

July 17, 2020

Memo to the Alta Planning Commission Re: the July 28, 2020, virtual Planning Commission Meeting:

We haven't met since October 22, 2019, how can that be possible?! On the other hand, it has been a pretty weird new world, and we haven't had any pressing business or applications, so we are good. Minutes to that October 22, 2019, meeting are attached.

We still don't have any truly pressing business or applications, but we now have two issues to focus on in our next meeting. 1) the feasibility study for the town's proposed community center and 2) deciding which way to go, if any on the Dark Sky issue.

Alta Community Center:

The Alta community has been discussing the idea of a community center for years, including two previous feasibility studies and conceptual plans done in 2003 and 2008. This may be one of the only things that the entire community agrees on. What exactly that community center should be is another question, but the general idea of a central gathering point for the community, a real community center, is supported town wide. One of the biggest hurdles in establishing a community center in the past was the fact that the town owned no land. After a lengthy process a congressional action conveyed lands to the town in 2014. That conveyance included not only the land under the town buildings previously under a forest service special use permit, but also included a 1.19A parcel for the construction of a community center. As a comparison, the recently expanded and upgraded Snowpine Lodge sits on 1.14A

A second hurdle was money. The town is currently engaged in creating a Redevelopment Agency through Salt Lake County where tax increment funding can be used to solidify a bond to assist in funding the construction and development of a community center.

Most recently the town awarded Ennead Architects a contract to perform a feasibility study, on our defined site, which is the first step, in planning for, designing and moving forward with a community center for Alta. Ennead's feasibility study will be addressing both the details of constructing a building on the site taking into account site specific conditions such as avalanche, as well as what elements the community wants included in the community center ranging from exhibition space to public restrooms and trail head access to anything else the community feels is necessary to fill the gap needed by the community on our 1.19A site.

In our virtual meeting, Ennead will update you with their program approach, let you know what they've learned so far from researching past studies and interviews with the advisory committee and the avalanche advisory team, what their thoughts are at this point, their plan for deeper development in the future and how you may be a part of the process now and in the future.

The study had been slated for approximately 12 weeks. With the virus situation, that timeframe may be a bit flexible. Ennead is now into the project approximately 10% and ideas and concepts will be picking up speed rapidly from this point on and we want you involved.

Attached is the RFP laying out the direction for Ennead and aerial photo showing the site and a like to Ennead. www.enead.com

Dark Skies:

We have talked about dark skies numerous times in the past. In our Last meeting, October 2019, we had a very informative tour with Aubrey Larsen and Sophie Bellina from the State's Community Development office overseeing Dark Skies. We got a great firsthand view of Alta's existing lighting and comments and suggestions from Aubrey and Sophie on how our lights relate to the Dark Sky program, and what we might do to improve our situation.

Our current ordinance only addresses lighting for signs and parking areas, prohibiting overshoot to neighboring properties and/or roadways.

The Planning Commission packet on the website for the *July 23, 2019*, meeting has great pictures of Alta's lights with accompanying narrative on dark skies. Some progress has been made since that inventory. After reworking the upper parking lot and entry drive, the Alta Ski Area modified the lights to reduce overshoot on the entry sign to the lot. The Snowpine lodge reduced the wattage on the bulbs in their port cochere and painted over the glass on the bulbs to cover the filament on the exterior wall lights. They also moved the spotlights from the eve of the building to the sign to eliminate overshoot.

Town, trying to lead the way and set the tone, retrofitted all building lights to dark sky compliant fixtures and finally changed the bright spotlight on our only streetlight to a dark sky compliant fixture.

We still have room for improvement. The town office still receives complaints and requests to instigate new lighting ordinances.

There are three options before you now.

- 1) Leave the ordinances the way they are. The current ordinance only addresses signs and parking area lights and restricts light overshoot to neighboring properties and roadways. There are numerous instances where the above conditions are not being met. The town could begin a more stringent program of enforcement of those conditions. Success may depend on what level of grandfathering might exist for the current lighting.
- 2) We could instigate a new lighting ordinance like Torrey, Utah, which is much more comprehensive and aimed toward dark sky compliance. That ordinance requires all new or replacement lights to be dark sky compliant but does not require retrofitting of existing lighting.
- 3) We could seek to adopt a new lighting ordinance that would give the town Dark Sky compliance, laying out an amortization schedule of say 5 years, like Ketchum, Idaho's ordinance for all existing lighting to be brought into compliance.

The town's existing ordinance, Torrey's ordinance and Ketchum's ordinance are attached.

You don't need to come to a decision in the upcoming meeting, but it seems time for the commission to discuss the issue and give staff direction on which option to follow.