

MINUTES
ALTA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, November 27, 2018, 3:00 PM
Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

PRESENT: Jon Nepstad, Chair
Roger Bourke, Vice Chair
Dave Abraham
Rob Voyer
Jeff Niermeyer
Mayor Harris Sondak (ex officio)

STAFF PRESENT: John Guldner, Town Administrator
Chris Cawley, Assistant Town Administrator
Nora Pincus, Town Attorney
Joe Bolton, Town Engineer

OTHERS:

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Planning Commission Chair Jon Nepstad called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 30, 2018, PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Roger Bourke made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 30, 2018, Alta Planning Commission meeting. Dave Abraham seconded the motion. The motion passed with four voting “aye,” and one abstention.

Chair Jon Nepstad invited Mayor Sondak to provide an update on some of the issues involving the Town of Alta that recently came out in the news.

Mayor Sondak explained that the Town of Alta recently lobbied pretty heavily to be included in the Central Wasatch Commission, and he was able to attend the Commission in August. It was his understanding that the goal of the Commission was to implement the Mountain Accord, and he felt as if he should be a constructive member of that body. In July, he was briefed before being admitted into the Commission by Executive Director Ralph Becker. Mr. Becker had stated that the only way to move forward with the Accord was to leave the Alta Ski Lifts out of the land swap legislation. Because he was new to the discussion, Mayor Sondak requested that the conversation be continued because he wasn’t prepared to declare an impasse. The reason the impasse took place was because the Alta Ski Area had pulled Grizzly Gulch, which was private ground, off the table for negotiation. The Mountain Accord had a few important contingencies, including one that stated that the Ski Areas would consider trading land at Grizzly Gulch. This

would allow the privatization of parts of the commercial core in Alta, in exchange for making some of the land in Grizzly Gulch public.

Mayor Sondak identified these properties on a map and noted that there were some patches of Forest Service ground in pockets in Grizzly Gulch. Another contingency in the Accord was that there would be a transportation solution that would include a connection between Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons. The Ski Area's opinion is that this has not happened, so they are not obligated to give up Grizzly Gulch. Contingent upon the Ski Area putting Grizzly Gulch into the mix, Salt Lake City Public Utilities had a clause that would provide water for a hotel on privatized ground in the base area, and water for snowmaking. Also included in the Grizzly Gulch exchange negotiation was Save our Canyons and the Wasatch Back Country Alliance. In conversations with the Ski Area, they led Mayor Sondak to believe that being left out entirely wouldn't hurt their ability to expand. He clarified that the legislation would create the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area, which would require a Management Plan. The NCRA would not apply to properties owned private entities, but it would apply to the Forest Service ground. If the entire Town of Alta were to be in the NCRA, a small parcel of ground at the mouth of Grizzly Gulch would inhibit the Ski Area's ability to expand. The Ski Area was adamant that this was unacceptable.

Referencing the map, the group discussed potential locations for the ski lift and ski area expansion, and there was a discussion regarding Pasty Marley.

Mayor Sondak felt that the impasse was an unfortunate outcome, because he believed that they could have come to a compromise.

Chair Jon Nepstad asked if this had any impact on the Planning Commission's role in the Town affairs. Jeff Niermeyer didn't believe that the discussion was over between the two parties yet.

Rob Voyer asked why Park City and Alta did not have representation on the Commission originally, and Mayor Sondak said that he wasn't sure of the history of the Commission. It was suggested that these municipalities were excluded in an attempt to keep the Commission numbers small.

3. PLANNING COMMISSION TO HEAR A STATUS UPDATE ON THE SR-210 EIS STUDY AND HOW IT MAY IMPACT THE TOWN

Chair Jon Nepstad invited John Thomas from UDOT to provide an update on the SR-210 EIS Study. He disclosed that his firm was part of the team doing the EIS, but they haven't been engaged for about three months.

John Thomas said that he was the project manager for the Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS. In 2017, the State Legislature appropriated \$100 million for recreation hotspot areas across the state, and Little Cottonwood Canyon was designated to receive \$66 million of that amount. They initiated the EIS process in January 2018, and since that time they have been evaluating the transportation needs of the area. Upon research, they discovered that anything they did in Little Cottonwood Canyon would have a direct and immediate impact on Big Cottonwood Canyon.

Some of those issues were bigger than they would be able to address with \$66 million. Based on this discovery, they chose to begin the formal environmental impact statement process and went through the public hearing process, and now they've decided to pull back from the original process. They would carry the information gathered and the public comments received, and move forward with a new process that was focused on items they can implement now. UDOT felt that the things they could implement now would be foundational to anything that may be done in the future for transit. Right now, they were looking into avalanche mitigation, intersection improvements, and summer trailhead improvements. Included in this would be a traffic study.

The comment was made that if transit were effective, they would see fewer cars coming up the canyon, which would relieve parking concerns. There was a discussion regarding transit station locations for Snowbird and Brighton.

John Thomas said that the intersection improvements they would do would be basic, but they would make a big difference in the way traffic flows through the area. They would release a new Notice of Intent in January. He stated that it would be about three years before they could start construction, because it would take two years to get the environmental permits.

A member of the public suggested that the study include a carrying capacity. That was not a consideration for projects in the past, but they had the opportunity to do it now. He wanted to know how many visitors they could bring into the community without adversely affecting the watershed.

Mayor Sondak addressed his concerns with parking issues during the summer months at Snowbird. There were certain sections where people were parking at an angle rather than parallel on the street. In some cases, the back of the cars were out into the lane of traffic. He was also concerned that there was no safe way for pedestrians to get from the west part of the Town to the post office. He asked if these were things that could be addressed by UDOT or if it was an enforcement issue. John Thomas said that he wasn't entirely sure, but he would find out.

4. PLANNING COMMISSION TO HEAR DETAILS AND DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF EXTENDING SEWER TO THE WEST GRIZZLY AREA NORTH OF SR-210

Town Administrator John Guldner introduced Keith Hanson, the manager of the Salt Lake County Service Area #3. A few meetings ago, Roger Bourke suggested that they look into three homes in West Grizzly Gulch that were still on holding tanks, so staff asked Keith Hanson to briefly explain what would need to be done to get those lots connected to the sewer system, as well as the approximate cost.

Keith Hanson explained that about twenty years ago, they were mandated through the Division of Drinking Water to develop a Source Protection Plan, and through best management practices they had maintained oversight over all of the holding tanks, including these three. One of the problems with a holding tank was that they have limited volume, and they don't have a way of inspecting tanks if they are on private property. If the tanks overflow, the sewage will seep into the drinking water. In the early 2000s, the homes in East Grizzly Gulch were connected to the

sewer system and it was a successful project. Keith Hanson presented some base calculations of what it would take to connect these homes to the sewer system. The bottom line was that these homes needed to be on the sewer system to ensure the safety of the drinking water.

There was some discussion regarding funding, and John Guldner said that the Town did have a sewer fund, but it was for maintenance of the existing system. They did not have capital money.

Chair Jon Nepstad asked if there was anything that the Planning Commission needed to do in this case, and John Guldner said that they could make a statement or recommendation to the City Council urging them to pursue this action. He noted that the General Plan stated that there could not be any expansion into areas that were not serviced by sewer and water.

There was discussion regarding a potential motion, and it was noted that this potential sewer project needed to be coordinated with transit, because in the previous discussion there was a suggestion of putting a transit station right in this area.

Chair Jon Nepstad moved that the Planning Commission encourage the Town Council to conduct an engineering study of developing a sewer line to service the five lots in the West Grizzly area, which would identify potential alignments, cost, and opportunities for grants or fund-sharing. Rob Voyer seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent of the Commission.

5. NEW BUSINESS FROM THE COMMISSION

Chair Jon Nepstad proposed that they treat the January meeting as a sort of retreat where they discuss what they want to accomplish in 2019. He gave some examples of items to discuss. The Planning Commission discussed meeting on January 22, 2019, but lengthening the meeting to ensure they had enough time to discuss the agenda. Staff requested that the Planning Commissioners email them with items that they would like to discuss so they could put an agenda together. It was noted that the meeting would still be open to the public.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was discussed during the previous item.

7. MOTION TO ADJOURN

Rob Voyer moved to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Niermeyer seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent of the Commission.

Minutes Approved on March 26, 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Cawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Cawley, Assistant Town Administrator