

4. 14.22

Staff Memo to the Alta Planning Commission

Re: Tuesday, April 26, 2022, 4:00 pm, Planning Commission Meeting

There are no action items, resolutions or recommendations to the Town Council that must be addressed for this meeting. This meeting will be a “meet and greet” open discussion with the Town Council.

This will also be our first meeting with our new member, Maren Askins. You all have received a copy of her resume. Maren was appointed to fill Roger Bourke’s position when Roger was elected Mayor. Roger is still on the Commission ex-officio, acting as the bridge between the Commission and the Council so, sorry Roger, you cannot escape!

Aside from introductions and open conversation between you two bodies, following is a brief update of recent activities.

Dark Skies: after presentations from Dr. Daniel Mendoza and representatives from the State Dark Sky Chapter, the town has contracted with Dr. Mendoza to seek certification with the International Dark Sky Association. This entails light measurements at various times of the year and narration on steps the town will take to meet Dark Sky requirements, such as new lighting ordinances, as part of the application. Dr. Mendoza is excited about this application as the town will be one of the first with a ski area to achieve certification. The Dr. is even planning a documentary film on the Alta process. The process can take up to two years to complete.

Climate Change has also been discussed in past meetings including presentations by Dr. Robert Gillies who participated in the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change under the UN. We will be scheduling further discussions, especially with the Alta Ski Area, related to sustainability and climate change and just what we should be doing to prepare for and address the future. This may include a Climate Action Plan on our own, or with us joining larger agencies, such as Salt Lake County if possible and appropriate. We just do not know at this point.

Last night in a Council meeting I was asked to comment about the Planning Commission and point out successes of the Commission. That’s a great starting point for our upcoming joint meeting. Alta’s Planning Commission has been in existence since shortly after the town’s incorporation in 1970. The Commission was unique in the fact that members had to represent certain disciplines but could not have any ownership or commercial interest in Alta. This was done to eliminate conflict of interest. The disciplines were: Planning, Environment, Business, Architecture and one open spot. It is interesting to note that open spot was filled by a respected water attorney water attorney who served on the Commission for over 40 years! The Planning Commission ordinance was amended a few years ago to allow for local, resident membership on the commission, while still seeking the same discipline representation. Roger Bourke was the first resident to serve on the Commission and he sat in the “open” seat, which Maren now has.

I think all the actions of the Commission have been successful and have helped produce better developments for the Alta environment due to the Commission review and approval process. What stands out recently and highlights the interaction between the Commission and the Council, is the amendment to the zoning or land use code. The Commission reviewed and discussed major sections of

the zoning ordinance for over two ½ years, thirteen meetings and three public hearings before forwarding an amended document to the Town Council for final review, amendment and adoption. The Commission's review covered the Base Facilities Zone to the Albion Basin, with recommendations on coverage, height, setback, density, uses, how to address non-complying structures and the establishment of a new Upper Albion Basin Protection Overlay Zone (UABPOZ). One of the tenets of the UABPOZ would allow for a one time, 250 gross square foot addition to the cabins in the basin so long as also approved by Salt Lake City and Salt Lake Valley Health Department due to watershed status. This was not possible before. The Council then reviewed the document and made revisions including amendment to the UABPOZ boundaries, watercourse setbacks and building height prior to final adoption of the complete ordinance package in March of 2021.

The Commission and the Council do work together so it makes sense to become more familiar with each other. We will schedule more joint meetings in the future for this purpose.

After the open discussion, Mike Maughan, General Manager of the Alta Ski Area, will recap this past season. There were significant changes to the parking situation, and the nation was still dealing with Covid so Mike's comments will be particularly interesting.

Finally, you can discuss future meeting dates and desired subjects, acknowledging that addressing Climate Change is first on the list.