

APPROVED – MAY 18, 2009



TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, March 23, 2009, 8:30 A.M.
Historic Utah County Courthouse, Suite 212
51 South University Avenue, Provo, Utah

ATTENDEES:

Bruce Chesnut, Orem, Chairman
Reed Price, Utah Lake Commission
Greg Beckstrom, Provo, Vice Chair
Ann Merrill, DNR-Div. of Water Resources
Bob Fisher, Woodland Hills
Chris Keleher, Department of Natural Resources
Chris Tschirki, Orem
Doug Sakaguchi, Division of Wildlife Resources
Jim Hewitson, Lehi
Ty Hunter, UT Dept. of Parks & Recreation
Jim Price, MAG

Jordan McCormick, Utah Cable Project
LaVere Merritt, Consultant
Michael Mills, JSRIP
Noah Gordon, Springville
Nathan Lunstad, Highland
Richard Nielson, Utah County
Sarah Sutherland, Central UT Water Conservancy District
Scott Neilsen, Utah Cable Project

ABSENT:

American Fork, Genola, Lindon, Mapleton, Pleasant Grove, Santaquin, Saratoga Springs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, UT Dept. of Environmental Quality, UT Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands, Vineyard, Utah Water Users

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Bruce Chesnut called the meeting to order at 8:34 A.M. He acknowledged Mr. Noah Gordon, Springville, and welcomed him to his first Technical Committee meeting. Mr. Gordon said it was his first day at his new job as Springville’s Assistant City Engineer and his first agenda item was to attend the Technical Committee meeting. He said he had represented Vineyard earlier when the Commission was being organized.

Chairman Chesnut welcomed Jordan McCormick and Scott Neilsen of the Utah Cable Project who would be making a presentation later in the agenda.

2. Review and approve the Utah Lake Technical Committee minutes from February 23, 2009

In reviewing the minutes Mr. Gordon pointed out on Page 7 the following correction be made in 4.6.4.1 – Objective R3.1 – Study Needs for Marinas and Informal Boat Access ~~Assess~~ Access.” Mr. Beckstrom moved to approve the minutes with the correction. It was seconded and approved unanimously.

3. Master Plan Update

Mr. Reed Price stated that the final version of the Master Plan is done and is posted on the Commission website. There is also a link to the website of the Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands (FFSL) where comments on the Master Plan can be made. At this point the Plan is going into its 45-day comment period that is required by the rules of the FFSL. That comment period will end on April 30, 2009.

The Commission has a public hearing scheduled this Thursday at the Governing Board meeting which will start at 8:30 A.M. The length of the hearing will be determined by the interest from the public. The hearing is not required by FFSL, but the Commission wanted to give the public one more opportunity to comment on the Master Plan.

The joint ceremony to adopt the Plan will follow the deadline of the comment period and be held sometime in May depending on how many comments are received and need to be addressed. It is anticipated that the signing ceremony will be held at the Utah Lake State Park, similar to the signing of the Interlocal Agreement.

Mr. Price stated that there are proposals coming into the Commission office. It will be a learning experience for the Technical Committee to determine how to best screen the proposals and decide how to review them. In the meeting today one of those proposals will be presented. Another proposal on transportation that was originally scheduled for presentation today was postponed until next month's meeting.

Mr. Price also updated the Committee on the phragmites removal project. The project is moving forward and FFSL is close to finishing the burn plan. In review, the removal project is for 112 acres directly west of Vineyard between the Lindon Boat Harbor and south to Center Street in Vineyard. It is a small pilot project that will begin the learning curve in preparation to remove over 5500 acres of phragmites. The date of the burn is dependent on weather patterns in order to blow the smoke out of the Valley.

The Technical Committee will fine-tune the implementation strategies once the Plan has been adopted. One issue that Mr. Price anticipates will be a priority item is to prepare model ordinances. He consulted with Mr. Jim Carter who was a consultant to the Master Plan to estimate how much should be budgeted to provide for a consultant to assist with the model ordinances. Mr. Price has budgeted \$20,000 in next year's budget per Mr. Carter's estimate.

Mr. Jim Hewitson questioned if the subcommittees are permanent now that the Master Plan is complete. Mr. Price said for all intents and purposes they still are in effect and as proposals come before the Commission the pertinent subcommittee will be consulted.

Mr. Price asked Mr. Michael Mills to report on the carp removal project. Mr. Mills reported that since his last update the end of February there hasn't been a lot of fishing due to the ice. Loy Fisheries went out to fish last Wednesday and have mostly been fishing around Goshen Bay. At this point they have caught almost 1.2 million pounds of carp. It has been arranged to take the fish for disposal down to Elberta to be used as composting. It will be more efficient. The fishing will be more difficult as the weather warms up and the fish begin to scatter. The June Sucker Recovery Implementation Program (JSRIP) has been very pleased with the number of fish that have been removed since October. The catch rate has been very good on many days. They feel confident that with enough funding and effort their goal can be accomplished.

The goal was to remove 2.5 million pounds of carp with the \$500,000 in funding. As a reminder, in order to reach the target of removing the carp from Utah Lake there needs to be 5 million pounds removed every year. The contract with Loy Fisheries was to remove 2.5 million carp within six months and is in effect until the end of April.

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Mr. Chesnut asked what would be done at the end of April if the goal has not been met. Mr. Mills said they could extend the contract. That decision will be up to the JSRIP administration committee and they may prolong the contract with Loy Fisheries until fall as the fishing is more difficult in the summer.

Mr. Chris Tschirki asked what the long term goals are for the carp as the population diminishes. Mr. Mills said that they hope to reach the goal successfully and eventually there should be an increase of species that will eat the carp such as catfish. Regular annual maintenance will probably be a part of commercial fishing too.

Mr. Beckstrom asked if the funding and the mechanism is found to remove the 5 million pounds per year is it assumed that the preferred species will naturally fill the vacuum left or will more proactive measures need to be taken to replace the population. Mr. Mills replied that in the case of the June sucker JSRIP stocks tens of thousands every year. The Division of Wildlife Resources has convened the Utah Lake Fish Forum to discuss and research what the future fish community will look like.

Mr. Beckstrom informed the members that last week Mr. Mills and JSRIP held their annual assessment meeting which included a complete variety of presentations about JSRIP. Mr. Beckstrom discussed with Mr. Price the possibility of getting some of those presentations on the JSRIP website. The website is junesuckerrecovery.org.

Dr. LaVere Merritt questioned who would know what the removal of phragmites might have on the June sucker. Mr. Mills answered that the phragmites make the carp fishing much more difficult by taking over the shoreline and preventing some of the uptake points for the nets. He doesn't feel it is a direct threat to the June sucker.

Mr. Doug Sakaguchi asked about the fire that was north of the lake last week. Mr. Price said he had called about the fire and found that it was northwest of the American Fork Boat Harbor and was a farmer cleaning out ditches that were an approved burn.

4. Presentation by Utah Cable Park Project

Mr. Chesnut introduced Jordan McCormick and Scott Neilsen from the Utah Cable Project.

Mr. Price summarized that the ultimate goal is for the members of the Technical Committee to understand their project and to be able to make a recommendation to the Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands and to State Parks & Recreation.

Mr. Neilsen showed a short video as an introduction to their project. He said he has been working on this plan for six years. He is pleased that there is now a Utah Lake Commission through which he can proceed.

He said that the cable park allows participants to enjoy Utah Lake water sports without having to have a boat. It makes the lake and water sports like skiing, wakeboarding, knee boarding, etc. accessible to anyone. It is safe for all ages and the water conditions are more controlled. It also has a positive effect on the environment.

There are five to six towers around the cable area and the cables are hung 32 feet above the ground and tows people around in a circle in the water. It has an electric motor which operates at about 55 decibels and is low maintenance. The speed can also be adjusted for younger skiers.

Their desired location for the project is in Provo Harbor. In this location there is a beach and they would bring in more sand. A second location would be north of Provo Harbor, but would require more construction to make it a non-navigational hazard.

Mr. McCormick explained how the cable works. It was asked how many skiers can be on the course at one time and it was answered that 8-10 skiers can be using the cable system with two more people on the start dock. On a busy day they would limit the number of laps for each person.

It was asked where a person would go if they fell and Mr. Neilsen said they would swim over to the side of the harbor. If there is a limit on the number of laps the system would derail the skier on the final lap. The ideal is 500-600 meters of running cable. A lap would be about 1-1/2 minutes.

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There is an emergency brake on the system and about 4,000 pulls a day is capacity.

There are 160 cable parks operating in the world and only 8 parks in the United States. Most cable parks also have rental shops for equipment. There are jumps set up in the water, but are off to the side so there aren't any obstacles for users who do not wish to use the jumps.

A cable pro-team is currently being assembled. There is also a contest series in the United Series. The demographics show that 4.9% of the Utah population enjoys watersports. They feel that number would grow if water sports were more accessible. The water park in Texas is a destination location and Mr. Neilsen feels that could happen in Utah as well.

Mr. Hewitson asked what the safety record is for the cable parks. Mr. Neilsen said they talked to the owner of the cable park in Kansas City and Texas Ski Ranch. He told them injuries were very infrequent and no injuries are common. He has only a handful per season and his season is nine months. Mr. Neilsen said all the staff would be lifeguards and water rescue certified.

All the current cable parks in the United States are built on man-made lakes and their building costs were between \$750,000 - \$2 million. That is one of the attractions of building the project on Utah Lake as the costs would be substantially less. Mr. McCormick said they would consult with the Texas Ski Ranch and the Orlando Water Complex (OWC) who are the two largest cable parks in the United States.

The reasons they would like to build their project by the Utah Lake State Park is prime location, easy access, and the location is familiar to the population. There is a longer season in Utah Lake as opposed to other locations such as Deer Creek.

Mr. McCormick pointed out how their project is compatible with the recreation policies in the Master Plan and reviewed Recreation Policies 1-4 with the members.

They presented ideas on how their park can be family oriented and stimulate tourism.

The lattice towers do not spoil the landscape. Mr. Price asked them to point out where the towers would be located. The towers are not permanent themselves, but are attached to a metal plate. The plates are anchored to a concrete anchor. Mr. Ty Hunter requested clarification of the anchors.

There was discussion. From the discussion it was clarified that the park would be the same size as other parks and not sized-down. They estimate about 300-350 visitors on a typical day with 250 of those being riders. They would like to set up clubs, classes and camps through the colleges and schools in the area and, also, out of the area.

Mr. Price had previously requested members to forward questions to Mr. Neilsen and Mr. McCormack prior to the meeting and they answered those questions. The lake needs to be seven to twelve acres and seven to eight feet deep. They were asked what their contingency plan would be when the lake is low. That would have to be discussed. Mr. Hunter said they should try to view some maps from prior drought years. Mr. Keleher suggested Provo City and Olympus Aerial may have some aerial history.

Mr. McCormick said according to the owner of OWS a cable can be successfully run in four feet of water, but not the jumps (kickers).

It was questioned if they had investigated the water ski facility in Faust as a comparison. There is a demand for this activity and Mr. Neilsen said wakeboarding interest is increasing, but waterskiing interest is dropping. Mr. Chesnut said he understood Lindon City is putting in a surf park in their water park.

The estimated cost for entry at the Utah Cable Project would be something close to \$12.00 hour, \$24.00 for half day, and \$36.00 for a full day. They will also have a cost for one lap. Tubes could possibly be used on the start dock. They are planning to meet with the owner of the Texas Ski Ranch and tour that park, but were not able to do so before this meeting as their presentation was moved up a month.

Dr. Merritt commented that it is an exciting project. He wanted to point out a few problems that they may not be aware of yet. One point was that the water in Utah Lake would always be turbid. Inside of the jetty there would be times when there would be algae blooms. The tower stability may be some problem and they may need a larger footprint. Lake level fluctuations need to be considered and will

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sometimes be deeper and other times be down two or three feet. There is the possibility of dredging which is provided for certain types of projects in the Master Plan.

Mr. Price noted that in the presentation slides it showed some spectator areas and wondered if they had any plans for something like that. Mr. Neilsen said he would like to bring in more sand for the beach area and that would be a spectator area where portable bleachers could be brought in. Lawn chairs could also be used in that area.

Mr. McCormick said another advantage to using Utah Lake is that there could be contest events and some of those could be combined cable and boating competitions.

Mr. Hunter requested that the presentation be forwarded to him and he will present the information to the State. Mr. Beckstrom asked Mr. Hunter if he felt this proposal was a feasible undertaking. Mr. Hunter said it thinks it is possible. He mentioned there are a few issues to resolve with the main one maybe being user conflicts, particularly with the fishermen. He suggested they should talk to the user groups.

Mr. Keleher said there are endangered species issues that are mainly compliance issues that could be worked through with the regulatory agencies. Mr. Hunter added that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers need to be consulted regarding permits and compliance issues. Mr. Hunter said Parks & Recreation would help to make sure that things were coordinated with FFSL. The towers would have to have lights because of the airport regulations and also in regard to navigational hazards.

Mr. Price recognized that there are a lot of specifics that need to be worked out, but that the purpose of the Technical Committee is to see if the members agree that this project supports the policies, goals and objectives of the Master Plan and if so, to give a recommendation to those who can help work out these specifics.

Mr. Beckstrom asked what the business entity would be. Mr. Neilsen and Mr. McCormick would own and manage the business. He noted that there would be a number of ancillary operations such as parking, concessions, etc. that would need to be coordinated with the Division of Parks & Recreation.

Chairman Chesnut asked the members if they saw any conflicts with this project with the Master Plan.

Mr. Price commented that even though there are some hurdles to overcome that it encourages effort to improve public access, encourages development of recreational opportunities appropriate to population and needs, and promotes development of a variety of recreational opportunities. He said this is a unique opportunity.

Mr. Beckstrom asked Mr. Hunter if this project would require an amendment to the Parks Master Plan.

Mr. Hunter said the management plan is outdated. Some public hearings would be necessary to outreach to the water users. One issue that would affect the traditional users would be parking. Mr. Neilsen said they had access to some land close by that could be used for parking by using a shuttle system. Those details could be worked out with Parks & Recreation and FFSL.

Mr. Tschirki said that one of the points that really stood out for him was the opportunity to become a destination location regionally, nationally and even globally. To create a destination location has been a point of interest since the beginning of the Commission.

Chairman Chesnut thanked them for their presentation. There was discussion on the support of the Technical Committee in regard to this project.

Mr. Beckstrom moved that the Technical Committee recognizes the consistency of the Utah Cable Project with the goals of the Master Plan and if the technical issues can be addressed in coordination with the Department of Parks & Recreation and the Division of Forestry, Fire & State Lands, the Technical Committee supports this proposal. It was seconded by Mr. Hunter and approved unanimously.

Mr. Hunter will set up a meeting with the Utah Cable Project and the Regional Manager Director.

Mr. Hewitson asked if this motion would be brought to the Governing Board and Mr. Price said he will bring it before the Executive Committee. Mr. Beckstrom suggested the Utah Cable Project meet first with the State and resolve some of the problems before they make a presentation to the Governing Board.

5. Other items

There were no other agenda items.

6. Confirm that the next Technical Committee meeting will be held on Monday, April 20, 2009.

The next meeting of the Technical Committee will include a transportation presentation by Mr. Leon Harward, Utah Crossing. Depending on interest in that meeting it may be moved to the Ballroom. Mr. Tom Twedt of Bio-West and an engineer from the company FIGG (bridge designer) will also attend with Mr. Harward.

Mr. Bob Fisher congratulated Mr. Price for his assistance to SUVMWA in obtaining comments from Mr. Lee Hansen and some others on a proposal written by Mr. Wham. In a combined meeting ideas were exchanged and clarified. It was a learning experience to everyone on how beneficial it is to share and coordinate ideas and research. Mr. Price said they discussed organizing a Technical Committee subcommittee as a research group for the purpose of sharing ideas and studying research findings.

7. Adjourn

Chairman Chesnut adjourned the meeting at 10:09 A.M.