

SALT LAKE COUNTY
Council of Governments (COG)

Thursday, November 29, 2018, 11:30 am

Columbus Community Center Auditorium – 2531 S. 400 E. South Salt Lake, Utah

MINUTES (approved)

1 – Welcome

Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 12:02 pm and welcomed all COG members, legislators and other participating officials. New legislators introduced themselves.

2 – Public comment

There was no public comment.

3 – Minutes approval from August 23, 2018

Councilmember Jensen moved to approve the minutes from the August 23, 2018 COG meeting. Councilmember Nichole seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4 – COG business

Wilf Sommerkorn reminded the body that information about the COG (including recordings and minutes) can be found on the Salt Lake County COG website. Mr. Sommerkorn also mentioned that Mayor Wood was unable to attend the meeting due to the recent tragedy in the South Salt Lake City Police Department.

5 – Housing affordability initiatives

Mayor Silvestrini of Millcreek expressed condolences to the City of South Salt Lake. Mayor Silvestrini addressed the housing affordability issue in Salt Lake County, noting that the growth of the population and the economy is causing a housing shortage and driving housing prices up. He expressed concern about the recent Utah Supreme Court decision regarding development in Holladay, especially in light of the time that local leaders spend in efforts to listen to constituents. Millcreek is working on several initiatives to improve the housing situation in the new city, including adding housing units, increasing density, and creating more walkable communities. Millcreek has taken advantage of TLC grants to make effective plans to improve the city. Local officials have also made great efforts to engage with communities and work with developers and community councils to plan a successful city center. Mayor Silvestrini encouraged other local governments to work toward housing solutions.

6 – SW county growth and infrastructure needs

Mayor Staggs of Riverton spoke about the need for collaboration between local communities. Population growth in the southwest quadrant of the county has accounted for a large portion of the growth of the entire county and is expected to increase. Almost half of the developable land in the

county is located in the southwest quadrant. Mayor Staggs highlighted the increase in housing stock in the area and noted that the percentage of single family homes is dropping as new growth occurs. He also pointed out that an increase in housing stock does not necessarily mean an increase in affordable housing. Mayor Staggs also noted the importance of building out the infrastructure in the county to support new growth in undeveloped areas.

7 – Local government housing plans, affordability, transportation

Cameron Diehl from the Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT) spoke about population growth around the state and its effects on housing affordability and transportation. Mr. Diehl said growth is happening and cities are planning for it, but according to ULCT surveys residents are sometimes frustrated because they think Utah is growing too quickly. Surveys show a perception of lack of planning around growth and lack of infrastructure. There is also a perception of broken promises when residents are told one thing and another thing happens. Focus groups also show that residents still trust local government but will hold leaders accountable for what they say they will do.

Rachel Otto, also of ULCT spoke about legislation being worked on by the Commission on Housing Affordability, which began meeting in July after the passage of housing bill HB430. The main elements of the bill in progress are outlined in the handout provided by ULCT. Ms. Otto also spoke about available funding for cities to plan for population growth. Cities work best when they focus on what they can do to increase affordable housing. Taking advantage of funding programs is key to cities' success and the ULCT is working to get more funds into the TLC and other housing funds. Ms. Otto also addressed the transportation legislation SB136 and other legislation linking transportation and housing affordability in planning for growth.

8 – UTA status and issues

Carlton Christensen, Chairman of the new UTA Board of Trustees spoke about his first few weeks as a trustee and the state of transit. Chairman Christensen and Trustee Holbrook have been learning how the UTA works and observing the many committed employees who want to do a good job with transit in the community. The UTA wants to be good a partner and wants to be part of conversations for growth. In July UTA will get the transit portion of the 4th quarter sales tax. Chair Christensen recognized that there are some holes in transit service that need to be filled. For Salt Lake County in particular, after Mountain View highway and U111 are completed, transit will likely be the only other way to move people through the valley. Last year's legislation, SB136, needs some tweaks which will include maintaining the UTA name, and making some operational changes as well. Chair Christensen invited everyone to reach out to the new trustees for collaboration in growth planning.

9 – Upcoming legislative issues for local government

Brad Wilson, newly elected Speaker of the Utah House of Representatives, spoke to the body about housing affordability. Housing affordability is a big problem that needs to be fixed for future generations. Some of the best actors in the state in the area of affordable housing are in Salt Lake County. They are thinking things through and making a bad problem not quite as bad. It is clear however, that in order to address the housing problem, density must increase. The Utah Supreme Court ruling from last night is concerning for housing issues going forward. The legislature will address the referendum issue to decrease the uncertainty that currently exists. Speaker Wilson also spoke

about a change in the state budget that will change the availability of funds for projects other than education. He stated that unless this is fixed, it will be difficult for the legislature to fund things other than education. Speaker Wilson also indicated that the legislature as well as the Governor will need to take a thorough look at economic development in the state in order to find solutions for how to grow differently.

Senator Jerry Stevenson, filling in for Senate President Stuart Adams, addressed the body and reiterated the need to fix the budget issue mentioned by Speaker Wilson. The state needs to make changes that will help us be prepared for another recession. Sen. Stevenson stated that economic development is also a big issue to address. Utah has a strong workforce, but we have housing and transportation restrictions that make it more difficult for businesses to move here and spur economic growth. Density will be a key factor in dealing with the housing shortage. One positive aspect of governance in Utah is that lawmakers work together across party lines to affect change.

10 – Comments from legislators and COG members

Questions were asked of the legislators regarding economic development, the Utah Retirement System as it relates to workforce shortages and competition, affordable housing, maintaining services and infrastructure, sales tax reform, and wages. Speaker Wilson and Senator Stevenson answered questions from the body. Legislators were also admonished to think carefully about how legislation at the State level affects local government, services, and taxes.

11 – Adjourn

Chair Wilson reminded the body that the next COG meeting will take place on Thursday, January 24, 2019 at the Salt Lake County Government Center at 11:30 am. The meeting adjourned at 1:26 pm.

COG Members Present (as listed on sign in sheet)

Ron Bigelow – West Valley City	Kristin Nicholl – Sandy City
Jackie Biskupski – Salt Lake City	Dan Peay – Magna Township
Dirk Burton (alternate) – West Jordan	Mike Peterson – Cottonwood Heights
Blair Camp – Murray City	Dawn Ramsey – South Jordan
Robert Dahle – Holladay	Jeff Silvestrini – Millcreek
Paulina Flint – White City Township	Joe Smolka – Emigration Township
Robert Hale – Midvale	Trent Staggs – Riverton
Michael Jensen – Salt Lake County	David Watts – Herriman
Karen Lang – West Valley City	Jenny Wilson – Salt Lake County
Tasha Lowery (alternate) – Draper	

Other Attendees and Participants (as listed on sign in sheet)

Cheryl Acton
David Brickey
Joel Briscoe
Scott Carver
Carlton Christensen
LaNiece Davenport
Cameron Deihl
Steve Eliason
Luz Escamilla
Erika Fihaki
Val John Halford

Doug Hill
John Hiskey
Beth Holbrook
Janice Kimball
Tami Moody
Aimee Winder Newton
Jana Ostler
Rachel Otto
Lynn Pace
Dennis Pay
Helen Peters

Laurel Price
Angela Romero
Greg Schultz
Matt Sibul
Wilf Sommerkorn
Jerry Stevenson
Gary Whatcott
Karen Wiley
Brad Wilson
Brett Wood
Jake Young