

Alta Planning Commission Meeting Summary
Community Center/Library, 10361 E. Hwy 210, Alta, Utah
May, 4th 2015, 4PM

IN ATTENDANCE:

Planning Commissioners: Jon Nepstad (vice-chair), Roger Bourke, Rob Voyer, Dave Abraham and Mayor Tom Pollard (ex-officio). **Excused:** Joan Degiorgio, chair

Town of Alta staff: John Guldner, Chris Cawley, and Liz Schulte (counsel).

Members of the public: Dave Eichel, Jen Clancy, Scott Briggs, Todd Collins.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Jon Nepstad convened the meeting, and mentioned the recent Town of Alta Vision and Values meetings conducted at Our Lady of the Snows, which planning commission members attended.

1:28 UPDATE ON RECENT EVENTS-STAFF

John Guldner described HB 351, a bill passed by the Utah State Legislature in the 2015 session which allows a county of the first class (counties with more than one million residents) to create a “Mountainous Planning District” in unincorporated areas of such counties used primarily for recreation and in which less than 5 percent of the population of each county reside. Planning and zoning decisions in such a district would be guided by a special planning commission. **Mayor Pollard, Jon Nepstad, and Chris Cawley** reflected comments from Salt Lake County staff about the general intent of the bill, which is to prevent piecemeal annexation, planning and zoning of the Wasatch Front canyons, in order to preserve the status of the canyons as a regional resource by providing regional control over planning and zoning decisions in the canyons.

John Guldner discussed a request by an Albion Basin property owner for the Utah State Private Property Ombudsman to issue an opinion on a purported “exaction” by the Town of Alta regarding water requirements for development. **Liz Schulte** described strengths and weaknesses of the Ombudsman’s opinion, and noted that the Ombudsman failed to acknowledge that the Town of Alta is ultimately restricted from serving water to Albion Basin by the Town’s surplus water agreement with Salt Lake City, which restricts the Town from serving water to areas beyond the 1976 boundary of the Town of Alta.

John discussed the conveyance of land from the United States Forest Service (USFS) to the Town of Alta, which was executed by legislation in 2012. **John** described parallels between this process and the ongoing negotiation of a land exchange between USFS and Alta Ski Lifts occurring within Mountain Accord, and described the intent of the Town’s conveyance, which is to allow the Town to own the land under its current facilities and a parcel of land on which to build a community center facility.

Rob Voyer asked whether the owner of the Shallow Shaft restaurant had been in contact with planning commission members and Town Staff in regards to plans for improvements to his property. **John** discussed the status of the Shallow Shaft property, which is zoned Base Facilities, in which a net developable acre is required to build a commercial property. The Shallow Shaft building existed before the land underneath it was private and before it was zoned as it currently is, and the property is significantly smaller than one acre, making the current structure a “grandfathered” non-conforming use. **Roger** asked whether the amendments to the Base Facilities Zone adopted in 2014 allow the small

properties in “zone C” to improve their properties, and **Liz** stated that the increase in coverage allowed by the amendment will not apply to the zone C properties because they are both non-conforming uses. **John** described an effort to review and improve a wide range of Town of Alta land-use ordinances being pursued by Town staff and Town Councilman Cliff Curry.

35:35 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 2nd PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Jon Nepstad observed that the draft minutes were dated incorrectly. **Roger Bourke** noted that minutes reflect a discussion between staff and the planning commission on the subject of the Town Center Concept Sketches and Massing Study presented at the March 2nd, 2015 meeting, in which it was recommended that a physical copy of the document itself, or of a portion of the document, be posted in a public place in Alta for review by community members. **Chris Cawley** noted that the Town has received feedback on the document, that the document is available on the Town website, and that there are paper copies of the document available in the Town office. **Chris** agreed to stage a portion of the document in the post office for public review.

Roger made a motion to approve the March 2nd minutes; Rob seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

39:10 SUMMARY OF RECENT VISIONING WORKSHOPS

Chris Cawley thanked planning commission members and community members for attendance at the April 14th and 16th meetings at Our Lady of the Snows, where community members participated in small group, round table discussions of the core values of the Town of Alta and the Town of Alta General Plan Vision Statement. **Chris** observed that a compilation of the central themes from each small group discussion confirm the accuracy and continued relevance of the General Plan Vision Statement, and described future uses of comments from the meetings.

41:20 UPDATE OF WASATCH FRONT REGIONAL COUNCIL (WFRC) PLANNING GRANT

Chris described the Town’s receipt of a grant from WFRC for a planning project. **Chris** stated that the proposal to WFRC was to pursue an update of the 2005 General Plan focused on the vision statement and the commercial element. **Jon Nepstad** asked how the planning commission will be involved in the project, and observed that there have been two themes in the Town’s planning outlook lately: one is the need to prepare to respond to elements of the Mountain Accord proposal, and the other is the need firmly establish the Town of Alta’s vision for the commercial core. **Mayor Pollard** stated that the Town needs to plan for what it wants in the base area in order to get out in front of Mountain Accord’s proposals, and opined that the Town should seek to complete this project within the next year.

The commission and staff discussed creating a formal scope of work and request for proposal to be executed by consultants with the awarded funds.

52:50 DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED LAND EXCHANGE BETWEEN USFS AND ALTA SKI LIFTS

Jon Nepstad asked **Mayor Pollard** whether he needed the planning commission to provide him anything in particular on the subject of the land exchange, such as a position paper or a statement to be voted upon. **Mayor Pollard** described the resolution adopted by the Town Council on the subject of the Cottonwood Canyons Negotiation Task Force (CCNTF) proposal, of which the proposed exchange of land owned by Alta Ski Lifts for base area land owned by USFS is a part. **Mayor Pollard** described what he understood to be the fundamental concern within the Alta community regarding the land exchange,

which is the possibility that the privatization of land in the base area could lead to the over-development of Alta. **Mayor Pollard** expressed his concern that for Salt Lake City to amend the water contract under which the Town of Alta uses drinking water, which is included in the (CCNTF) proposal, could weaken the effect of the water contract as a cap to the total amount of development possible in Alta. **Mayor Pollard** added that the proposal to increase the amount of drinking water the Town of Alta can use will only be considered if Alta Ski Lifts agrees to give its' private land in Grizzly Gulch to USFS. **John Guldner** clarified that the proposed exchange of a number of other parcels under Alta Ski Lifts ownership for USFS land in the base area would also include increased snowmaking water for Alta Ski Lifts company.

Planning commission members and staff discussed next steps related to Mountain Accord.

Roger Bourke stated that he was concerned about the lack of details available on the land being proposed for exchange.

Liz Schulte recommended that the planning commission review the 9-page summary of CCNTF recommendations and provide Mayor Pollard with comments or concerns, and consider focusing a discussion on the document itself at the June 1st, 2015 planning commission meeting.

Jon Nepstad opined that the Town needs to decide what it wants in the base area, so that individual opinions about one development question or another do not dilute the progress of the Town in confronting various issues. **Dave Abraham** agreed, observing that the region in which the Town of Alta exists is changing rapidly.

The planning commission discussed comments to the Town of Alta on its own planning activities and on Mountain Accord. The Planning Commission and staff discussed the possibility of hosting more visioning workshops.

Scott Briggs asked whether the Mountain Accord Blueprint will establish an alignment for a transportation system, and described a concern shared by fellow community members that the decision to build a train had already been made. **Mayor Pollard** stated that mode and alignment will be investigated in Mountain Accord Phase II, which will feature NEPA analysis of transportation system features such as alignment and mode. **Jon** and **Liz** described other aspects of NEPA. **Jon** reminded the planning commission that the Town's General Plan Vision Statement stated that the Town of Alta "will carefully consider the effects on the environment, including the watershed, wildflowers, and wildlife; public safety; and traffic in evaluating transportation options within Little Cottonwood Canyon and for transportation and skier connections to Big Cottonwood Canyon and the eastern side of the Wasatch Range." **Jon** stated that the environmental process pursued in Mountain Accord Phase II will provide that information.

1:34:30 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The planning commission confirmed that the next meeting will take place on June 1st.

1:35:47 MOTION TO ADJOURN

Roger Bourke made a motion to adjourn the planning commission meeting, **Dave Abraham** seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

Please see a full version of the Cottonwood Canyons Taskforce Recommendation at the address below . This document reflects a preliminary agreement between parties within the CCTF, and has not yet been formally adopted or executed by the Mountain Accord Executive Board or by the parties within the CCTF.

<http://mountainaccord.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/CCTF-Recommendation.pdf>

The content of the minutes is not intended, nor are they submitted, as a verbatim transcription of the meeting. These minutes are a general overview of what occurred at the meeting.

These minutes were passed and approved on August 3rd.

S/ Chris Cawley
Assistant Town Administrator

*Audio Recordings are available on <https://soundcloud.com/townofalta>.