

**MINUTES**  
**ALTA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**  
**Tuesday, October 22, 2019, 5:00 PM**  
Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

**PRESENT:** John Nepstad, Chair  
Roger Bourke, Vice Chair  
Dave Abraham

**STAFF PRESENT:** John Guldner, Town Administrator  
Polly Samuels-McLean, Town Attorney

**OTHERS:** Geoff Whatcott, Unified Fire Authority  
Tom Snider, Alta Shuttle

*The Alta Planning Commission met on Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 for a tour of Alta and dinner. The commission visited properties in Alta to discuss wildland fire hazard and viewed exterior lighting conditions in buildings around town after darkness had fallen. No action was taken by the commission at the meeting.*

Tom Snider drove the commissioners up to the octagonal cabin on the summer road.

Geoff Whatcott provided an impromptu assessment of the cabin re: wildland fire issues.

Creating defensible space does not require clearcutting as many think. In this as in many Alta situations, limbing the trees so they are 6' to 10' above ground and not touching the structure, thinning clumps of trees, removing the little trees, which makes the bigger trees healthier bigger, and removing ladder fuels is enough.

The commission discussed amending the ordinances to accommodate better fire protection. There is already a requirement for a site plan showing all vegetation, the commission felt it would be a good idea to add UFA as a check off to the site plan re: fire protection.

In addition, any substantial remodel should require a UFA assessment.

The commission went on to see homes in Grizzly Gulch and Peruvian Estates with similar discussion and recommendations from the UFA.

Grants were discussed, other members of the UFA would be aware of grant possibilities for defensible space, as would Bri Binnebose, a consultant with possible insights on available grants.

At 6:15 the commission adjourned to the Snowpine Lodge for dinner to await dark to continue the field trip to view lighting about town related to Dark Sky efforts. The commission was joined by Aubrey Larsen from the State Community Development Office and her intern Sophie. Ms Larsen distributed dark sky assessment materials and maps showing the brightness of areas around the Salt Lake Valley and Alta.

After dinner the commission shuttled up to the Albion Parking lot. The lights on the maintenance shop were almost entirely shaded, but the light source was still visible. The lights outside the two apartments were quite bright but were under the building overhang. They could be shielded with warmer lighting.

Lights on the Day Lodge and the Ticket office would also be better if shielded with warmer lighting.

The rear of the Maintenance shop was quite bright. Ms. Larsen noted that motion sensors would be a good solution for that area.

The entry sign to the upper parking lot has been relocated. It was identified as very bright in earlier pictures. The lights have not been installed on the sign, but Alta Ski Area has committed to shielding and directing the lights to the sign to eliminate the previous spillover effects.

The town's street light at the end of the paved road in Grizzly Gulch was very bright, shining out over the landscape. A replacement dark sky compliant light on a 10' mast has been ordered from Rocky Mountain Power.

The tour continued down to the town's water building, further shielding and even a motion sensor would work for that building as well.

The Rustler's lights were off. It was noted that their lights are shielded and directed correctly on the sign, satisfying current town ordinances, but that the lighting could be warmer.

There are new flood lights on the front of the Photohaus that are not shielded and trespass into the roadway and beyond. They do not meet current ordinances and will have to be shielded and angled down.

The florescent lights over the Alta Lodge Ramp shine directly out into the roadway, and do not comply with the current ordinance. Lodge representatives have said they will be addressing that light. It was also noted that the lighting on the roof sign was quite bright.

Lights on the town office and Alta Central are quite bright but dark sky compliant lighting has been ordered.

The tour continued on to the Goldminer's Daughter and the main parking lot. Goldminer's lights were not on, but it was note from a previous picture that the lights are directed toward the building, don't really shine off the property, but could be warmer.

The four streetlight type lights near the turnaround at the Goldminer's Daughter and the Skier Services building a very bright and unshielded. Ms. Larsen's light meter read 18.35 for that area. The way the light meter works, the higher the number up to 100, the darker the sky. Those lights should at a minimum be shielded and would be better with warmer lighting as well. It was noted that the brightness in this area was approximately the same reading as downtown Salt Lake City near the planetarium.

The Peruvian Lodge lights illuminating the sign were bright and could be modified and better directed.

The rear of the Peruvian had been an issue in the past for residents of Powder Ridge. So long as the rear lights are adequately shielded and directed, they are fine.

The tour continued down to the Blackjack, View, and the Village areas. The flood lights over the Blackjack sign were quite bright and trespassed beyond the property. Shielding and proper angling would alleviate that.

The View was quite bright, but the light originated in the glassed stairwells on the inside of the structure. Neither existing ordinances or dark sky recommendations really address interior lights. It was suggested that maybe The View could voluntarily install shades to block some of the direct interior light. There were bright flood lights on the interior of the Village but didn't seem noticeable outside the development.

The tour then looped through Powder Ridge, which was quite dark, and back up to the Snowpine, where it began.

The Snowpine area was quite bright. The light meter for the area in front of the Snowpine was 17.6+, brighter than the main parking lot. It was noted that the chandeliers under the port cochere were still too bright even though the owner had replaced the bulbs with dimmer, warmer bulbs. Bulbs aren't the solution for these types of lights, what is needed is shading on the fixtures. It was noted that the chandeliers are a safety hazard to people driving and walking on the road. Other lights on the Snowpine were not on but were not shielded. This will have to be done prior to final occupancy.

There was a question about Christmas lights. Ms. Larsen noted that there are seasonal variances allowed even under dark skies.

General lighting options were briefly discussed, shielding, brightness and color re: dark sky compliance.

Alta is pretty dark, but there are areas that can be improved. Obtaining compliance with the existing lighting ordinances will go a long way towards dark sky compliance. After achieving compliance, another assessment will be done to see how far we have to go.

With that, the tour ended, approximately 8:45pm.

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Minutes Approved on July 28, 2020.



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Chris Cawley, Assistant Town Administrator