

Wasatch Hollow Community Council

Minutes for the meeting of April 26, 2023

6:30 Vice-Chair Dan Jensen called the meeting to order

- Minutes of March 23 WHCC meeting approved unanimously.
- Questions and comments arose pre-empting presentations by officials from Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County, so the agenda moved directly to a presentation on the WH park and flood.

6:40 Report from Jesse Stewart, SLC Deputy Director of Public Utilities joined by Clint Meacham, Director, and Tom Sanders of Salt Lake County Emergency Management.

- On Wednesday, 4/12 Emigration Creek overflowed the detention basin at the head of the culvert in WH park. This caused the creek to flood, which filled a pond that backed up to a point as far north as Kensington Ave. The water flowed through the children's play area and parking lot, then onto the street.
- By 9:00 pm that night Public Works crews from SLC and SL County, as well as emergency response crews were joined by more than 500 volunteers to fill sandbags, and place thousands of them to channel the runoff down 1700 South and 1500 East to where it could flow back into the natural creek bed west of the parking lots between the LDS Ward and the Garfield School.
- The culvert-head structure in WH Park is unique in the SL County water management network. A component of the structure is a 300-lb steel plate that lays in the bottom of the water collection structure to prevent damage from the force of the water. During cool weather, with a Herculean effort involving seven massive pumps and some very specialized equipment, a UFD emergency crew was able to enter the box, determine the blockage, and correct the position of the plate. Somehow, the plate was lifted from the floor of the box and tipped up to cover the entry into the culvert pipe, allowing only about 40 cubic feet of water per second to exit the structure, while the creek's inflow surpassed 100 cfs.
 - Since the plate has no other purpose than to lie on the floor, it is inconceivable that a crew would have lifted it into the blocking position in which it was found.
 - Spray paint graffiti was found inside the box, so it is certain that unauthorized people have been in there. A few kids could muster the momentary strength required to lift one edge of the plate. The assumption is that these are the ones responsible for the malplacement.
 - The standing water that had collected in the basin during the weeks prior to the overflow appeared normal to officials, and it did not trigger an alarm for action.
- SL County hydrologists have determined that runoff from Emigration Canyon will continue into June, but its peak has already been reached. That, combined with the temporary removal of the plate gives assurance that we've seen the worst from our creek. The temporary road barricade and sandbag embankments have been removed, perhaps to be redeployed elsewhere.
- Appraisal of and repair to the damage caused to the lower creek banks, residential landscaping, street and sidewalk surfaces, and the soil structure under-girding them will begin soon.

- Many in the meeting applauded the swift response and management of the emergency by the City and County crews, the officials, and the volunteers

7:05 City Council report from Councilman Dan Dugan

- WHCC did not qualify for a portion of the hoped-for Capital Improvement Program grant. We will pursue this to see if there is a way to turn that decision around.
- The city is developing zoning allowances and requirements for Homeless Resource Centers, which are designed to provide hundreds of beds to those experiencing homelessness.
 - A new bill at the state level would require Salt Lake County, Davis County, and Utah County to add at least one HRC-type shelter each.
 - SLC has placed a moratorium on new HRC's pending review of the state's requirements, however a new facility has already been underway and will open soon.
 - Those suffering mental health and drug abuse issues comprise the majority of the state's homeless population. The City is working with SL County Health and the Huntsman Mental Health Institute to develop proactive policy to help with this problem.
- SLC's partnership with the SL School District, the SL Education Foundation, and UTA provided free transit passes for all students, faculty and staff in the SL School District during this school year. The program was a great success, scoring 415,000 rides. The City expects to increase the program next school year by extending the pass to parents of the students.
- Demolition on Lamplighter Square on Foothill Blvd at 1600 South within two months. The redesigned square will host a new liquor store and new commercial occupancies.
- Mr. Dugan recently attended a meeting of the Utah League of Cities and Towns, and heard a presentation about the Dignity Index, which was created in partnership with leaders in the field of behavioral science, politics, and communication, and is being tested and refined by researchers at the University of Utah, the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute, and the Hinckley Institute of Politics. It is an mechanism for opponents to increase dialog and move forward during conflict using an eight-point scale that scores speech along a continuum from contempt to dignity in as unbiased a manner as possible. Learn more about the Dignity Index at their website:
<https://www.dignityindex.us/>

7:20 Neighborhood Byway presentation by Will Becker from the SLC Transportation Department

- The Sugarhouse-University and the Kensington Byways were identified in the SLC Walking and Biking Master Plan from 2019.
 - See all of the Neighborhood Byway concepts at the City's website
<https://www.slc.gov/transportation/neighborhood-byways/>
 - Comments and ideas from the public were gathered last year.
 - Mainly byways will enhance pedestrian safety. The primary focus is on intersections, and street marking and signage would also be improved.
 - Once the final plan is approved, the team will prioritize projects and solutions according to their cost-benefit.

- There currently are no funds for the Neighborhood Byways program, pending approved plans. The plans do not include added funds to improved residential curb, gutter, and sidewalk.
- The City's 50/50 Concrete program has funds for homeowners. Visit their website at <https://www.slc.gov/mystreet/sidewalk-program/>

7:40 Report from Makaylah Respicio-Evans on the status of entries to the WH Nature Preserve

- Makaylah Respicio-Evans, SLC Public Lands Planner, reviewed the entries to the park. There were originally three new entrances planned for the park.
 - The entrance from Emerson Ave at 1700 East has been eliminated due to environmental and cost considerations.
 - There will be a west entrance at Kensington Ave at about 1650 East. This will require improvements to the gate for pedestrians and new signage.
 - The design for an east entrance using City property on Rosecrest Cir is nearly complete. One hurdle that must be overcome is crafting an agreement to modify the conservation easement that originally brought the nature preserve into existence, to allow a bridge to be erected within the easement area at the foot of the Rosecrest property.
- Learn more about the nature preserve and the entrances at the city's website here: <https://www.slc.gov/parks/wasatch-hollow-access-and-amenity-improvements/>

7:50 Flip Your Strip program presentation by WHCC Secretary Tim Komlos

- Converting a home's parking strip from turf to water-wise xeriscaping is endorsed by the Salt Lake County's Flip Your Strip program. Homeowners can earn up to \$1.25 per square foot for conversion under specific guidelines. Learn details at Utah Water Savers' website here: <https://utahwatersavers.com/Program/2/flip-your-strip>
Barbara Ballingham, Community Outreach Coordinator for SLC Urban Forestry, reminds us all to take care of the trees. If you are going to cut water use in your yard by xeriscaping or other measures, be sure to continue to provide enough water for the trees on your property. There is a lot of information on caring for your trees at the SL Urban Forestry website here: <https://www.slc.gov/parks/urban-forestry/>

7:58 Meeting adjourned