proposal was related to Tri-Canyon Bathroom Maintenance and Cleaning. Many partners in the Wasatch Front contribute to the maintenance and ongoing cleaning of trailhead restrooms. It currently cost the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, Forest Service, and Salt Lake City Public Utilities approximately $180,000 year-round to service all of the trailhead restrooms. To offset some of those costs, Ms. Nielsen submitted a request for $10,000.

In 2020, the CWC funded approximately $15,000 for restroom maintenance. Starting in the new fiscal year, the CWC would assume the contract for restroom maintenance in the Wasatch Front, across Millcreek Canyon, Big Cottonwood Canyon, and Little Cottonwood Canyon. The CWC would not be fully funding the restroom maintenance, as it would be a communal effort. Ms. Nielsen explained that she had requested $10,000 to address the current restroom maintenance needs. She noted that it was an effort that involved the four ski resorts, the Town of Brighton, the Town of Alta, Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, Forest Service, and Salt Lake City Public Utilities.

Once all of the proposed projects have been reviewed, the Committee Members will consider which ones will be funded and to what extent. Ms. Nielsen reported that the total request amount was approximately $92,400. She reminded the Committee Members that $60,000 is available for short-term projects. Ms. Nielsen clarified that short-term projects are those that can be completed within one calendar year of funding. Additionally, it is important to remember that any projects selected needed to satisfy one or more tenants of the Mountain Accord. The tenants of the Mountain Accord were environment, recreation, transportation, and economy.

Mayor Bourke noted that a lot of the short-term project proposals were related to ongoing activities. There were not a lot of close-ended submittals. He believed something like the Anchor Maintenance proposal would be whereas something like the shuttle program was ongoing. Since many of the projects are ongoing, he did not necessarily believe they were all short-term projects. That being said, all of the projects were worthwhile. Mayor Weichers asked if any follow-up was required. Ms. Nielsen explained that reporting was a requirement for awardees. After the Short-Term Projects Committee presents their recommendations to the CWC Board at the May 1, 2023, CWC Board Meeting for final approval, she would send out congratulatory emails for the projects that were selected. In addition, there would be documents sent with information about reporting.

Chair Worel asked about the projects funded last year. She wondered if all of those projects met the requirements. Ms. Nielsen confirmed this. Another requirement of the grant was that any unused funding be returned. The CWC received some return funding last year. An organization funded the installation of a bicycle rack at a trailhead in Millcreek Canyon. However, the costs were overestimated and a small amount was returned after the installation.

There was discussion regarding how to determine which short-term projects to fund. Mayor Bourke suggested that each Committee Member identify priority projects. Mayor Weichers suggested that the projects be considered based on how well each fulfills the tenants of the Mountain Accord. Mayor Bourke felt it was important to consider what would happen if a particular project did not receive grant funding. For instance, what the impact would be on the applicants. He noted that the first project on the list was asking for less than 10% of what was needed. If the CWC did not award $15,000 to the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, it was necessary to think about what the impact would be. Mayor Weichers agreed that the percentage of the project cost was a notable factor.

The Committee discussed the Friends of Alta submission for the Junior Ranger Activity Book. Chair Worel liked that it benefits children. In addition, the request is fairly low compared to the other projects. Mayor Bourke and Mayor Weichers were supportive of funding that proposal. Ms. Nielsen wondered if there was a desire to fund the project fully at $3,000. This was confirmed.

Mayor Weichers discussed the Canyons Trail Maintenance and Invasive Weed Control Project that was submitted by the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation. He felt that work was important and noted that there were a lot of excellent partners that participated. The proposal satisfied the Mountain Accord and there had been consistent funding from the CWC. $15,000 had been requested. He was not certain whether the full $15,000 should be funded and suggested $10,000 instead. It was suggested that $10,000 be written down as a placeholder before the amount was finalized.

The Committee Members discussed the requests from the Salt Lake Climbers Alliance. Ms. Nielsen reminded the Short-Term Projects Committee that there had been a request to help fund a staff position. She noted that it was technically outside of the scope of what the Short-Term Projects Grant Program allowed for, but it had been submitted in addition to the Anchor Maintenance proposal. There was no support for the staff position request, but Mayor Weichers believed the Anchor Maintenance was essential. He asked how that related to the Mountain Accord. Ms. Nielsen explained that it satisfied the recreational stewardship tenant of the Mountain Accord. It was noted that the request for Anchor Maintenance was $7,500. Mayor Bourke suggested funding it fully.

The Wasatch Backcountry Alliance Shuttle request, which was $15,000, was discussed. Mayor Bourke stated that traffic and parking in Little Cottonwood Canyon had become a significant issue. Last season, Alta Ski Area employed a reservation system that helped the traffic situation a lot. He felt that Wasatch Backcountry Alliance had done something rational in response to that. The shuttle reduced the number of vehicles associated with backcountry use. That was a valuable contribution. As a result, his recommendation was to fully fund the request. Mayor Weichers asked Mr. London for additional information. He was concerned that there was no charge for the shuttle. It would make sense to charge a small fee, which would reduce the requested amount needed in the future. He loved the idea of removing vehicles from the canyons but felt it was fair to charge a small fee for the service. Mayor Bourke reminded Committee Members that Utah Transit Authority (“UTA”) service had been cut back dramatically that year. The Wasatch Backcountry Alliance Shuttle had helped fill in some gaps. Mr. London noted that the Short-Term Projects Committee could consider funding the project in full, contingent on there being a nominal charge for ridership next season.

The Wasatch Backcountry Alliance was originally opposed to the Alta Ski Area parking reservation program because there were concerns that it unfairly restricted access to Grizzly Gulch and traditional backcountry ski areas in the upper portion of Little Cottonwood Canyon for non-resort patrons. However, the program had a positive impact on the traffic levels in Little Cottonwood Canyon. The shuttle buses were able to operate better in Little Cottonwood Canyon than in Big Cottonwood Canyon. If other resorts were willing to switch to reservation programs, that could have a notable impact on traffic congestion in the canyons. Mayor Weichers believed that Solitude Mountain Resort was considering the implementation of a reservation system as well. The Committee determined that $15,000 would be added as a placeholder for the Wasatch Backcountry Alliance shuttle.

The Short-Term Projects Committee discussed the $15,000 request from Utah Open Lands for the Bonanza Flat Transit to Trail Shuttle. Mayor Bourke wondered where the remainder of the funds would come from. Mayor Weichers explained that it would come from the city. Chair Worel noted that the project had been successful in the past. There was not enough parking in the area, so the shuttle was necessary. The program ran from July to December. Mayor Weichers wondered whether the service timeline would expand in the future. Chair Worel noted that there would be support from users if the service expanded, but it depended on the amount of funding available. Mayor Weichers believed the intention of the shuttle was to change behavior, which was important. There was support to fund the Bonanza Flat Transit to Trail Shuttle, but the amount was still to be determined.

Based on the projects that the Committee had expressed interest in so far, the total amount was approximately $50,000. There was $60,000 to allocate. Mayor Bourke noted that Committee Members would revisit the funding amounts once all of the projects have been reviewed further.

The submission from Save Our Canyons was discussed. Ms. Nielsen reminded Committee Members that the request was $10,000 for Trail Work, Invasive Weed Work, Education, and Outreach. Ms. Tyler explained that the program had to do with on-the-ground stewardship. The Wilderness Stewardship and Education Program was launched in 2018, with funding from the David Kelby Johnson Memorial Foundation. This year, there were approximately 30 hours of trail maintenance that needed to be completed with the Salt Lake Ranger District. The work included the removal of illegal fire pits, trash clean up, and trail maintenance that the Ranger District needed assistance with, in addition to invasive weed pulls in partnership with Salt Lake City Public Utilities. The hope was that there would be 100 volunteers during the season. Ms. Tyler stressed the importance of the education component. It was important to inform users that actions could impact the watershed. Additionally, it was necessary to inform the community about fuel management in Millcreek.

Mayor Bourke asked what Save Our Canyons would do if the grant funding was not received from the CWC. Ms. Tyler explained that some trail days would need to be canceled. It took a lot of staff time to coordinate volunteers and work with Salt Lake City Public Utilities. In addition, the education side would need to be reduced or eliminated. Mayor Bourke pointed out that the total project cost was $134,500. If the $10,000 requested did not materialize, there would still be other funding available. Ms. Tyler clarified that grants had been submitted for funding elsewhere, but the full amount was not secure. The intention was to combine the $10,000 grant with others. When it came to grant funding, every little bit counted to complete the project to the fullest extent possible.

Mayor Weichers wanted to hear additional information about the education component. Ms. Tyler reported that Save Our Canyons liked to have digital education, such as social media, and live events. The organization hosted educational events where it was possible to share the seven principles of “Leave No Trace.” At least two or three educational events were scheduled. There were also digital marketing materials. Chair Worel asked about the relationship with Salt Lake City Public Utilities. Ms. Tyler clarified that Save Our Canyons would provide the volunteers and would work with Salt Lake City Public Utilities on trail days. The organization brought the volunteers to the project. Committee Members believed the Save Our Canyons request was worthwhile. It was determined that the $10,000 would be added as a placeholder and the number would be refined later in the meeting.

The next item was Dumpster Days from Recycle Utah with a funding request of $12,000. Ms. Wawra reported that each event cost approximately $3,500. It was done four times per year. The County was a partner on the trash side of the event. She noted that there was funding for the spring event, but she wanted to make sure the event could happen in the fall as well. The Short-Term Projects Grant had been applied in order to shoulder some of the additional costs. It had increased from $1,800 per event to $3,500 per event due to fuel costs and labor costs. Inflation had impacted the work. Mayor Weichers wondered whether it would be possible to award a partial amount. The Committee suggested funding the submission at either $6,000 or $7,000 to assist with the program.

The final proposal was discussed, which was for Tri-Canyon Bathroom Maintenance and Cleaning. Mayor Bourke felt that the Forest Service should be handling the costs. Ms. Nielsen noted that the Forest Service was taking care of the majority, but there was not enough to cover the full amount. Committee Members were supportive of funding the full amount, but it depended on what was left from the $60,000 that the Short-Term Projects Committee had to allocate to various projects.

The Short-Term Projects Committee reviewed the projects and the placeholder amounts. It was noted that the total amount was higher than $60,000. Chair Worel suggested reducing the $15,000 requests to $12,500. Ms. Nielsen pointed out that the Anchor Maintenance project proposed by Salt Lake Climbers Alliance requested $5,000 to $7,500. It might be possible to fund at the lower end. With the adjustments made, the Short-Term Projects Committee was $9,000 over the allocated amount. Mayor Bourke wondered whether it would be possible to ask the CWC Board to fund the excess. Ms. Nielsen reported that in the past, the Short-Term Projects Committee had requested that the CWC utilize reserve funding. Discussions were had about possible reductions. Mayor Weichers suggested that the Save Our Canyons amount be reduced to $8,000. The Short-Term Projects Committee determined that the additional $7,000 needed would be requested from the full CWC Board.

Ms. Nielsen reported that the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee Meeting was scheduled for April 17, 2023, at 3:30 p.m. She would summarize the decisions made and the dollar amounts in a memo ahead of that meeting. It would be distributed to the Executive/Budget/Audit Committee as well as the Short-Term Projects Committee. On May 1, 2023, the full CWC Board would review the projects.

**ADJOURN SHORT-TERM PROJECTS COMMITTEE MEETING**

1. **Mayor Nann Worel will Close the Short-Term Projects Committee Meeting.**

The Short-Term Projects Committee Meeting adjourned at 1:07 p.m.

***I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Central Wasatch Commission Short-Term Projects Committee Meeting held Friday, April 14, 2023.***

**Teri Forbes**

Teri Forbes

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Minutes Secretary

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