

**Alta Planning Commission Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Summary
Community Center/Library, 10361 E. Hwy 210, Alta, Utah
November 17th, 2014, 4PM**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Planning Commissioners: Joan DeGiorgio (chair), Jan Striefel, Rob Voye, Jon Nepstad, Roger Bourke (by phone), Mayor Tom Pollard (ex officio)

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

Members of the public: Marcus Dippo, Craig Smith and Adam Long representing Snowpine Lodge, Mark Haik, Onno Wieringa, Jen Clancy, Scott Briggs; Buck Swaney, Dave Harris and Tyler Smithson of Logan Simpson Design; and Ryan the videographer

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Planning Commission Chair **Joan Degiorgio** opened the meeting. **Roger Bourke** asked about a study **Mayor Pollard** described in the October Planning Commission meeting. **Joan** indicated that a presentation of a portion of the study would be included in the Mountain Accord agenda item.

0:20-UPDATE ON RECENT EVENTS, STAFF

John Guldner reported that proposed Base Facilities Zone ordinances continue to be discussed by the Alta Town Council, and that the definitions of “coverage” and “grade,” as well as height restrictions, are subjects of this ongoing discussion. **John** described that the Town of Alta (the Town) is pursuing an exemption from the expansion of Salt Lake County regulations restricting the use of wood burning stoves during inversion conditions in the Salt Lake Valley. **John** reported on the transfer of land from the United States Forest Service (USFS) to the Town, and on the building projects permitted by the Town during the summer of 2014.

9:00-UPDATE ON MOUNTAIN ACCORD

Joan gave a brief summary description of Mountain Accord, and described the status of the Mountain Accord “system group” process, which, as of mid-November, 2014, is that the process of combing idealized systems has begun. Joan observed that there is significant agreement between systems, and that several issues are still outstanding, including transportation modes and corridors, ski area expansion, and ski area base development—all of which are issues that will have an impact on Alta.

Mayor Pollard described the Town Center concept study as a tool the Town can use to help visualize what future development in the Town of Alta might look like. **Mayor Pollard** introduced the consultants from Logan Simpson Design working on this study.

Chris Cawley gave an introduction of materials included in a “request for proposal” (“RFP,” townofalta.com/couch/uploads/file/rfptowncenter10_2014.pdf) sent to three planning and design firms and used by Logan Simpson Design in their creation of “Town Center” concept renderings. These materials include excerpts of comments from public visioning exercises related to revisions to the Town of Alta General Plan, as well as highlights from the General Plan Section 4.3. **Chris** described the “Commercial Core” of the Town of Alta, which lies between the Albion Base Area and the Alta Peruvian Lodge, which is where the Town Center concept study is focused. **Chris** stated that the study is purely conceptual, and as such, it is not formally constrained by environmental factors such as slope, soil, or

wetlands, or administrative factors such as land ownership and the availability of drinking water in the Town of Alta. **Jan** asked that it be clarified that this study does not constitute a “Master Plan” for the Base Facilities Zone, and suggested the title of the document reflect that. **Jon Nepstad** observed that the Town might need to plan for a Town Center regardless of what happens in Mountain Accord. **Buck Swaney** of Logan Simpson Design described the study as an exploration of Town Center concepts in light of a possible transit system being constructed in Little Cottonwood Canyon.

Dave Harris presented information used to produce early draft town center concepts, which include images of mountain towns from around the world, images of Alta from the 1870s, and analyses of factors such as vegetation, slope, and solar exposure. **Dave** then presented the town center concept renderings. The range of renderings includes various concepts for specific town center placement, transit alignments and roadway adjustments, parking assets, and development density. Fundamentally, the concepts convey either a significant departure from the current layout of buildings in the Commercial Core, or an adherence to the current layout, and the structures included items indicated in the RFP document such as a community center building, a transit station, employee housing, small retail shops, a small school, and a small library.

Jan stated that the best option may be to *not* select a preferred alternative from these concepts.

Dave described that the next step of the project will be to refine the concepts and then create 3-D renderings of the concepts.

Joan stated that she would like to see concepts that reflect the current water system limitations. **Jan** reiterated her concern about the presentation of this as a master development plan or something that will otherwise be adopted as Town of Alta policy.

Mark Haik suggested that this project could highlight 3 potential locations for a transit facility—the Wildcat Base Area, the Albion Base Area, and somewhere else.

Roger asked to see a version of this presentation, and stated he agreed with the concept of having three different town center locations shown in the three different study concepts.

1:24:00-DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION ON PROPOSED RIDGELINE PROTECTION ORDINANCE

The Planning Commission did not discuss this agenda item due to time constraints.

1:24:40-DISCUSSION WITH POSSIBLE ACTION ON AMENDING THE BASE FACILITIES ZONE TO ALLOW CONDOMINIUMS

Joan described the October 10th memo to the Planning Commission from **John Guldner** describing possible conditions under which condominiums would be allowed in the Base Facilities Zone. **Rob Voyer** stated he felt that while the best possible outcome could be that allowing hotels to build condominiums would in turn allow them to build nicer hotel rooms, perhaps simply assuring “no net loss” of hotel rooms is worth allowing condominiums in the BFZ. **Joan** addressed new language from staff about requiring a hotel to make a “rental pool” available for condominium owners, rather than *requiring* inclusion in a rental pool. **Roger** asked whether it would be realistic to require hotels to fit “parking and ancillary facilities” associated with condominiums in the building envelope.

Joan mentioned the possible requirement that condominium occupants be notified of interlodge travel restrictions by associated hotel front desk staff, rather than individually by Alta Central. **Joan** described the requirement that condominiums be connected to all the amenities available in the associated hotels, and the requirement that condominium density will be determined by the same method as hotel rooms, and be limited by the same density that currently exists.

Joan observed that this density restriction is not related to the question of how much drinking water system source capacity is required for condominiums. **Roger** opined that lodge owners do not know enough about how much water system source capacity is available to be able to plan significant renovations or additions. **Joan** quoted from the October 10th memo describing alternative methods for allotting the remaining water system source capacity. **Rob** stated that he doubts a “first-come, first-served” allotment system is legal, although Town of Alta legal counsel **Liz Schulte** stated that such an allotment would be legal, and others in attendance observed that water allotment “works that way” in other places.

Jan stated that questions about “water” should not affect the decision about whether the Planning Commission wants to allow condominiums in the BFZ, and suggested that the subject be removed from this particular conversation. **Roger** observed that the water question is pertinent to all conversations about development in Alta, and several Planning Commission members agreed. **Joan** asked whether the Town should place some kind of premium on water allocation, by requiring that use of water connections be allowed only if users provide a community benefit of some kind.

Several audience members observed that if Mountain Accord envisions significant development in Alta—or if the Town envisions significant development on its own--than the current water contract by which the Town of Alta uses drinking water is not sufficient to serve that development. **Mayor Pollard** stated that Mountain Accord has proposed limited additional development near possible transit stops in Alta and Brighton to serve transit facilities, although that development must remain within existing water system restrictions. **Mark Haik** suggested the Town investigate a change application filed by Salt Lake City on 500 acre feet of water as a way to begin to understand its’ water situation. **Liz** stated that the change application in question does not affect the Town’s ability to use drinking water or permit development.

Marcus Dippo observed that the question of whether to allow lodge owners to build condominiums in order to finance more hotel rooms was about how best to serve the community’s needs with a limited resource, and that perhaps the community wants public spaces and other types of facilities more than it does hotel rooms. **Marcus** expressed concern that the concept of developing a “Town Center” in one location or another is going to isolate properties that are not near that Town Center.

Mark Haik recommended that the Planning Commission consider time-share arrangements within the subject of condominiums as a way of making Alta’s lodging properties more successful, and pointed out that Snowbird offers time-share opportunities.

Craig Smith thanked the Planning Commission for their attention to the issues discussed in this meeting, and stated that the owners of the Snowpine would like to be able to proceed with significant renovations to their property, hopefully in the upcoming summer of 2015 building season.

Joan asked what else needed to be done in order for the Planning Commission to make a recommendation to the Town Council on allowing condominiums in the BFZ. Several Planning Commission members observed that there were a number of outstanding issues, including the ratio of condominiums to hotel rooms in a development, and the water issue. **Jan** suggested that the ratio question should be abandoned, reiterating that the question of whether condominiums are desirable in the BFZ or not should be considered separately, and adding that the Town could wait to see what kind of proposals are made by property owners under softer constraints.

2:07:30-DISCUSSION ON THE COMMISSION'S MEETING SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

It was agreed that a regular December meeting would be held on December 15th. The regular January meeting will be held on February 2nd.

2:13:00-MOTION TO ADJOURN

Jan made a motion to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting. **Rob** 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 December 15th, 2014.

S/ Chris Cawley
Assistant Town Administrator

*Audio Recordings are available online at soundcloud.com/townofalta.