

Alta Planning Commission Meeting Summary
Alta Community Center/Library, Alta, Utah
August 7th, 2017, 4PM

IN ATTENDANCE:

Planning Commissioners: Joan Degiorgio (chair), Jon Nepstad (vice chair), Rob Voye, Dave Abraham, Roger Bourke, Mayor Tom Pollard (ex officio).

Town of Alta staff: John Guldner, Chris Cawley, Rich Mrazik

Members of the public: Greg Bell, Allen Orr, Jen Clancy

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Planning Commission Chair Joan Degiorgio opened the meeting, welcomed the audience, and introduced the agenda.

1:05 UPDATE ON RECENT EVENTS, STAFF

John Guldner updated the planning commission on the status of renovations to the Snowpine Lodge, the Rustler Lodge, the Peruvian Lodge, and various single-family homes. John reminded the planning commission that the Town of Alta does not regulate chairlift construction on Alta Ski Area's special use permit area. Jon Nepstad asked whether the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) is aware of impacts to traffic and parking on SR-210 which may arise as the Snowpine Lodge renovation project proceeds into ski season. John indicated that UDOT is aware and that the Snowpine, UDOT, and the Alta Marshal's Office will work together to mitigate impacts. Roger Bourke asked whether the Snowpine's coverage and setback issues had been resolved, and John indicated that a resolution was attained.

9:30 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 5 2017 ALTA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Joan Degiorgio asked the planning commission for comments on the draft minutes. Roger Bourke made a motion to approve the draft minutes from the June 5 2017 planning commission meeting. Dave Abraham seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

10:20 UPDATE ON THE COMMERCIAL CORE IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT

Chris Cawley began a presentation of material presented to the "core project team" at its first meeting in late July, 2017. [This presentation can be accessed on the Town of Alta website here](#). Chris described that the project will produce a set of preliminary design plans for projects along the SR-210 corridor that will improve conditions for walking and bicycling through Alta. These projects could include lane and parking striping, median and barrier features and other "traffic calming" installations, signage and

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wayfinding, entry monumentation, and other strategies. Jon Nepstad reminded the planning commission that UDOT right-of-way along SR 210 through Alta remains undefined. John Guldner added that the Town of Alta's parcel of vacant land, which includes the Flagstaff parking area, was surveyed under the assumption of a 66-foot right-of-way based on the observed centerline of the road. Chris described an iterative approach to developing projects of this nature, which begins with a "pilot" or demonstration project, which are built with low-cost, temporary materials, so that the effects or desirability of various projects can be evaluated prior to being developed into long-term, durable infrastructure.

Roger Bourke asked Chris Cawley whether the project will seek not to remove any current parking. Chris acknowledged that parking was a very significant issue in the project, and that the project team had not yet determined whether parking should be entirely "held harmless" from being impinged upon by conceptual projects. Chris acknowledged that snow removal is another major operational constraint which will influence the project.

40:20 INTRODUCTION OF INVASIVE WEEDS ORDINANCE REVIEW

Joan Degiorgio thanked staff for moving forward with a review of the Town of Alta's noxious and invasive weeds ordinances. Chris Cawley acknowledged that Aliza Whalen, an intern with the town, did a great deal of research into how various communities in Utah regulate noxious and invasive plant species. Chris mentioned that the effort to review the town's weed ordinance grew out of the Alta Weed Action Plan, in which various organizations committed to take certain actions to advance the goal of monitoring and combating the spread of noxious and invasive species in Alta. Chris acknowledged that many, if not most, communities in Utah have noxious weed control programs and regulations that have been updated more recently than Alta's, and that noxious weed control programs typically entail more public relations and communications than enforcement. Chris acknowledged that an update to the Town of Alta ordinance will involve developing a list of species Alta seeks to regulate, which will be based on the State of Utah's noxious weed list.

Dave Abraham asked whether the Town of Alta's development application process requires an applicant to submit a landscaping plan. John Guldner stated that the town requires developers to identify existing vegetation and to plant new trees in the event that a project requires the removal of existing trees. Jon Nepstad observed that the current town ordinance requires property owners use control methods which may be out of date.

Roger Bourke opined that staff used communities that are less rural than Alta as examples and that ordinances and programs used in places as rural as Alta should be sought. Roger also observed that getting the United States Forest Service (USFS) to pull weeds on USFS property could be difficult and asked whether the ski area is required to pull weeds within their special use permit. Greg Bell confirmed that there is not a requirement that Alta Ski Area pull weeds within their permit area. Jen Clancy opined that through the efforts of various community partners, the spread of invasive species in Alta has been

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relatively well managed and documented. Chris observed that Summit County is arguably more rural than Alta, as it contains a substantial amount of undeveloped, public land, and large agricultural areas.

Chris acknowledged that noxious weeds ordinances are not technically land use ordinances, and that as such they are not necessarily within the planning commission's authority to approve. Chris also acknowledged that since the issue of noxious and invasive species has been on the planning commission priority list for a long time, staff will continue to consult the planning commission as it develops updates to the town's regulations.

1:01:10 CONTINUATION OF REVIEW OF PROPOSED ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS; "HOT TOPICS" IDENTIFIED IN EARLIER REVIEW; ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ALBION BASIN SOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY ZONE; WATERWAY OPTIONS; WATERWAY SETBACKS; AND NONCONFORMING USES.

John Guldner introduced the Albion Basin Source Protection Overlay Zone concept, and presented a slide depicting the boundaries of the conceptual zoning overlay. John described a wide variety of arguments why Albion Basin could be considered distinct from the rest of Alta for environmental reasons. John acknowledged that there are 21 cabins in Albion Basin: 12 in the Albion Basin and Albion Alps Subdivisions and 9 in the Cecret Lake area, all of which were approved by Salt Lake County prior to the incorporation of the Town of Alta. John indicated that the conceptual overlay would apply different waterway setback and nonconforming use regulations within the boundaries of the new designation. Rich Mrazik observed that the package of ordinance revisions before the planning commission contains a proposal to loosen the nonconforming use regulation in the Base Facilities Zone, and clarified that the Albion Basin Source Protection Overlay Zone would seek to maintain the "status quo" for nonconforming use regulation in Albion Basin. John Guldner described that there are several steps to take before potentially approving and adopting any of the proposals in the package of updates, including a public hearing by the planning commission and approval by the town council.

Roger Bourke opined that it seemed the rationale to create the Albion Basin Source Protection Overlay Zone was to provide for liberalization of various regulations outside of Albion Basin. Rich Mrazik acknowledged that the proposed overlay would have the effect of creating a distinction between areas where increased development intensity would be more or less desirable.

Rich Mrazik observed that the town may want to consider whether further changes to zoning regulations in Albion Basin could be a "moot point," given that many private parcels in Albion Basin may already be undevelopable under current regulations. Joan Degiorgio opined that there could be value in the town making a general statement about Albion Basin's special status by adopting an overlay.

Jon Nepstad asked whether the effect of the town's current nonconforming use provision is to preclude a property owner from tearing down and rebuilding such a structure, or otherwise altering various

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aspects of the structure such as height, coverage, or “profile.” Rich confirmed that this is essentially the effect of this provision.

John Guldner observed that the planning commission seemed to be generally supportive of the concept of a special zoning overlay for Albion Basin. John described that an engineer at Forsgren Associates recommended the proposed boundaries of the Albion Basin Source Protection Overlay Zone based on drainage and hydrology. Rob Voye asked whether the proposal to require deeper setbacks from waterways will have any effect on development in Albion Basin. John Guldner observed that there are several additional regulatory constraints to development in Albion Basin applied by other jurisdictions, and that if all of those regulations become less restrictive, the town’s waterway setback requirements may effectively prohibit development on certain parcels.

Jon Nepstad asked whether waterway setback requirements are intended to prevent environmental impacts during construction, or whether the goal is to keep finished projects further from the waterways. Dave Abraham stated that setback requirements seek to prevent both of Jon’s hypothetical impacts. John Guldner observed that the town cannot adopt a less restrictive setback regulation than Salt Lake City’s watershed ordinance or Salt Lake Valley Health Department Watershed Regulation, but that it can adopt a more restrictive waterway regulation. Several planning commission members opined that a letter from University of Utah scientists arguing for a 100-foot setback from waterways is persuasive. John Guldner observed that applying a 100-foot setback requirement in all of Alta’s zoning districts would create several dozen non-conforming uses.

Jen Clancy observed that autumn is a particularly dry period off the year, and that taking a walking tour of Albion Basin during dry conditions may not provide an accurate demonstration of the function of the waterways in upper Albion Basin.

Joan Degiorgio introduced the final “hot topic” within the larger ordinance review package, which is a proposal to change the treatment of nonconforming uses in the base facilities zone. Rich Mrazik stated that the proposal would allow such nonconforming uses to tear-down and rebuild on the current footprint and within the current structural “envelope,” and encouraged the planning commission to discuss whether this, or some other configuration of these provisions is desirable. Roger Bourke recommended the town consider how the public interest could be served by allowing nonconforming uses to be redeveloped in various ways. Dave Abraham asked whether nonconforming uses will be required to comply with parking requirements. John Guldner and Rich Mrazik clarified that lacking required onsite parking would prohibit property owners from intensifying a nonconforming use, but it may not prohibit other property improvements which are prohibited under the current ordinance.

1:42:05 NEW BUSINESS

Roger Bourke recommended the planning commission walking tour include some instruction on noxious and invasive weed species in Alta.

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1:43:35 CITIZENS INPUT

Allen Orr asked whether the size of the proposed Albion Basin Source Protection Overlay Zone is appropriate to the purpose and need for the proposed regulation. Allen recommended that the planning commission consider the effects of expanding the waterway setback requirement to 100 feet on Alta Ski Area facilities in the base areas.

1:46:10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The planning commission agreed to cancel its regular September meeting, and to schedule its walking tour for Monday, October 2nd at 3 PM.

1:53:30 MOTION TO ADJOURN

Jon Nepstad made a motion to adjourn the planning commission meeting. Dave Abraham seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

The content of the minutes are not a *verbatim* transcription of the meeting. These minutes are a general overview of what occurred at the meeting.

These minutes were approved on October 2, 2017.

S/ Chris Cawley
Assistant Town Administrator

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