Quality Growth Commission Meeting
Wednesday
March 24, 2004, 11:00 AM
Room 236, Davis County Courthouse
Farmington, Utah

Attending:
Dan Lofgren, Chair

Commissioner Shauna Kerr, Vice Chair
Dave Allen
Mayor Lewis Billings
Brad Barber
Commissioner Cary Peterson
Bob Morgan
Commissioner Carol Page
Carlton Christensen

Others Attending:
Wilf Summerkorn, UAC, Davis Co. Econ Dev
Neka Roundy, Davis Co. Econ Dev
George Ramjoue, WFRC
Jeff Salt, Utah Wtrshd Coord. Council
John Quick, UDOT
Andrew Jackson,
Mark Bedel, DCED

Excused:
Gary Herbert
Ken Ashby
Max Thompson

Staff:
Wes Curtis
Mike Hansen
John Bennett
Brian Carver

1. Welcome

Carol welcomes Commission and thanks Wilf's office for providing lunch. The Commission recognizes the departure of GOPB's Camille Hacking in light of office administrative changes. Carol suggests that the Commission as a board send her a note of appreciation for her service and hard work.

Carol then introduced Neka Boundry, of the Davis County Dept. of Community and Economic Development. She is locally known as the "Bird Lady" for her responsibilities in organizing the annual Great Salt Lake Bird Festival. Neka distributed brochures for the upcoming festival and invited Commission members to attend. Many properties preserved by the Commission will be part of tours for bird watching and habitat. Tours are very popular and sell out annually so reservations are recommended. Neka highlighted the fact that while most of the listed birds are viewable in other areas of the State, the Great Salt Lake is an important stop for migratory species and is good place to see them all in great numbers. Over 4,000 people attended the main events at the Fairgrounds last year, and attendance has been growing each year.

2. Approve Minutes from the Jan & Feb meetings

Because a quorum could not be established at the previous February meeting, the Commission reviewed minutes from both the February and January meetings of this year.

Mayor Billings corrected the February 25th meeting minutes, noting that he was present by phone for the voting actions. Staff will make the necessary corrections.

Brad Barber moved to accept both months, Shauna Kerr seconded. Vote passed unanimously.

3. Public Input

Jeff Salt, chairman of Utah Watershed Coordinators Council – a council of 35 members staffing conservation districts or volunteers from local, state, and federal agencies and industries, introduced the organization and how its work relates to critical lands conservation. Jeff was interested in what kind of support the Commission would be able to provide so that the Coordinators Council could assist watershed managers and communities in watershed and water quality assessment and planning. Dan expressed the Commission's enthusiasm for cooperation but preferred that funding assistance be provided on a parcel acquisition or easement basis rather than broad planning support. He also asked if the Council would be able to provide technical assistance to communities seeking to develop critical lands plans for their watersheds and Jeff concurred that support would be available.

4. 2004 Legislative Session Update

Wilf Summerkorn provided summary. He predicts that transportation will become a big issue in the future, similar to education funding. There are many projects and plans needed in the near future, but no money available to begin the process. The previous Open Space bond resolution may heavily involve Commission in the future.

Wes Curtis discussed state planning, beginning by saying that public lands policy will take the front seat in the near future. There is more good news: The Commission received $300,000 in one-time for FY2004 for LMF. State and Local Planning also received $250,000 for several things. Some money will be available for technical assistance, Smart Sites will take some, Outdoor Recreation Economic Ecosystems may take some. How to divide the spoils has not been determined. Wes suggested waiting to see what communities want before deciding what kind of assistance to provide. Rural land planning is a possible venue. The new Rural Development Office established under SB 50 should help provide additional priorities in the near future. Hopefully the Commission can coordinate with new office to provide planning and education assistance.

Mayor Billings was concerned that planning grant money will not be available from this new $250k, but Wes thinks it's still a possibility. Budgets for the next fiscal year will be finalized soon and the details known by July. Mayor Billings recalled high interest in planning assistance from previous League meetings. Carlton Christensen questioned

waiting for communities to recognize a problem before seeking assistance. Is it a funding issue? Wes was concerned that we're spending money and resources on communities who don't feel they need or want the assistance. Maybe we need to re-address the issues. Mayor Billings suggested that the Commission designate a contact to work with the new Rural Office to coordinate priorities and financial efforts. Wes Curtis could provide a presentation at a future Commission mtg. on SB 50 and Public Lands Planning Toolkit.

Dan Lofgren concurred that a Commission liaison to this new group is important and asked for a volunteer. Meeting times and locations are still up in the air, but a Salt Lake City location would be logical. Shauna Kerr expressed interest and Wes and GOPB staff will make sure she's in the loop.

5. Quality Growth Communities Subcommittee

John referred to the green sheet in the distributed packet on final Water Quality Board incentives.

Bonus to points on numeric priority system
Grant funds for qualified communities – must be repaid as a loan if status fails
Technical assistance

Recent outreach has included the WFRC Regional Growth Committee and TAC – presentations and discussion. George confirms that a recommendation to the Regional Grown Committee to support QG Communities is forthcoming.

The recent Water Users Association Conference presentation was well attended. Thanks to Bob and John for representing.

Dan was concerned at the apparent slow reaction of communities to jump on the wagon. Carlton mentions that planning is a slow process by nature and it may take a while for communities to develop the interest and enthusiasm to participate. Persistence is important to keep these things in their minds and encourage application.

John mentions upcoming meetings – Utah County Council of Governments meeting – 4/1 – a Commission member should do a presentation or represent to answer questions. Mayor Billings will already be there. Tooele County Planning Commission meeting on 4/7 – Dan will go if back in town in time. I missed who volunteered to attend.

Brad will represent at WFRC RGC meeting on 4/1. Dan mentioned that we finally have an appointment to present to Board of Realtors – missed date.

Lunch provided by Davis County office of Economic Development

6. LeRay McAllister Critical Land Subcommittee Report

John reviewed the proposed schedule and noted that it would overlap conveniently with the federal Farm Protect Program funding cycle. FPP applications are due April 30 and

funding will be decided on May 16. This gives McAllister Fund applicants due notice of possible matching funds.

Mayor Billings requested details on the available amount for the upcoming cycle. John noted that the FY2005 appropriation was the same as last years, approximately $486,000. That is in addition to the $300,000 of non-lapsing one-time funds allocated in the previous legislative session. Mayor Billings suggested that the Commission seek to contact the members of the legislative subcommittee and Fiscal Analyst's Office to express our thanks for the additional $300,000 allocated to the program.

Dave Allen expressed concern that the pre-application period was too short, but Shauna Kerr explained that in order to accommodate the early Commission meeting in May, the subcommittee had to meet several weeks before its usual time, leaving only a month for pre-applications.

Shauna moved to accept the application cycle as presented. Carol Page seconded. The motions passed unanimously.

The subcommittee also discussed additional uses for portions of the extra $300,000 such as critical lands mapping and planning assistance. Is it within the bounds of the Commission and Fund to help with planning by providing grants and staff assistance? Some options available are assistance through Associations of Government and other grants. Mapping would document all current conservation easements, including Fund projects, as well as other easements held by other state and private entities such as The Nature Conservancy, UDOT, and DNR. GOPB began coordinating the development of such a map a few years ago, but the effort was never completed. Some small staff time could be dedicated to finishing the project, creating a tool useful to communities in creating critical lands plans and other agencies to determine "green space continuity."

Dan felt that planning assistance would pay off in terms of good will and support much more than a single funded easement would. Shauna believed that since the $300,000 is one-time money, the chance to complete the map would be of benefit to many parties and not impact the Fund's reputation. Carlton expressed concern that the original advocates of the appropriation such as legislators and the Fiscal Analyst, might have different expectations of what is to be done with the money. Brad suggested that a map could be incorporated with existing easement data such as the WFRC Open Space Study, funded by the Commission. Dave expressed concern about a map being truly useful to individual communities. He wondered if small grants for communities to conduct their own critical lands mapping would be more effective.

Mayor Billings pointed out that the original question was not whether to do the mapping, but whether to hold back some of the one-time appropriation to provide additional services this year. John provided the original Quality Growth Act language detailing how Fund money may be spent. There are two camps, each interpreting the language differently. The Attorney General's office believed that Fund "expenses" could be

defined very broadly to include a multitude of projects. Others felt the money should only be spent on easement acquisition.

Dave suggested that an amount be reserved with the intent to provide planning assistance subject to the Fiscal Analyst's office and supporting legislators' feedback on how the money should be spent. Mayor Billings continued by saying that some critics might feel that Fund money is being spent on something that staff should be doing with their own budget anyway unless the project has some real compelling interest, some "flash." Andrew Jackson asked if there was any other critical lands support available. He wondered if small grants of only a few thousand dollars would be effective in helping communities assess and plan for critical land preservation. Mark Bedel mentioned that staff annually must construct a budget and recommended that no amount be decided upon until the new budget was decided upon.

Carol reiterated her support for a critical lands map, calling it an asset.

Mayor Billings moved to reserve $75,000 from the one-time appropriation of $300,000 for FY2004, to be rolled back into the Fund if an appropriate assistance project cannot be determined. Cary Peterson seconded with a challenge to the subcommittee to work on the idea. Motion passed unanimously.

John presented an update on the Holladay City grant. At a recent City Council meeting he attended, they discussed writing a letter of intent to the Commission before the imposed deadline of March 25, stating their intentions to continue with the project but seeking more time to find additional matching funds. The Commission and subcommittee will have opportunities to consider their new proposal at the May meetings. If the project is ultimately dropped, the $250,000 allocated will roll back into the Fund.

Dan encouraged that an additional extension be granted only on condition of proof of matching funds and a detailed schedule of project completion. Lewis asked if new letters of support would be necessary if the project details changed. John answered that they are not necessary, but staff will check with the government officials anyway.

7. 2004 – 2005 Work Plan

Dan stressed that the Commission needs to create a better public image and begin to drive Quality Growth Principles into state policy. Quality of Life and Economic Development are joined at the hip. Shauna also mentioned that transportation issues are important. John Quick mentioned that the UDOT Transportation Task Force is working to incorporate economic development into transportation project priority planning. He believes that the Quality Growth Principles could be added to the priority list.

Lewis Billings felt that recreation and public lands access from urban-forest interface areas was important. The Commission should promote planning and critical land acquisition as a matter of forethought, not reaction. He used the example of a park Provo

City obtained the property for several years ago. Currently the property is worth approximately $13 million an acre and would be impossible to acquire by the city. Thinking ahead saved money. Additionally, he stressed that critical lands be acquired and managed in ways the benefit the community, not left to waste or made of such inconsequential size as to be ineffective in preserving the qualities originally desirable. Dan agreed that development drives capital to spend on amenities, but must be balanced with preserving quality of life. "If we all have a job, but life stinks, so what? And on the other hand, if we have lots of open space, but can't afford to put gas in the car to drive out there, what good is it?"

Carlton recommended requesting presentations from communities and developers showcasing best cases of planning ahead, perhaps at a Commission-sponsored symposium or other educational forum. Brad mentioned that the State spends money on promoting Quality of Life through Tourism and Economic Development. The Commission should advertise what we're doing to protect that Quality of Life.

John asked if the Commission would be willing to co-sponsor a conference or summit, inviting a variety of speakers and topics such as Quality of Life and Economic Development. Dan suggested a pitched battle between the "Greenies and Rapacious Developers." Quality of life protects economic development, and vice-versa. There must be a balance.

Dave said that the idea requires further definition. Lewis said that the University of Utah's new planning school could help with maps and other student assistance. John mentioned that staff has been developing contacts with several colleges and universities to solicit student help.

Cary said that numbers are needed. Cost/benefit analysis, best examples, etc. Dan mentioned that Envision Utah does some calculations and could help provide similar details. He envisions a conference where a Fortune 500 executive comes and explains that they relocated to Utah because of its Quality of Life. Lewis suggested outreach workshops such as Envision's "envisioning" meetings. Perhaps a "Top 10" list of Quality of Life facets could be developed through inquiries to corporate relocation evaluators, developers, the Nature Conservancy, etc.

Additional discussion will be required.

9. The next meeting will be TBA.