# UTAH COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

# WORK SESSION

**Minutes of the February 10,1997 Meeting**

Present: Elaine Englehardt, Chair
Jill Taylor Taylor, Member
Don Nebeker, Member
Gary Robison, Member
Brent Gordon, Alternate Member
Jeff Mendenhall, Community Development Director
Buck Rose, Senior Planner
Dave Shawcroft, Attorney
Sherrie Christenson, Planner

Also present were the following: Tom Wroe-Fire Marshal, Jerry Grover-Utah County Commissioner, Dick Casto-Utah County Search and Rescue, Shirrel R. Young, Thistle; Mel Lindberg, Odell Miner-Planning Consultants, Robert Bennion, Sundance; Bob Bonar, Ray Gardner, Bob Pruitt-Snowbird, Josephine Zimmerman-The Daily Herald.

## A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Elaine Englehardt, Chair.

## B. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT TO SEC 5-5-B-25

Ray Gardner stated that the Snowbird philosophy is a world class ski resort with a year round program. Located in Little Cottonwood Canyon it includes four hotels, a restaurant, conference area and employs 2,000. Best snow on earth with an average of 500 inches per year.

The owner, Dick Baro, wants an international renaissance area for the enhancement of body, mind, and spirit. Ray noted that the operations are of the highest quality, receiving the Gold Key Award for quality and service, which has not been received by any other resort in Utah. Snowbird has received more awards for environmental accomplishment and preservation than any other resort in Utah. Snowbird has also received the Silver Eagle Award three times for environmental accomplishments.

Ray stated that they have built a sewer line in the canyon and have the best Salt Lake water coming out of the canyon. They have natural gas pipelines that reduces pollution and they own a co-generation plant which produces most of their own electricity at the bottom of the canyon. They own a large amount of land at the top of Mineral Basin on the Utah County side.

Ray mentioned that they want one ski lift to come back to the tram and another ski lift to connect to Alta.

Elaine Englehardt read the proposed amendment.

Jeff Mendenhall stated that all recreational resorts that are in the CE-2 zone. Snowbird could apply for a zone change. The amendment would allow lifts to go in the CE-1 zone and that Sundance would have that same right. CE-2 zone is different for taxing purposes and CE-1 zone is service areas 6 and 9.

Ray Gardner commented that it makes more sense to do a CE-1 zone text change because they don't want to do as broad of activities as the CE-2 allows. Ski lifts have much less impact than more intrusive things that are permitted uses in the zone. Maybe there is a possibility of spot zoning if they are to change from CE-1 to CE-2.

Ray stated that concerning the tax question the property patented is a mining claim and is being taxed as such. Under the proposed development Utah County would receive higher taxes. Lifts would increase property value and the taxes would go to Utah County, not the state, like taxes on mining claims.

Ray noted that no real services are needed from Utah County. Snowbird currently has a professional ski patrol, the best in the world, headed by a man who has been there 26 years. Snowbird also has a public safety force of 30-35 members, a fire station with EMTs and a Deputy Sheriff.

Ray stated that Snowbird could work with Salt Lake County and Utah County to see that additional services are provided where necessary. Salt Lake County Commissioners verbally and informally said they could work out intra local agreement.

Don Nebeker questioned what the tax estimates and annual revenues would be.

Ray Gardner noted that it would be 3 to 4 million dollars worth in improvements.

Bob Snow mentioned that the tax assessment on mining claims is based on production and that currently it is a non-production area.

Ray Gardner stated that it would be taxed as real property, not as a mining claim.

Don Nebeker questioned the proposed construction and how they would get cement to the site.

Ray Gardner stated that there would be no tree cutting and that they have plans to plant trees with Tree Utah. He noted that they would cut the road off the top for the snow cats and use some of the existing roads. The ski lift towers and the cement would be brought in by helicopters. Snowbird would also use some of the current 4x4 roads.

Don Nebeker questioned what the forest service feelings were.

Ray Gardner stated that the forest service said it was all on private land and that they have no problem with it. Ray noted that there will be a warming hut, non-water toilet system and vending machines. There is currently a run down hut at the top of Hidden Peak, but that they are in the drawing stage to fix it up. There are possible plans for a restaurant on the Salt Lake side with access on the Salt Lake side only, for now.

Bob Bonar stated that the landslide areas are difficult to develop and maintain a road. It would take 10 to 20 years to be able to bring in these things.

Ray Gardner noted that bottle water would be carried in at first, then a water line would be run in from the Salt Lake County side. Ray also noted that the warming hut would be 2,000 to 3,000 sq. ft. The loading station would be at the bottom and the lift would be a top drive station.

Jill Taylor questioned if an apportionment part of ales tax would be generated by the lift tickets.

Ray Gardner stated that currently they would pay sales tax, Utah County could get a portion from this and from the vending machines. But, the real value would be in real property tax plus capital improvements made on the property.

Bob Bonar noted that there is already a lot of use in that area with cross country skiers, snowmobilers and snow shoers.

Ray Gardner explained that if a skier is injured, it would be handled by the ski patrol and not by Utah County. The presence of the patrol in the basin would allow for quicker help.

Dick Casto expressed concern that because there is a lot of snowmobile activity up there and it is hard for Utah County rescue to get there, how would they handle the out-of-bounds control.

Bob Bonar stated that the snowmobilers would sign out with proper equipment and register with Salt Lake Search and Rescue creating a more controlled situation.

Jeff Mendenhall questioned if there are mining hazards left.

Ray Gardner explained that they closed up a couple summers ago. Ray stated that there would be between 800 to 1000 people up there on a heavy day. The resort may not operate the lifts throughout the season because of the high avalanche danger and bad weather during early and late seasons.

Bob Bonar stated that an endangered species study performed found no endangerment in the area. The warming hut would be at a 9500 ft. elevation.

Dave Shawcroft mentioned that the notes on erosion and construction impacts were listed in the proposal.

Ray Gardner stated that the US Soils Conservation says its nice to see a company who knows how to do it and does it with regards to properly maintaining and preserving soil. The project would be all internally financed.

Buck Rose noted that he feels very tentative on the cost benefit ratio. He feels a decision shouldn't be made until the master plan process is completed and a requirement for approval should be a positive ratio in Utah County's favor.

Jill Taylor stated that she doesn't want to wait till the master plan is done, but she wants to see the bottom line of the cost benefit ratio.

Ray Gardner commented that he doesn't know exactly what kind of report we want and doesn't know what the assessor would value it at. He would need to meet with the Assessor, Sheriff and Fire Marshall to access the real costs.

Don Nebeker express concern about possible pressure for access from the American Fork side and he feels it would not be difficult for Snowbird to work with the staff to get the estimate of cost.

Robert Bennion commented that he thinks the text should be either a conditional use or a Board of Adjustment special exception instead of opening it up as a permitted use. He stated that it would open Pandora for others, i.e. Sundance. Robert questioned whether the property should be annexed into Salt Lake County and if there is different snow quality on other ridges of Salt Lake County.

Commissioner Grover stated that his position on this issue is if you write the ordinance well enough you won't have to go to conditional use and that he prefers permitted uses to conditional ones.

Jill Taylor stated that she would like it conditional use.

Elaine Englehardt closed the meeting at 1:30 PM stating that the item would still be on the agenda for February 18th, and she would like to see a cost-benefit analysis and she appreciated learning more about the proposal. She asked staff to write two versions of the amendment. One that was a conditional use and one that was a permitted use so that the Planning Commission would have an option.

APPROVED:

Chair

Secretary