

**MINUTES**  
**ALTA TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Wednesday, July 10, 2019, 5:00 PM**  
Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

**PRESENT:** Mayor Harris Sondak  
Council Member Margaret Bourke  
Council Member Cliff Curry  
Council Member Elise Morgan  
Council Member Sheridan Davis

**STAFF PRESENT:** John Guldner, Town Administrator  
Chris Cawley, Assistant Town Administrator  
Piper Lever, Town Clerk  
Jen Clancy, Deputy Town Clerk  
Mike Morey, Town Marshal  
Nora Pincus, Town Attorney

**OTHERS:** Karen Travis, Roger Bourke, Del Draper, Pat Shea, Kyle Maynard, Mike Maughan, Mark Haik, Maura Olivos, Carlton Christensen

**1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

00:00:15

Mayor Sondak called the meeting to order 5:00 PM and expressed appreciation for those in attendance.

**2. CITIZEN INPUT**

00:00:15

Pat Shea, with Friends of Alta and the University of Utah, spoke to the Little Cottonwood Environmental Impact Study (EIS). During the previous meeting, the representative from the Forest Service said he didn't think a visitor capacity was necessary before the EIS was completed. That comment was different than what he had been told before. Traffic and visitation in the canyon were controlled by parking availability and the highway. He was concerned that the flow rate of transportation would significantly increase with the proposed improvements. With all of those increases, there would be an impact to the Town of Alta and the environment. He encouraged the Council to adopt a position that the EIS could only move forward when a visitor capacity study was funded.

00:03:22

Kyle Maynard, Friends of Alta, said there had been studies done in the past that could be included in the EIS. The best and most recent example was the Mountain View Corridor and the Growth Choice Study that was conducted. They worked with the community to talk about their version

for the future of transportation that corresponded with their vision. That process was not happening with the Little Cottonwood EIS. He didn't understand why a capacity study couldn't be conducted before the EIS process was done.

00:05:57

Roger Bourke said that it was nice to have the speed bump back, and it was a great means of slowing down traffic.

00:06:32

Mike Maughan, Alta Ski Area, reported that the snow was melting, and the road through the campground was accessible. They were on track to open the campground on July 20<sup>th</sup>. The parking areas at the old Supreme lift were completed and it could now hold another 14 to 16 cars. As soon as the summer road opened, they would be operating a shuttle out of Wildcat Base. They were also underway on the expansion of Alf's Restaurant.

Council Member Curry asked if there were any drawings or renderings on the website for Alf's. Mr. Maughan said there were not, but that this was a good idea. They also wanted to put a newsletter together. He continued his report by stating that they were grading the Albion Parking Lot, and they were working to get paving done before the end of September.

00:13:55

Karen Travis summarized an email she had written to the Town Council after their last meeting. She suggested that they focus on bringing visitors to stay overnight in Alta on weekdays. Currently, people were staying in Salt Lake City and traveling up to Alta for daytime activities. Having them stay in Alta would reduce traffic and increase sales tax.

00:16:40

Mark Haik said that during the previous meeting, in response to a question regarding the Albion Basin, Mr. Guldner responded that everything had been litigated. Mr. Haik countered that response by stating that when the Town of Alta lawsuit was moved from Utah District Court to Federal Court, the exhibit of the Annexation Agreement was excluded based on a few things, including an affidavit from the Town Recorder stating that the Annexation Agreement wasn't a certified document. At the time, the Town didn't have an ordinance in place to certify documents. In the current case pending before the Utah Supreme Court, it was an admitted fact by Salt Lake City that they failed to provide Judge Jenkins with the knowledge of the change application that they made into the Town of Alta to provide municipal water. Mr. Haik had acquired a complete set of the Town of Alta minutes via a GRAMA request, and he said the Town Council Members could review those.

### 3. CONSENT AGENDA

- Treasurers Report
- Town Council Meeting minutes for June 20, 2019.
- Departmental Reports

00:22:23

Mayor Sondak noted that the Departmental Reports had been distributed to the Council Members before the meeting.

00:23:13

**MOTION:** Council Member Davis moved that the Town Council APPROVE the Consent Agenda. Council Member Morgan seconded the motion.

Council Member Bourke appreciated having the Departmental Reports ahead of time, but she didn't think they should be included on the Consent Agenda. She thought the Council would like to be able to ask questions and make comments on the reports. Mayor Sondak and Council Member Morgan agreed.

**MOTION:** Mayor Sondak moved that the motion be AMENDED to exclude the Departmental Reports from the Consent Agenda. Council Member Curry seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent of the Council.

Mayor Sondak called for a vote on the motion to approve the Consent Agenda, as amended. The motion passed with unanimous consent of the Council.

4. PRESENTATION OF TRANSIT INITIATIVE – UTA Board Chair Carlton Christensen

00:27:00

Carlton Christensen, UTA Board Chair, presented handouts showing the current UTA routes up to Alta during the ski season and ridership numbers. He stated that the Board regularly had conversations about ski service, frequency, and how this information integrated into the management of overall traffic in the canyon. Mr. Christensen described the current makeup of the Board, and the areas those board members represented. There was also a nine-member Local Advisory Council to provide public input. One of the main focuses of the UTA Board was improving service, which did not necessarily mean adding more busses. It took a few years to implement significant service changes. Both of the facilities in Salt Lake County were at maximum capacity, so they were currently working to rebuild an old facility next to UTA headquarters. They were also working to overhaul the vehicles in the blue line. Mr. Christensen reported that UTA had three service change dates: one in December, April, and August.

00:43:04

Mayor Sondak asked why the April and December dates didn't coincide with the beginning and end of the ski season. Mr. Christensen wasn't sure why the dates were selected, but he would research the question. He noted that the dates were flexible.

Mayor Sondak asked how much coordination there was between UDOT and UTA. Mr. Christensen said that they may not be officially a part of the CWC, but they collaborated heavily with UDOT. UDOT was very transit-minded, and they had frequently told the Board that UTA had to be part of the solution for the canyons.

00:47:45

Council Member Davis asked how other communities, like Park City, were able to provide free busses for community members to access the mountains. Mr. Christensen said that these communities had taken a portion of their sales tax and possibly general fund revenue to pay for that service. He noted that fare collection covered only 18% of UTA expenses. They were currently taking a holistic look at their fare structure.

Mayor Sondak said that the Town of Alta and the Alta Ski Area came together to provide a resort shuttle. He asked if that was in conflict with their agreement with UTA. Mr. Christensen said they were welcome to do that as long as they weren't making revenue from that service.

00:53:33

Council Member Bourke commented that UTA sometimes offered free fare days. She asked if they could have a free fare day to invite people to come up the canyon during the non-ski season. Mr. Christensen said that he would have to speak to the rest of the Board, but he was happy to work on getting something like that arranged. He noted that free fare days were supplemented in some way. The legislature recently appropriated some money for free fare days that were related to air quality.

Mr. Christensen concluded his presentation.

01:00:15

Mayor Sondak said that there was a request to reopen the public comment portion of the meeting, and the Council Members were favorable.

01:00:37

Maura Olivos commented on ridership into the Town of Alta. She noted that Alta Ski Lifts would be doing the ride app program starting this winter. She noted that this would be her last summer with Alta Ski Area and her position was now open. They were hoping to receive applications by July 20<sup>th</sup> and hire someone so that she could train them. They were looking for someone with an environmental science and conservation background. Ms. Olivos reported on the upcoming events, including Volunteer Stewardship Days, the Hawk Watch Show and Hike, the Wildflower Festival, and Ski Area Cleanup Day.

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## 5. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

01:10:35

Town Administrator John Guldner gave a brief overview of his departmental report and asked if there were any questions.

Mayor Sondak asked if a survey was done for the boundaries of the Upper Albion Protection Overlay Zone, and Mr. Guldner answered affirmatively. He said that there were only a few questionable areas, and those were being surveyed.

Council Member Curry asked how many homes would be non-conforming with the requirement to build 20 feet from the top of the embankment, and Mr. Guldner said there would be a lot. Those structures would be grandfathered in, but they would be limited on what they could do to their

structures in the future. He stated that the Town could alter the code to allow tear down and rebuild, but the property owners still wouldn't be able to do that because of the Salt Lake Valley Health Department and Salt Lake City Public Utilities regulations. This was why staff opted to disallow tear down and rebuild in the zoning code.

Mr. Guldner continued giving an overview of his departmental report.

01:32:28

Council Member Davis asked how the Town obtained the land from the Forest Service for the community center. Mr. Guldner explained that it took a lot of discussion and pressure from the Town. The Forest Service doesn't give land away, but the Town's argument was that they spend thousands of dollars every year on the summer road, and they provide law enforcement and public safety dispatch for emergencies on Forest Service Land. Staff noted that the land was given through a legislative act by Congress.

01:34:12

Council Member Bourke asked about the Planning Commission's discussion regarding wildfire prevention. Assistant Town Administrator Chris Cawley said they wanted to look into creating or altering the Town's regulations regarding defensible space. Currently, an owner needed permission to take down a mature tree, and the code required them to plant ten replacement trees. However, that kind of requirement went against the principles of creating defensible space. They wanted to discuss Alta's position on defensible space and whether it was encouraged, allowed, or required. He suggested working with UFA and the Forest Service to better define the current state of defensible space in Alta and what they could do differently. The Council agreed that this was something they could continue to discuss.

## 6. MAYOR'S REPORT

01:39:55

Mayor Sondak reported on the recent CWC meeting, where a visitor capacity study was discussed. The CWC seemed to think that the improvements to the road would make travel more convenient and safer, but it wouldn't actually result in more people being in the canyon. Mayor Sondak didn't agree with that presumption. He then reported on the temporary dog licenses that were issued since the last meeting. Dee Madder received a two-day license; Amy Youngstrum received a four-day license; and Amber Margolus and Jim Smith received a one-day permit. At the next City Council meeting on August 14<sup>th</sup>, they would be holding a public hearing for the Truth and Taxation process.

## 7. RESOLUTION 2019-R-12 APPROVING CWC FUNDING AND ILA

01:48:50

Mayor Sondak explained that the proposed Resolution would allow the Town of Alta to enter into an interlocal agreement with the Central Wasatch Commission (CWC). The agreement called for the Town to disburse \$15,000 to the CWC, which was already included in the Town budget.

01:50:05

**MOTION:** Council Member Davis moved that the Town Council APPROVE Resolution 2019-R-12. Council Member Bourke seconded the motion.

Council Member Bourke was a proponent of capacity analysis for the Town of Alta. She proposed that they amend both the Resolution and the interlocal agreement, if possible. The language she was proposing would stress the Town's interest in having the capacity study funded and completed as part of the environmental impact study of Little Cottonwood Canyon. She urged the Council to take a position on the need for a visitor capacity study.

Mayor Sondak stated that the \$15,000 was already part of the budget of the CWC, and he didn't think the Town had the power to tie that money to a study. Council Member Curry said that he supported a capacity study, and the Council should adopt a strong resolution about its position, but he agreed that the Town should not attempt to dictate how the CWC used its funds. There was some discussion on the matter.

Town Attorney Nora Pincus said that the interlocal agreement before them was the same one that every entity entered into. If they wanted to change the language of the agreement, each entity would have to agree to the amendment.

Council Member Morgan said that the Council needed to have further discussion about what kind of capacity study they wanted. It could involve transportation, activities, trails, the water shed, etc.

02:04:35

**MOTION:** Council Member Bourke moved to AMEND the proposed resolution to include the following language:

“Whereas the Town of Alta wishes to share revenue with the Commission to help fund the Commission's purposes, including but not limited to a visitor capacity study, should UDOT fail to include such a study in the current environmental impact study for Little Cottonwood Canyon.”

Council Member Davis seconded the amendment. Vote on motion: Council Members Bourke and Davis voted “aye”; Council Members Curry and Morgan voted “nay”; Mayor Sondak abstained. The amendment failed.

Mayor Sondak called for a motion on the original motion. Vote on motion: Council Members Curry, Davis, Morgan, and Bourke voted “aye”; and Mayor Sondak abstained. The motion carried.

**8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDED CAPITAL PROJECTS PLAN**

02:09:50

Town Clerk Piper Lever distributed a document showing the updated capital projects plan. She explained that with a capital projects fund, they were required to have a plan for those funds. Staff

identified a number of projects and did some basic cost estimates. She noted that the capital projects plan could be amended at any time.

02:13:29

**MOTION:** Council Member Davis moved that the Town Council ADOPT the amended Capital Projects Plan, as proposed. Council Member Curry seconded the motion. The motion passed with unanimous consent of the Council.

9. **BUDGET UPDATE**

02:16:13

Mayor Sondak gave a brief update on the budget for the current fiscal year, including some changes to the sales tax revenue. He noted that they had set aside money in the last fiscal year for a new truck, but that purchase would be carried over into the current fiscal year.

10. **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON A REQUEST TO INCLUDE A CANYON CAPACITY STUDY IN UDOT'S EIS**

02:18:55

Mayor Sondak introduced the item and opened the floor for discussion. Council Member Bourke stressed the importance of taking a position on a visitor capacity study. The Town of Alta was at the end of the canyon, and they should have a strong say in what was going on. Additionally, a study should be done to determine whether they could handle an influx of people. It was important that the transportation component of the environmental study include how these visitors would affect the canyon, including the watershed and the natural environment. There were professionals that knew how to conduct this kind of study.

Mayor Sondak said that the Town Council had a few different options. They could make a request to UDOT via a letter or resolution; they could direct the Mayor to address the CWC as a member of the Commission; or they could pursue a Growth Choice Study, as was suggested earlier. It was noted that the Growth Choice Study would allow the community to become involved, and the Town of Alta could provide input as to how they would like to see the community in 10 or 15 years.

Council Member Morgan said that "capacity" was a hot topic for people in the Town of Alta. It might be better to do the same study under a different title, such as a Growth Choice Study.

City Attorney Nora Pincus recommended that the Council have a clear idea of what they wanted from the study. The Town currently had a lot of unused studies on the books, and the Town did not have a lot of money to conduct studies all the time. They should consider how a capacity study could be used in the future as well as within the current context.

After continued discussion, the Council decided to have a work session on this item to determine what the study should include.

11. **DISCUSSION OF WILDLAND FIRE – DEFENSIBLE SPACE IN RELATION TO THE TOA VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE**

02:49:06

Mr. Cawley didn't have a specific recommendation for this item, but he wanted to get some qualified guest speakers to come and help them determine their defensible space needs. They would put this on the agenda for August.

12. **NEW BUSINESS**

02:49:47

Council Member Bourke questioned whether they wanted to change the Alta Shuttle, such as expanding hours or the season, or charging a fee. Mayor Sondak said this was something they could explore when the fourth quarter sales tax came in.

18. **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION:** Council Member Curry moved to ADJOURN at 8:00 PM. Council Member Davis seconded the motion. The motion carried with unanimous consent of the Council.

APPROVED by Alta Town Council on August 14, 2019



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Piper Lever, Town Clerk