

**Alta Planning Commission Minutes**  
**February 16, 2018**  
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**Alta Planning Commission Meeting Summary**  
**Alta Community Center/Library, Alta, Utah**  
**February 16, 2018: 3PM**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Planning Commissioners:** Jon Nepstad, Roger Bourke, Rob Voye, Dave Abraham, Roger Bourke, Jeff Niermeyer, Mayor Harris Sondak (ex officio).

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

**Members of the public:** Marcus Dipppo, Mimi Levitt, Jen Clancy

**00:00:20 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE VICE CHAIR**

Planning Commission Vice Chair Jon Nepstad opened the meeting and welcomed the commission members.

**00:01: COMMISSION TO VOTE ON/ELECT A NEW CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Jon Nepstad stated that Joan Degiorgio, previous commission chair, had resigned. Rob Voye made a motion to nominate Jon Nepstad to be planning commission chair, and to nominate Roger Bourke to be Vice Chair. John Guldner described recent discussions of the issue of planning commission members having potential conflicts of interest. John opined that Jon Nepstad would not abuse his position as planning commission chair to obtain business opportunities. Roger Bourke agreed, and added that perceived conflict of interest was important to avoid as well. Dave Abraham suggested that Jon Nepstad's professional, technical background made him an asset to the planning commission. The planning commission and town staff discussed the ongoing planning project being led by Fehr and Peers under a grant-funded contract, and the competitive process through which consultants are selected within the grant program. Mayor Sondak observed that merely disclosing a conflict of interest sometimes causes parties with such conflicts to disregard those conflicts more comfortably. Jen Clancy added that Jon Nepstad would be working as a consultant on the Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project, and Jon stated that the EIS would be funded entirely by the State of Utah.

Roger Bourke seconded Rob Voye's earlier motion and confirmed that he was willing to serve as planning commission vice chair. All planning commission members present voted in favor of the motion, and the motion was carried.

**00:14:00 INTRODUCTION OF MAYOR SONDAK**

Mayor Harris Sondak introduced himself as having served on the Alta Town Council for six years prior to

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his election in November of 2017. Mayor Sondak described his professional background, and opined that the Town of Alta faces increasingly complex challenges due to population growth in the Salt Lake Valley, some of which could be exacerbated by improvements to SR 210. Mayor Sondak opined that the town had been well-served by its partnerships with Salt Lake City and the United States Forest Service.

**00:17:00 INTRODUCTION OF JEFF NIERMEYER**

Jeff Niermeyer described that he served as the director of Salt Lake City Public Utilities prior to joining the Alta Planning Commission, and described that he'd considered former Alta Mayor Bill Levitt a mentor. Jeff described that he served on the boards of directors of several organizations including the Board of Directors of Save Our Canyons.

**00:20:08 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 6, 2017 ALTA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Roger Bourke made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2017 planning commission meeting. Jon Nepstad seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

**00:22:15 COMMISSION TO DISCUSS AND ESTABLISH REGULAR MEETING DATES AND TIMES**

Jon Nepstad asked whether the commission preferred holding the previous year's meeting convention of the first Monday of each month. The planning commission discussed various options, and settled on holding meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 3 PM.

**00:22:15 UPDATE ON SR-210 EIS, JON NEPSTAD**

Jon Nepstad again acknowledged that he was working on the EIS, which will analyze various proposals for improving transportation on SR 210. Jon described that in 2016, the Utah State Legislature approved a bond to fund transportation projects on certain state roads which provide access to outdoor recreation. SR 210 was selected as one of the priority roads, and some of the funding approved by the legislature was devoted to conducting the SR 210 EIS. Jon described that the process does not assume a predetermined outcome, and that the EIS will analyze numerous alternative concepts. Jon described that the EIS could take several years to conclude. John Guldner stated that Mayor Sondak and John Thomas, the Utah Department of Transportation project manager overseeing the SR 210 EIS, had been in touch and that the EIS project team will be consulting directly with the town as the project develops. Jon Nepstad stated that HDR, an engineering firm with offices in Salt Lake City, was leading the SR 210 EIS project team, and described that the project was still in its very early stages. Jen Clancy reported that John Thomas had suggested the project could identify a preferred alternative as early as the autumn of 2018, and Jon Nepstad added that a long time could transpire between identification of a preferred alternative and a record of decision being recorded. Jeff Niermeyer asked whether certain political trends at the federal level, such as preferences for more streamlined planning and environmental

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requirements, could affect the SR 210 project. Jon Nepstad observed that such guidance had been promoted by previous administrations, and opined that the SR 210 EIS was unlikely to be affected by any such guidance.

**00:39:20 UPDATE ON CURRENT LEGISLATION**

John Guldner described that town staff, Mayor Sondak, and contract lobbyists with Parsons, Behle, and Latimer were working to monitor and provide input on a variety of legislative issues. John described that Senate President Wayne Niederhauser was sponsoring legislation to allow UDOT to levy tolls on state highways. The planning commission discussed the common understanding that the legislation was intended to allow for tolling on SR 210 as a potential means to reduce traffic congestion. Jon Nepstad described his experience working on various “managed lane” strategies including tolled roadways, and expressed some skepticism about expectations that tolled roads would generate surplus revenue.

John Guldner asked Jeff Niermeyer to speak to various legislative proposals related to Salt Lake City’s watershed jurisdiction. Jeff described a bill intended to revoke jurisdiction provided under state code to Utah cities of the first class over entire watershed areas, which also requires watershed areas to be managed to allow livestock grazing. John mentioned legislation that would require individual public water systems to establish storage capacity requirements based on three-year averages of actual water use, and legislation establishing a local government oversight committee within the state legislature. John described a complex transportation governance and funding bill, which would have added four percent to the transient room tax in order to fund transportation.

Rich Mrazik described a bill that would loosen local governments’ ability to regulate wireless communication towers.

Jon Nepstad asked whether staff and legal counsel could communicate with the planning commission about legislative matters. Mayor Sondak expressed some concern about planning commission members communicating directly with the town’s legal counsel. Jeff Niermeyer introduced a motion recommending that planning commission members with questions for legal counsel regarding legislative matters communicate those questions through town staff. Roger Bourke seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

**57:30 OVERVIEW OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON OUR OPERATIONS IN ALTA, ROGER BOURKE**

Roger Bourke opined that the town needed to incorporate the impacts of climate change into its outlook on the future of Alta. Roger described aspects of how climatological models suggest that local climate characteristics will change in the future, including the expectation that temperatures will warm, which will cause more precipitation to fall as rain. Roger added that while many climate models have been found to under-anticipate the rate of change they’d originally projected, such models have accurately foreseen the general trend toward warmer temperatures. Roger observed that ski season has

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been starting later and later in Utah, and suggested that this could cause ski industry businesses to raise prices, which could drive more people away from going to ski areas. Roger opined that Alta may be in a more favorable position relative to other ski areas with lower elevation base areas, and that hotter summers may drive more people to Alta in between ski seasons.

Roger recommended the Alta Planning Commission become more acquainted with the likely future implications of climate change. Jon Nepstad observed that municipal general plans frequently contain chapters on “resilience,” and that the impacts of climate change are common elements of such planning materials. Jeff Niermeyer described University of Utah research that produced down-scaled climate models focused on the Wasatch Mountains, which suggested winters would be shorter and summers would be hotter. Jeff added that Colorado watersheds had already suffered substantial impacts from changing wildfire conditions, and Mayor Sondak opined that considering the implications of wildfire would be a good topic for the planning commission.

**1:14:05 DISCUSSION AND STATUS OF THE ONGOING COMMERCIAL CORE PLANNING EFFORT/ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

*Please visit [http://townofalta.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Planning-Commision\\_v3.cdcredit.pdf](http://townofalta.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Planning-Commision_v3.cdcredit.pdf) to view the presentation given during this portion of the meeting*

Chris Cawley described that the current planning project was an outgrowth of the recent Commercial Core Plan, which was a general planning-level approach to envisioning the future of the portion of Alta the town refers to as the “Commercial Core,” which is the portion of town in between the Albion Base Area and the Peruvian Lodge. Chris described that the town convened a team of stakeholders at the outset of the current project to evaluate strategies to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists along highway 210 in the center of town, which include traffic calming measures such as curbs and medians, wayfinding and landscaping opportunities, and parking management and lane striping strategies. Chris and Kyle Cook described several constraints identified by the project team, including existing parking patterns, private property encroachment, snow removal, and UDOT “clear zone” requirements.

Kyle introduced two new concept drawings adjusted to avoid private property encroachment and comply with UDOT clear zone requirements. Highlights of these concepts include a center median between the SR 210 travel lanes, segments of raised medians along the outside of each travel lane, pedestrian pathways, a crosswalk, and plazas or gathering areas. Kyle presented a 5-year phasing program for moving projects forward through increasingly permanent materials choices, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of individual concepts prior to investing in long-term infrastructure.

Jon Nepstad and Mayor Sondak asked whether there is planning commission action required for the project to be implemented. Chris stated that the purpose of presenting the project was to honor the role of the planning commission as the authors of the Town of Alta General Plan, but that the planning

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commission will not need to take action in order for the project to proceed.

**1:50:43 MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Rob Voyer made a motion to adjourn the planning commission meeting, Roger Bourke seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

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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 March 27, 2018.

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S/ Chris Cawley  
Assistant Town Administrator

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