

Alta Planning Commission Meeting Summary
Our Lady of the Snows, Alta, Utah
May 2nd, 2016, 4PM

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

Town of Alta staff: John Guldner, Chris Cawley

Members of the public: Mark Haik, Mark Vlasic, Allen Orr, Tracie Kirkham, Jen Clancy, Marcus Dippo, Maura Olivos, Walter Krebsbach, Scott Briggs

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Joan Degiorgio opened the meeting by introducing the meeting agenda and inviting planning commission members and members of the public to introduce themselves for the benefit of **Roger Bourke**, who attended the meeting via phone.

2:10 UPDATE ON RECENT EVENTS, STAFF

John Guldner mentioned a recent article in the Salt Lake Tribune describing proposals to the United States Forest Service (USFS) by Alta Ski Area for ski lift and facility upgrades. **John** reported on a project to revise provisions in the zoning ordinance that has stalled recently due to turnover in the Town of Alta's legal counsel and engineer, and reported he'd made contact with Salt Lake County Noxious Weed Specialist Sage Fitch regarding a future Town of Alta project to develop an ordinance related to managing the spread of invasive plant species. **John** reported that the USFS Salt Lake Ranger District has proposed a parking fee program in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons which would establish parking fees at the two seasonal trailheads in Albion Basin in order to generate revenue for operation and maintenance of USFS facilities in the canyons.

Chris Cawley reported on the two major elements of Mountain Accord at this point, which include the effort to establish a "Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area," and phase II of Mountain Accord's mountain transportation effort, which will focus on improving bus service in the short term future, while providing conceptual analysis of long term solutions such as fixed guideway systems and roadway improvements.

12:30 APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 4 AND APRIL 18, 2016, PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS

Joan asked for comments on the April 4th minutes. **Rob Voye** indicated that despite making a joke regarding local concerns with traffic on the Albion Basin Summer Road during the April work session, he feels that summer road traffic has become a problem which needs to be addressed. **Jon Nepstad** made a motion to approve the April 4th meeting minutes, **Rob** seconded the motion, and the motion was carried. **Joan** asked for comments on the April 18th meeting minutes; **Rob Voye** made a motion to approve the April 18th minutes, **Roger Bourke** seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

15:00 UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON THE COMMERCIAL CORE PLANNING EFFORT

Chris Cawley reported on recent progress in the Town of Alta Commercial Core planning project, including a public open house on April 7th at which Mark Vlastic, Commercial Core Project Manager from Landmark Design, presented the 5 plan alternatives developed by the project team to an audience of over forty people; the planning commission's April 18th work session on the alternatives; and a final meeting of the plan advisory committee on April 20th at which a first draft preferred alternative was presented. **Chris** reported that Wasatch Front Regional Council had awarded the Town of Alta another grant for a follow-up project, and indicated that the town has flexibility in how it approaches the next project.

Mark **Vlastic** elaborated on **Chris'** report by describing the objective scoring matrix based on the "guiding principles" developed early in the project. **Mark** indicated that the "mid-T" road concept was dropped from the preferred alternative and that a concept for a transit "loop" near the west side of the Albion Parking Lot has been included in the most recent version of the preferred alternative.

Mark presented the planning commission and the audience with paper copies of the most recent preferred alternative, and summarized important elements of the plan. **Mark** described that the "center of town" location along highway 210 between the Alta Lodge and the Rustler Lodge was a major focal point, and indicated that the project team had kept elements of the "shared street" concept from Alternative #2 such as traffic calming, pedestrian enhancements, and special paving which would indicate to motorists that the area was to be considered a pedestrian area. **Joan** recalled a discussion with Mayor Pollard in which the mayor opined that we ought to embrace the notion that the Town of Alta and the ski area base facilities could be considered distinct places serving somewhat distinct populations with different uses and functions. **Mark** described adjustments to the presentation of "vertical assist" features such as trails and/or mechanical transportation systems; essentially, the plan focuses on providing a better public, year-round connection between the community center location along highway 210 and the existing town park. **Mark** described that the concept from Alternative #4 showing the decommissioning and revegetation of the easternmost segment of Highway 210 had also been removed from consideration despite its popularity in some comments. **Mark** discussed the presentation of a transit loop with associated developed facilities on the west end of the Albion Base Area, which would be intended to serve all modes of transit including Utah Transit Authority Ski Bus service, local shuttle service, and active transportation modes. **Mark** discussed the placement of summer event zones at each base area.

Joan asked for comments on the most recent plan alternative, and invited Roger Bourke to begin the discussion. **Roger Bourke** and **Joan Degiorgio** discussed the presentation of a ski area day lodge on the Wildcat Day Lodge, and **Joan** indicated that the most recent version simply illustrates "Potential Alta Ski Area Base Facilities." **Roger** discussed earlier presentations of trailhead locations and items such as the proposed funicular, many of which have been adjusted in the most recent plan alternative. **Roger** discussed the Alta Ski Area proposal to transfer 50 parking spots from the Wildcat parking lot to the Albion parking lot, and asked whether this was contrary to the concept of a transit loop in the Albion Area. **Roger** recommended that the final plan include an alternative based on there not being a land swap.

Dave Abraham indicated he felt the plan could present summer event zones at each ski area base, and opined that creating strong connections between the ski area and the town center was very important. **Dave** suggested that the purple polygons depicted in the town center area could all simply be annotated “community center/mixed-use” and the commission discussed the notion of “phased” development of areas on each side of highway 210, with development in areas on the south side of Highway 210 being contingent upon a land exchange with the USFS at some point in the future. **Dave** added that the placement of a trash and recycling center in the “phone lot” area on the west end of town was a good idea, although the feasibility of the concept is unclear.

Jon Nepstad asked the planning commission whether the town is wise to consider the proposed land exchange between Alta Ski Area and USFS as the only circumstance under which development constraints in Alta would change in the future, and mentioned the acquisition of USFS land by the Town of Alta as an example of another way for development to be accommodated. **Jon** recommended that the plan represent a vision that was not complicated by the proposed land exchange between USFS and Alta Ski Area. **Jon** asked whether the Albion transit loop is intended to be “one-way,” and **Chris** and **Mark** indicated that the intent was to illustrate a one-way loop.

Rob Voye asked whether the plan was meant to illustrate a major transit hub at the town center, and **Mark** confirmed that the plan shows Albion as the primary transit destination, and that it does not depict a major transit hub at the town center. **Joan Degiorgio** opined that the plaza depicted at the town center was very important.

53:35 Joan asked the planning commission if there were further comments. **Mark** asked the planning commission if it was comfortable with the current direction of the plan, and **Joan** indicated that the plan generally reflects the planning commission’s vision. **Roger Bourke** indicated that the plan does not illustrate an existing trailhead across highway 210 from the Snowpine Lodge. **Maura Olivos** of the Alta Environmental Center indicated that the trail **Roger** described is intended to be decommissioned over time as Alta’s trail network is improved. **Rob** indicated he felt that the community gathering location/summer event zone at the Wildcat base area may not be necessary, and **Chris** opined that both the current town park and the deck of the Goldminer’s Daughter Lodge already provide public gathering places. **John Guldner** described that the Goldminer’s Daughter was granted a variance to expand beyond coverage limitations if it agreed to provide public day lodge facilities. **Joan** asked **Roger** whether he felt that a relatively small summer event zone in the Albion Base Area would be amenable to Grizzly Gulch neighborhood residents, particularly if it were to aide in reducing traffic on the summer road. **Roger** opined that there is no evidence that providing events at the Albion Base Area will ease traffic on the summer road, and **Dave** opined that the pressures of population growth and increased use may require development of facilities in order to attract people somewhere besides the summer road. **Rob Voye** described that perhaps the Alta Ski Area Sunnyside chairlift would operate in the summertime, which could enhance the activity level at the Albion Base enough to distract people from driving directly up Albion Basin.

Joan asked the audience for comments. **Walter Krebsbach** recommended that the illustration of special paving in the town center be extended further west to the USFS garage and Our Lady of the Snows, because this area is just as “social” as the portion of the roadway east of the Alta Lodge. **Jerry Oyama**

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recommended the town consider a Zion National Park-style system on the summer road in which base area parking lots are utilized as staging areas for shuttle service up the summer road.

Maura Olivos added that the illustration of a trash and recycling center in the “phone lot” area may not be feasible due to the current use of the area as an Alta Ski Area materials storage and waste staging location. **Maura** indicated that the illustration of a trail along the transfer tow is misplaced and offered to provide an illustration of the preferred location of a future Albion Meadows Trail alignment. **Maura** opined that the planning commission would be wise to consider a “no land trade” alternative. **Maura** agreed with concerns stated earlier regarding the potential for noise and light pollution potentially associated with creating a summer event zone, and recommended the town consider ordinances regulating light and noise. **Chris** indicated that the current project does not include ordinance development, and **Mark** indicated that the final plan will include guidelines for future ordinance development. **Roger** asked when “phase II” of the project could begin, and **Chris** indicated that while the town has received another funding award, the focus of a future project had not yet been determined.

Mark Haik observed that several of the trails and other vertical assist features linking the ski area with highway 210 did not link actual gathering points or destinations, and that these illustrations should be focused on such locations. **Mark** opined that the plan ought to reflect Alta’s cultural resources, and recommended that the plan should illustrate the Landis Jump Hill in the North Rustler area. **Mark** recommended that vertical assist features such as trails should follow natural waterways, and observed that the expanded Alta Ski Area Wildcat Base Facilities illustrated in the plan are very close to Little Cottonwood Creek. **Mark** recommended that culverts diverting the creek in the Wildcat Base Area be removed or reduced in size in the future. **Mark** asked whether a sidewalk is proposed along highway 210, and opined that creating a more viable pedestrian connection through town is critical for economic viability. **Joan Degiorgio** asked whether cultural resources will be included in the plan, and **Chris** indicated that cultural resources were not included in the scope of work for the project.

Maura Olivos clarified that a proposal has been made to move the lower Albion Meadow’s Trail to the south side of Little Cottonwood Creek, and described elements of the ongoing Alta Ski Area/USFS trails master planning effort, including efforts to improve current conditions on Alta’s network of summer trails, as well as creating new, purpose-built, sustainably designed trails. **Maura** indicated that there will be a trail junction roughly in the location of the Landis Jump Hill which **Mark Haik** described as a significant cultural resource.

Marcus Dippo opined that a connection between the Peruvian Lodge parking lot and the Wildcat parking lot could be created in order to help ease congestion related to bus service, which currently utilizes a very tight “hairpin” turn at the foot of the Wildcat parking driveway.

1:32:00—DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Joan Degiorgio, Chris Cawley, and Mark Vlasic discussed the final stages of the project. **Mark** stated his preference to take additional time to create a draft plan based on the preferred alternative, meaning that the plan would not be completed in time for the regularly scheduled planning commission meeting on June 6th. It was decided that the planning commission would meet simultaneously with a draft plan open house on June 27th, which will take the place of the regularly scheduled June 6th and July 11th planning commission meetings.

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1:42:20 MOTION TO ADJOURN

Jon Nepstad made a motion to adjourn the planning commission meeting. **Rob Voye** seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

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 approved on June 27th, 2016.

S/ Chris Cawley
Assistant Town Administrator