

Alta Planning Commission Meeting Summary
Community Center/Library, 10361 E. Hwy 210, Alta, Utah
March 2, 2015, 4PM

IN ATTENDANCE:

Planning Commissioners: Joan Degiorgio (Chair), Jon Nepstad, Roger Bourke, Rob Voye, Dave Abraham and Mayor Tom Pollard (ex-officio).

Town of Alta staff: John Guldner, Chris Cawley, and Liz Schulte (counsel).

Members of the public: Mark Haik, Dobber Price, Dan Ketner, Marcus Dippo, Toby Levitt, Elise Morgan, Jen Clancy, Harris Sondak, Cliff Curry, Brent K. Pratt, Dave Eichel, Bill Stahly, Diane Stahly, Creighton Hart, Jerry Oyama, Allyn Hart.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Joan Degiorgio thanked the audience for their attendance.

00:46-UPDATE ON RECENT EVENTS, STAFF

Jon Guldner welcomed **Dave Abraham**, recent appointee to the Alta Planning Commission. **Dave** described his background in Alta as well as his career in architecture.

05:00-APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 2, 2015 PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

The Planning Commission adopted the February 2, 2015 minutes with no objections.

05:10-PRESENTATION OF TOWN CENTER CONCEPT SKETCH AND MASSING STUDY FROM LOGAN SIMPSON DESIGN GROUP. (please view this document: townofalta.com/about_new.php)

Chris Cawley introduced **Dave Harris**, Logan Simpson Design. **Chris** described information on which the Town Center Concept Sketch and Massing Study document was based, which includes Town of Alta General Plan policy and goals, records of comments from recent public visioning exercises, and concepts discussed throughout the Mountain Accord process.

Dave Harris acknowledged that the purpose of the study was to provide visual representations of different concepts for shaping future development in the Town of Alta. **Dave** acknowledged that there is a wide range of opinions about what should happen in the future in Alta, and opined that it is important for communities to identify what is most important to them in order to preserve their core values, given the certainty that as time passes, pressures and influences on a community will change.

Dave described an image of the Town of Alta circa 1873, and his attempt to place that image within a three-dimensional computer model of present day Alta. **Dave** then discussed the range of images from other ski towns that were used to create alternatives for the Alta town center concepts, and reviewed studies of solar exposure, viewshed, vegetation, slope angle, and other environmental factors. **Dave** reviewed the 3 draft conceptual alternatives created by Logan Simpson Design.

An audience member asked whether avalanche exposure had been taken in to account. **Chris** acknowledged that formally addressing avalanche exposure would require a more rigorous study, and that the purpose of this document is simply to highlight advantages, disadvantages, and tradeoffs of various design styles for whatever future development happens in Alta's commercial core. **Roger Bourke** asked whether the public drinking water system allotment available within the current Town of Alta

Surplus Water Contract with Salt Lake City had been taken into account, and **Chris** stated that the constraint applied by the Town of Alta's water contract was considered present but not binding to this study. **Mayor Pollard** agreed that the point of this study is to illustrate concepts and possibilities and that if additional development in Alta's base area moves forward, it will be time to apply constraints.

Dave presented refined, final versions of the three town center design alternatives. Graphics of these final drafts include labeled structures such as a community center, transit hub, housing, et cetera. **Dave** explained that his team focused on creating distinct massing concepts, circulation patterns, and town center locations. **Jon Nepstad** asked about a proposed road south of current lodge properties, and **Dave** described it as a different way to experience the architecture in Alta, much of which is not visible from the main road through the Town. **Roger** asked whether the proposed town center design concepts were intended to be used by residents or visitors, and pointed out that many of the concepts represented town center-type facilities in the Albion Base Area, although most residents live on the other side of the Town of Alta.

Planning commission members and **Chris** discussed the future of this study. **Chris** stated that the goal was to gather public input on the document and possibly begin a general plan update in the fall of 2015. **Dave** and several audience members discussed concepts such as "placemaking" and authenticity.

Mark Haik asked **Dave** about the range of studies produced by firms like Logan Simpson Design. **Dave** described other planning projects his firm is working on and described some of the steps beyond what was completed in the Alta Town Center study that could be included with a larger project budget, such as in-depth public involvement. **Mark** asked **Dave** whether there are places served by transit with low-density development patterns such as that which exists in Alta. **Dave** opined that in general, different transit systems serve different uses, with some transit serving employment centers, residential areas, or recreation facilities.

Joan suggested the impetus for this study was not only the possibility of mass transit as implied by Mountain Accord, but also the intent of the Town of Alta to better define its own future, identify a location for a community center facility, and other goals. **Jon Nepstad** agreed, and added that regardless of Mountain Accord, the Town will benefit from more rigorous future planning. **Chris** added that the purpose of this study was not to select a town center layout to implement in the near future, but rather, to illuminate discrete concepts such as various levels of density, placement of certain facilities, and infrastructure patterns.

Bill Stahly asked the planning commission to speak to the possible effects of "doing nothing"—of not changing the way that Alta functions today. **John Guldner** opined that rather than simply doing nothing, the Town of Alta recently amended the Base Facility Zone ordinance to allow greater density of pure hotel rooms, and remains engaged in the pursuit of land on which to build a community center or other public facilities. **Mayor Pollard** opined that the community would like to see enough additional commerce to support more of a year-round economy in order to provide better jobs and greater economic security.

Brent Pratt suggested that it will be important to create a "critical mass" of social activity and commercial opportunities if the Town of Alta wants to create a town center, particularly if the goal is to enhance the summertime economy.

Mark Haik observed that at recent Town of Alta public events, community members stated they would prefer to see less additional development and infrastructure in Alta than was being presented either in Mountain Accord or in any of the Town Center concepts presented in the study.

Jon Nepstad suggested that as planning for the Town of Alta Commercial Core proceeds further, a “business as usual” scenario should be included in a comparison of concepts.

Jerry Oyama asked **Mayor Pollard** to describe the nature of possible approval or adoption of the Mountain Accord Blueprint. **Mayor Pollard** stated that rather than articulating preferences or explicit support for one element of the Blueprint or another, the Town will eventually decide whether to remain engaged in Mountain Accord or not. **Cliff Curry**, Alta Town Council member, mentioned an upcoming Town Council work session which will focus on Mountain Accord. **Creighton Hart** observed that there is significant displeasure with the Mountain Accord Blueprint in Park City and Summit County, and opined that the Town of Alta still had the option of withdrawing from Mountain Accord altogether.

Mark Haik observed that moving forward with future planning for the Town of Alta will require significantly more funding than was allotted for the study presented today.

Jen Clancy observed that the Alta community is particularly engaged at the moment, and encouraged the planning commission and the town council to capitalize on that level of engagement.

Joan concluded the discussion of the study.

1:51:10-COMMISSION TO APPOINT A VICE CHAIR

Jon Nepstad was formally appointed vice-chair of the planning commission.

1:51:50-DISCUSSION ON THE COMMISSION’S PRIORITIES

The planning commission agreed to table this agenda item given the late hour.

1:52:15-MOTION TO ADJOURN

Roger Bourke moved to adjourn the planning commission meeting, **Jon Nepstad** seconded the motion, and the motion was carried.

The content of the minutes is not intended, nor are they submitted, as a verbatim transcription of the meeting. These minutes are a general overview of what occurred at the meeting.

These minutes were passed and approved on May 4th, 2015.

S/ Chris Cawley
Assistant Town Administrator

*Audio Recordings are available on <https://soundcloud.com/townofalta>.