

MINUTES
ALTA TOWN COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING
Wednesday, July 12, 2023, 3:00 PM
Alta Community Center (virtual), 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

PRESENT: Mayor Roger Bourke
Councilmember Carolyn Anctil
Councilmember John Byrne
Councilmember Sheridan Davis
Councilmember Elise Morgan

STAFF PRESENT: Chris Cawley, Assistant Town Administrator
Mike Morey, Town Marshal
Molly Austin, Deputy Clerk

ALSO PRESENT: Cameron Platt, Legal Counsel
Craig Heimark, Treasurer

NOT PRESENT: Jen Clancy, Town Clerk

1. **CALL THE REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING TO ORDER AND
DECLARATION**

00:00:00

Mayor Bourke called the regular meeting of the Alta Town Council to order for July 12, 2023. Pursuant to his June 28, 2023 determination, Mayor Bourke said that it is in the community's best interest to hold this meeting virtually without an anchor location.

2. **CITIZEN INPUT**

00:00:55

Molly Austin reported there was no written comment submitted.

Margaret Bourke thanked the council for the opportunity to comment. She mentioned that UDOT had released their Record of Decision (Little Cottonwood Canyon EIS) this morning. She said while she hadn't been through all of the documentation yet, she wanted the Town Council to consider working administratively Federal Highway Administration to amend regulations that have to do with exemptions for tolling operations because right now the tolling is only exempted for bicyclists and motorcyclists, otherwise you have to have more than single occupancy. She mentioned there had been something in the Final EIS about this, that there was a potential to exempt residents, service drivers, and employees from peak periods when the tolling is in effect. She feels this is critical to the Town that there be such an exemption for these groups of people. She also thanked the council for reactivating the Community Center project from 2003 from EMA. She likes the location, feels it's safer than the area to the west. She suggested that we consider one season of construction if we can temporarily find a home for the Post Office and deputy quarters.

3. **PRESENTATION OF THE ALTA COMMUNITY CENTER SITE PLAN, CRAIG ELLIOT**

00:04:40

John Guldner reflected that we went through the Ennead process which opened our eyes but the sight and price tags didn't sit well. It was suggested to go back to an old study from 2003. John found Craig Elliot one of the main principles on the project and has been working with him to resurrect the study and make it current.

Craig Elliot introduced himself as being a partner with Doug Mahoney at EMA architects when the 2003 study was done. At this time, Doug is winding down his career and didn't want to be involved in the project moving forward, but Craig was. Craig mentioned he had done a primary cost study and that there was some discussion about whether it was an appropriate number. Then Craig's group was asked to do a review of the previous study in more detail and to analyze whether it met the current needs and to see what sort of updated modifications they would propose based on their knowledge of the project.

Craig mentioned that in the previous study, some 20 years ago, that there was a question about if the current building was something viable that could be worked off. Today he said it would be wise to take down the existing building and replace it with a new structure. Craig confirmed the Town's land and site would be big enough to fit the project, he also felt a building of about the same depth would limit excavation costs. He said they approached the project to be wise with Town funds and looked at construction phasing if the Post Office and UDOT spaces needed to be maintained so they have a layout with that option. He did recommend building it in one shot if possible so that there would be less issues and it costs less to build in one phase. He went over some schematics and talked through the layout as well as updates to the building's external architecture. He said their work provides a good stepping off point to start looking at funding, it could be a basis for going out to hire an architect and contractor. He suggested we revisit the programming to make sure it meets all of our needs. Their report shows the programming and preliminary costs.

John Byrne said it was a reasonably attractive building. He suggested there are some things in the cost analysis that he thinks will change the cost per square foot number. John added there wasn't a cost for the demolition of the existing building, suggested the rock retention issue would still be there and would need to be dealt with, and that there wasn't an estimate for a new foundation. He suggested one reason the price was so low compared with the Ennead study was because there were no parking spaces. He suggested that we remove the garage space for UDOT if they are building a gondola. John also suggested the constraint of the old building design go away and that we maximize the buildable footprint.

Sheridan Davis concurred with John's points and said we want to look at the best, highest use of the space we have available to us. She said part of this process would be inventorying our current space, looking at the space and determining what best aligns to provide the best bang for the buck. She suggested people over space for storage and wants us to consider that.

Carolyn Anctil said it's exciting we are revisiting this again and she really feels the structure is much better than what was proposed a few years ago. She suggested the needs of the community have probably changed in the last 20 years and so revisiting the needs of the community and what people want out of a gathering space be addressed.

John Byrne offered that he felt the strongest part of the Ennead study was the programming. He suggested this building is about half the size of the Ennead building so it would be a tight fit. John also suggested we take a step back and think about all of the Town's building and facility needs for the next 10-20 or so years, and take a few months to discuss that so better decisions can be made going forward. He added that we shouldn't be afraid of excavation, and that the rock could be useful on site.

Craig Elliot reflected that most of the council's comments were on programing which he again suggested be revisited. He also mentioned on the construction costs this was their best guess estimate which includes foundation work and their expectation was that the building would act as a retaining wall because that's the most efficient cost effective way to do it.

Mayor Bourke thanked Craig for his work. When prompted by Sheridan, Mayor Bourke stated that his highest priority is to figure out a way to retain the character of Alta as the world changes in the future. He offered that the community center may or may not be a part of that.

4. ALTA SKI AREA UPDATE – MIKE MAUGHAN

00:29:25

Mike Maughan reported that yesterday, July 11, 2023 their snow stake went to zero. There are still snow piles all over the upper mountain, but the official measuring point went to zero. They have gone through their first tier of season pass sales and volume is flat. Mike said the price of the Alta – Bird pass increased significantly this year and so those sales are down about 60%. He also reported this past year was a record for skier visits nationally, and that 1.4 million out of the 3 million increase nationally was from the State of Utah. He pointed out Utah continues to grow in volume and visitation. Mike said it was not a record year for Alta Ski Area, the challenges with the road in late March and April took a toll and they ended up being down 6% compared to their record year the year before.

For next season, they are looking forward to the parking reservation system and no real changes to what was done this last season. He reported Brighton and Solitude will be going to a reservation system, Snowbird will continue as they have, and Snowbasin is considering a reservation system. The UTA bus service is expected to be the same as last year.

Mike said access up on the mountain for summer projects and maintenance has been hampered by snowfall, but they are slowly getting there. The summer road and campground have remained closed with an estimated opening in late July. Their summer projects include the fuel island replacement, replacement of snowmaking lines around the wildcat base, and installation of 6 new Wyssen Towers on Mount Baldy. They will some helicopter activity starting late in July for the Wyssen Towers. Mike added there are still some upper Supreme Lift terrain changes too. In the fall, he said they will be doing a snowmaking line extension from Alf's to roughly the bend parking area. They are also looking to do some maintenance around Alf's for runoff and that the Creekside retaining wall needs some work.

They have started working on designing an Albion Day Lodge extension to the east. They went through the Forest Service NEPA process and are now moving into the design phase for a building. Additionally, on the north side of the Albion Lot, in the flattest spot they are working through the Forest Service process to obtain approval to build a 10,000 square foot equipment storage building (cold storage). They are also going through the NEPA process for several other projects including striving to eliminate roadside parking from the Bypass road up to the Deep Powder House (except for about 10 spots across from OLS), he said they already eliminated some roadside (parallel) parking between the

Alta and Rustler Lodges when the traffic calming devices went in. Originally, he said they were trying to square up the wildcat lot on the north and south sides, but they ran into some issues on the south side and so now they are just focused on the adjustments to the northside of the wildcat lot and then going to the Grizzly Gulch parking lot. He said the Grizzly Lot is an odd shape, sort of an elongated hourglass with limited parking in the middle so they are looking at maintaining a 60 foot width to be able to perpendicular park on both sides. They are also looking at the area just west of the Albion Ticket School office where the ski school conveyor is for kids to get back to the ski school area. They have noticed the rope tow is now a bit steep for some beginners, so they want to add another long conveyor to the area and relocate the kid's conveyor to facilitate better use of that area for beginners.

Mike said that with the UDOT EIS coming out he is hoping UDOT will start engaging with them and the Town regarding the potential bus stop between the Alta Lodge and Rustler, as well as the tolling issue, and a few other things. He said with the phased approach a lot of that planning is supposed to start this year.

There was a brief discussion about the Alta Kid's camp, and a few council members complemented the ski area on this program.

Carolyn Anctil put in a plug for more employee housing with the Albion Day Lodge expansion. Mike said the expansion included storage space, additional seating on the day lodge level, possibly moving Alta Java and providing some indoor space, and then the top level would all be employee housing. Mike said the addition on the east side would be an additional story higher than the rest of the building, and they would lose a story on the bottom. He said they are in the very beginning stages and hope to get an architect on board soon to understand if the programming will work and to get a design.

Mayor Bourke commented that the new trail map that was out and at the kiosks was first class. He said it was a significant upgrade, particularly with the descriptions of each trail.

5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA: JUNE 21, 2023 MEETING MINUTES, STAFF AND FINANCE REPORTS

00:46:25

MOTION: Sheridan Davis motioned to approve the consent agenda including the June 21, 2023 meeting minutes, the staff, and financial reports. John Byrne seconded.

Chris Cawley informed the council there would be a Planning Commission (PC) meeting on July 18. They were considering including a proposal to update the land use appeal authority ordinance to remove the Town Council as the appeal authority and designate an administrative law judge in that capacity because it's becoming common practice in some Utah communities. Chris reported that there was feedback right after publishing the meeting packet and acknowledged this is a significant proposal for a technical and obscure topic. He said regardless of the arguments themselves, it was clearly not the right pathway to include that on a PC agenda with the assumption the council would take it up for final adoption. Chris said they have taken the item off the PC agenda and that they have cancelled the public hearing. Chris concluded that at this time they don't have any plans to bring the concept forward again, he just wanted to make sure that was all clear with the council and check to see if they had any questions.

Sheridan Davis asked for clarification on if the Town Council was the land use authority. Chris Cawley responded that the Planning Commission is the land use authority. John Byrne stated he was happy to see us move away from the idea of removing the council from its role and keeping with the status quo. Cameron Platt added that the council can affect the way that the PC operates by passing ordinances that deal with land use. He said proposals have to go through the PC, but that they administer the ordinances as passed by the council. Once a decision has been made by the PC, the appeal authority goes to the town council to decide if the PC correctly decided the issue.

Mayor Bourke asked Mike Morey to comment on the “see something say something” request he been making. Mike reflected that we’ve had a few remarkable months after the ski season including high profile incidents including 2 car thefts which is extraordinary for this town. This comes on the heels of some business burglaries, and a significant rise in the number of crimes against persons calls. He said this underscores their need to work closely with everyone in the community. He asked if anyone sees anything that looks out of place or suspicious to contact Alta Central.

John Byrne asked about the noise ordinance and complaints. Mike Morey responded that year-to-date they had only received one complaint from a contractor working after hours over at Powder Ridge.

VOTE: All in favor. The consent agenda including the June 21, 2023 meeting minutes, and the staff and financial reports were unanimously approved.

6. QUESTIONS REGARDING DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

00:57:32

(questions/ comments rolled into the previous agenda item)

7. MAYOR’S REPORT

00:57:32

Mayor Bourke reported on the following:

- It has been a relatively quiet month in Alta, largely due to the record snowpack that continues to melt. Fortunately, the temperatures have been mild hence didn’t trigger any rapid melt events causing flooding.
- Truly breaking news: The Record of Decision for the Little Cottonwood Canyon Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released this morning. It codifies the UDOT preferred alternative of a gondola from La Caille to Snowbird and Alta. However, the Wasatch Front Regional Council and other entities have strongly advocated that phases 1 and 2 be completed and evaluated before moving to phase 3, gondola construction. Phase 1 is improved bus service and tolling; phase 2 is snowsheds. Capital cost is \$729M and operation and maintenance of \$7.7M per year
- This weekend is forecasted to very hot in the valley, highs up to 105°F, although nothing like St George 10° hotter. I expect there will be many visitors to Alta, call them climate refugees.
- The planning commission is scheduled to meet at 4 PM on July 18; the meeting will be on zoom

- Council of Mayor's Meeting on July 20th will be in Alta. This will be an opportunity to show off our town as the beautiful place that it is and emphasize the fragility of that beauty.
- The Town Council's next meeting will be Wednesday, August 9th, 2023, 6 pm, expected to be hybrid. It will include a truth in taxation hearing related to proposed town property tax rate increase.
- The astronomy report: Mars has a similar angle between its spin axis and orbital plane. Hence it has seasons. Tomorrow, July 13, is the beginning of northern summer on Mars.

8. **INTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS TO TOWN OF ALTA INTERLODGE ORDINANCE**

01:01:55

Mike Morey reflected that with the remarkable winter we just had, Interlodge took on a bigger meaning and that prompted them to take a look at the ordinance. He the Interlodge ordinance has not been modified much since it was put into effect back in the 1980's. Mike reported staff thinks it's a good idea to update the ordinance to match their practices. Additionally, with the recent action to shift a good deal of the Mayor's operational responsibilities to the Town Manager they identified some language that should be cleaned up. He said the bulk of the ordinance would remain unchanged. A few of updates mentioned included removing language about an Alta Ski Lifts security department and including language reflective of the coordination with the avalanche office to track critical personnel. They also discovered neither Alta Ski Area or the Town of Alta could produce a hold harmless agreement so Cameron's been working with the ski area on that. Cameron said the ski area is supportive and that we just need to get the ordinance in place. Mike classified these changes as mostly housekeeping items that the ski area was supportive of. He asked to bring the changes before the council at a future meeting.

The council was generally supportive.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

01:15:20

There was no new business.

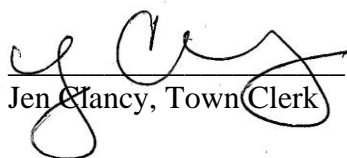
10. **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

01:16:20

MOTION: Sheridan Davis motioned to adjourn, and Elise Morgan seconded.

VOTE: All in favor. The meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Passed this 9th day of August, 2023


Jen Clancy, Town Clerk