

MINUTES OF THE COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026, AT 4:00 PM IN THE COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL WORK ROOM LOCATED AT 2277 EAST BENGAL BOULEVARD, COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS, UTAH

Present: Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion, Council Member Matt Holton, Council Member Ellen Birrell, Council Member Suzanne Hyland, Council Member Shawn Newell

Planning Commissioners: Lucy Anderson, Mike Smith, Dan Poulson, Mike Shelton, Sean Steinman, Dan Mills, Garry Barnes

Staff Present: City Manager, Jared Gerber; City Attorney, Shane Topham; Finance Director, Scott Jorges; Police Chief, Robby Russo; Records, Culture, and Human Resources Director, Barbara Higgins; City Recorder, Tiffany Janzen; Community and Economic Development Director, Jim Spung; Planner III, Sheldon Howa; IT Manager, Matt Ervin; Public Works Director and City Engineer, Matt Shipp

1.0 WELCOME – Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion.

Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion called the City Council Work Session to order at 4:00 PM.

2.0 CITY COUNCIL REVIEW OF BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA – Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion.

Mayor Bennion reviewed the Meeting Agenda and stated that the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by Council Member Newell, followed by the Citizen Comment Period. Item 4.1 would be Cottonwood Heights Police Department (“CHPD”) promotions.

Item 5.1 was the consideration of Resolution 2026-07, Awarding a Retiring Police Officer His Badge and Approving His Purchase of a Police Firearm. Sergeant Dan Morzelewski is retiring after 32 years of public service, including 17 with CHPD. As authorized by City Code, Sergeant Morzelewski will be awarded his badge and allowed to purchase his sidearm.

Council Member Hyland reported that Sergeant Morzelewski has accepted the Director of Parks position with the Cottonwood Heights Parks and Recreation Center. Police Chief, Robby Russo stated that he began working at the Recreation Center when he was 15 years old.

Mayor Bennion stated that City Manager, Jared Gerber, was participating remotely as he recently had surgery.

Item 5.2 was the consideration of Resolution 2026-08 Ratifying Committee Assignments. Item 5.3 was consideration of Resolution 2026-09 Approving a Temporary Occupancy Concurrence Request by UDOT. Both items were discussed later in the Work Session.

Council Member Hyland requested that approval of the January 6, 2026, City Council Meeting Minutes be postponed as they were received that day, and she did not have time to review them. It was agreed that the item would be postponed.

3.0 STAFF REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION

3.1 Utah Renewable Communities Discussion. Planner III Sheldon Howa.

Mayor Bennion reported that the City Council would not vote on this item until March or April 2025.

Planner III, Sheldon Howa, provided an overview of the Utah Renewable Communities (“URC”) program.

The URC is a coalition of 19 cities advancing a clean energy program for homes and businesses in these communities. The primary goal is to make net-100% clean electricity available to participating communities by 2030 in partnership with Rocky Mountain Power. The goal will be accomplished by utilizing existing clean energy sources and acquiring new sources to match 100% of annual energy consumed annually. The program was enabled by the Utah Community Renewable Energy Act of 2019.

The URC worked with Rocky Mountain Power to develop the URC Program Application. The application was fully submitted to the Utah Public Service Commission (“PSC”) for review in June 2025. Technical and public witness hearings were held on the application in December 2025, and a final ruling is expected by March 2026.

The URC solicited bids for clean energy resources (solar, wind, geothermal, hydroelectric, etc.) that:

- Interconnect directly with PacifiCorp transmission grid.
- Are located in Utah, Wyoming, or Idaho.
- They are between two and 300 megawatts in size.
- Can achieve commercial operation no later than December 31, 2029.

Ten bids were received, which was narrowed down to five. No information on the specific proposals was available.

In response to a question raised by Council Member Hyland, Mr. Howa confirmed that the projects must be located within three states but will connect to a grid that covers six states. However, they are prioritizing Utah sources so that partner communities receive a direct benefit.

Council Member Hyland asked if the program would only benefit Utahns or residents of other states as well. Council Member Holton stated that there is a BlueSky Utility program that allows individuals to voluntarily participate in the activity, but URC is a citywide approach where cities opt in to a holistic approach to renewable energy. He believes the program has many issues and would be more in favor of it if it involved a renewable energy project in the City that produced energy directly for residents. Mayor Bennion stated that it is a complex issue and indicated that discussion would continue after Mr. Howa had completed his presentation.

Mr. Howa reported that to fund the new clean energy sources, the program will automatically enroll all Rocky Mountain Power customers in participating communities. The proposed additional cost per customer is \$3 to \$4 per month. However, Rocky Mountain Power has argued for a rate increase of up to 10%, and the PSC has not yet determined a fair and equitable rate for the program. All residents within the City would be automatically enrolled, but can voluntarily opt out of the program within 90 days of adoption. Customers wishing to opt out at a later time will be subject to a termination fee of between \$3 and \$20. Low-income households can receive a bill credit of up to \$0.77 per bill if they are enrolled in the RMP Schedule 3 Home Electric Lifeline Plan.

Benefits of joining URC include protecting residents' health, safety, and overall quality of life, supporting the Cottonwood Heights Sustainability Plan.

In 2019, the Utah Legislature adopted the Community and Renewable Energy Act, which established the framework for a multi-community clean energy program. Cottonwood Heights committed to participating in that program that same year (Resolution 2019-66). In 2021, the City joined the URC through an interlocal agreement (Resolution 2021-30). Contributions are based on population and energy load, and to date, Cottonwood Heights has contributed a total of approximately \$21,000 to the URC, or approximately 3% of the agency's overall budget. With the exception of noticing costs, the City will incur no additional program costs if it chooses to continue with the project.

Upon approval of the Program Application by the PSC, Cottonwood Heights will have 90 days to adopt the program by ordinance. There is no penalty for not adopting the program.

If the City chooses to adopt the program, the process will be as follows:

- Cottonwood Heights will be responsible for all costs associated with notifying Rocky Mountain Power customers in the City of the program.
- Rocky Mountain Power will generate notices and notify all affected customers with an initial paper notice and a second notice with the customer's bill.
- The costs to cover both noticing periods is estimated at approximately \$19,000.

Mr. Howa reported that former Mayor Mike Weichers and former City Planner, Ian Harris, are the City's current URC Board members, so new appointees are needed to fill those positions. Board meetings are held on the first Monday of every month and last approximately two hours. The anticipated time commitment is between five and 10 hours per month.

Mayor Bennion stated that the bill was passed by the Utah State Legislature with a strong majority; almost 50 of its 75 members voted in support of the measure. When Cottonwood Heights voted in 2021, four members voted in favor of the resolution. More clean energy will benefit the environment, and the program provides the ability to opt out. She recommended that a community meeting be held to gauge the community's support for the program.

In response to a question raised by Council Member Newell, Mr. Howa confirmed that the URC anticipates renewable energy sources to be providing power to the community by 2030. Council Member Holton stated that they had committee to reach their goal by 2030, not that the energy will

directly go to Cottonwood Heights. Mayor Bennion stated that if residents choose to participate, their participation will sustain a program that creates a net-zero energy offset for their personal household's share of the electric grid. Mr. Howa stated that if the resource provides 300 megawatts of clean energy and Cottonwood Heights only uses 50 megawatts, for example, it will completely offset the City's energy consumption.

Council Member Holton stated that he is in favor of renewables and is grateful that City Hall was built with sustainability in mind. However, he does not believe that the URC program is the way to achieve it. He believes it will guarantee that residents will pay more for basic utility services. Many residents are upset with the cost of water, and the Council is upset that the City is not in control of that. He sees this as a voluntary rate increase. It is not a direct power purchase that guarantees renewable energy in the City's homes. The opt-out period is only 90 days, and he does not believe most residents know that the program exists.

Council Member Birrell stated that in the last month and a half, temperatures had been dramatically higher than people who have lived in Utah all their lives have ever experienced. She emphatically believes that the City needs to take a stand for the core health needs of Cottonwood Heights and the extended community. Even if the power does not directly feed into Cottonwood Heights, it will make a difference in the region, and the program represents an opportunity to move the needle toward where humanity needs to go. All scientific evidence shows heightened temperatures and lower air quality. There is ample time to engage and educate the public, and she believes the Council needs to be careful not to only look for the negatives. Council Member Holton remarked that the opportunity to participate in an offset program exists, and he does not want to force it on the City's residents.

Council Member Hyland agrees that renewable energy and the climate are important. However, she is concerned about the information provided on the program. The cost is estimated at between \$2 and \$7 per month, which equals an increase of between \$355,000 and \$1.2 million per year that Cottonwood Heights would be encumbering its citizens with paying. As Council Member Birrell has pointed out in other meetings, basic services should not be taxed. There is an opt-out, but she believes it is an illusion of choice. Most people will not opt out, and there will be a penalty for doing so. She would like the penalty removed. The program also does not have an end date, and no information was provided on what happens to the fee when the renewables are available in 2030. She is also concerned about governance because the packet indicates Salt Lake City will have 53% of the vote and the PSC retains final decision-making authority over the program.

Council Member Hyland remarked that the economics of energy have changed since 2019 due to artificial intelligence. A recent article in *The Washington Post* entitled "Why Your Power Bill is Spiking Faster Than a Nearby Data Center" reports that residential customers are subsidizing data centers. Amazon has purchased a solar farm. Rocky Mountain Power will be competing with data centers, which will drive up the anticipated program costs. She believed the City Council needs to be very mindful of the financial impact, how the program has changed since conception, and the program's governance.

Council Member Newell expressed concern about the opt-out process, as it will be like subscriptions, so many people do not know they are burdened with. He is in favor of the opt-in process. He is passionate about the environment, but he believes the Council has a responsibility to do things in the

right way and not encumber residents with something they have no choice over. Council Member Holton stated that when the legislation was passed, it was indicated at that time that the economics would not work if people opt in.

Mayor Bennion stated that it is an important decision for the City. She clarified that the governance is one vote per City, so that information may need to be updated. Salt Lake City has many low-income residents and does not want to increase those residents' power bills, and there is a discussion on the URC to extend the opt-out period to six months. If the City stays in the program, it will spend approximately \$18,000 with Rocky Mountain Power to ensure that residents are aware of the process. The City website, mailings, and social media will be utilized to educate residents as well. She hopes that the City Council is open to feedback from constituents on all sides of the issue and considers what they are turning off if Cottonwood Heights leaves the program. It would allow the City to be a leader, but other cities are committed to anchoring the program even if others pull out. Council Member Hyland stated that Sandy and Draper are not participating in the program.

Council Member Birrell recommended that a FlashVote survey be conducted to determine the community's interest in the program. Council Member Hyland stated that the agreement was one topic per Council member, and only four surveys remain on the contract. She requested that the survey not be conducted until the PSC makes its final determination and the full details are known. Council Member Holton remarked that the Council has already talked about conducting surveys on other fiscal issues, like a potential property tax increase.

Mayor Bennion stated that the City is operating on a very tight budget. City community rooms are currently not being rented out due to those budget constraints, and a study is required to increase those fees. She recommended that a community meeting be held at Whitmore Library. Council Member Holton stated that the community needs to be engaged in other issues like the overall budget and General Plan, and he does not believe the topic rises to that level. Council Member Birrell stated that the Council needs to hear from residents.

3.2 General Plan Presentation and Discussion with City Council and Planning Commission. Community and Economic Development Director Jim Spung.

Community and Economic Development Director, Jim Spung, reported that there had been a lot of progress since the last General Plan update meeting in December 2025. It can be challenging to think abstractly about the City 20 years in the future, but it is important to create that trajectory. He asked the Council for their thoughts on the most recent materials.

Council Member Hyland stated that there had been some email discussion on the economic goals and asked Mr. Spung about next steps after the goals and objectives are provided to Landmark Design. Mr. Spung reported that Lead Consultant, Sam Taylor, was present via Zoom. The path forward is uncertain because the scope of changes has not been determined. Once the goals and objectives are solidified, the next step will be public engagement on the goals, objectives, and new document outline. After a general consensus is reached, the consultant will draft the document with supporting narratives and data.

Online public engagement has been found to be very effective. Open houses can be tricky due to scheduling conflicts, and providing an opportunity for residents to comment online over one to two months typically generates more feedback than in-person meetings. Mr. Spung recommended both a webpage with meaningful information that people can respond to and an in-person open house in addition to engaging the public via the City newsletter and social media. Staff will also need to work with Landmark Design to adjust the contract. In response to a question raised by Mayor Bennion, he clarified that the contract does not have a firm end date, but the allocated funding has been expended.

Council Member Hyland asked for more information on the process. After they are supplied with the city's goals and objectives, Landmark Design will then use its technical expertise to create strategies to support them. Mr. Spung stated that the City Council could determine the most effective process. It is important to start with high-level goals that the subcommittees have been working on. Next is a document outline, followed by public engagement to ensure that it is on the right track.

Mayor Bennion stated that she was very pleased with the subcommittees' work. She served for five years on the House Political Subdivisions Committee, which focuses on city issues like housing, water, land use, and transportation. The current draft is much updated and talks about infill, reducing sprawl, and walkability. The Utah Legislature spends \$45 million yearly on a statewide active transportation network, and it is important for City residents to be able to access it.

Planning Commission Chair, Sean Steinman, inquired about specific deliverables. Mr. Spung stated that the subcommittees did great work and he does not believe much more modification is needed, but the City Council needed to discuss whether the big ideas and overall vision have been captured. If everyone agreed, the current draft could be sent to the consultant. The language is not binding; it is intended to provide direction on each element of the General Plan. Some work toward key actions and strategies was already completed. In response to a follow-up question from Chair Steinman, Mr. Spung stated that there was not yet a clear enough scope to renegotiate the contract, but he hoped that it would be determined at the meeting.

In response to a question raised by Council Member Birrell, Mr. Spung reported that Wasatch Front Regional Council ("WFRC") Community Development Planner, Christy Dahlberg, was present via Zoom. Council Member Birrell stated that the WFRC provided \$170,000 for the General Plan update with a City match of \$20,000. If those funds had been expended and the process had only started, another grant may be needed. She also asked for clarity on how the City's adopted Master Plans, especially the Fort Union Boulevard Master Plan, fit with the new General Plan.

Mr. Spung reported that a lot of work had been put into drafting the plan since the project started in 2019, but it had only been resurrected within the last 12 months. The baseline goals and vision are being reevaluated because it is a different Council than in 2019. He believes most of the work that has been completed is still relevant and can be carried forward, and Staff is willing to take on the brunt of the work to limit additional costs to the City. Council Member Hyland stated that the other studies should be referenced in the General Plan. For example, Draper includes other studies as appendices to their plan.

Council Member Birrell stated that the plan had not been worked on over the last 12 months as work began in August 2025. A core draft came out in 2021 that outlined the public engagement process

and recommended joint City Council/Planning Commission Meetings, but she does not believe that plan was followed. Council Member Hyland pointed out that the series of public engagement meetings was mentioned in the Staff Report Memo. Although it is relevant to know the history, she believed the discussion should be about how to move forward. The goal of the currently adopted General Plan is to keep the City the way it is, and an update is sorely overdue. Council Member Birrell clarified that she agrees the process needs to move forward, but the City is well behind schedule, and she does not believe the \$170,000 investment was ever discussed. The Council majority at that time decided to look at form-based code prior to moving forward, and the current Council needs to be clear on its goals so tax dollars are used efficiently, and they do not allow any further confusion or waste of the very expensive materials that had already been developed for the City.

In response to a question raised by Chair Steinman, Ms. Dahlberg reported that approximately \$15,000 is still available, not including some invoices that were put on hold when the project was paused. Chair Steinman stated that the first draft document was completed by the consultant and then refined by the subcommittees. He asked if a final draft could be created with the remaining funds. Mr. Spung stated that a clear direction and plan should be determined first.

Chair Steinman recommended that each chapter be reviewed to determine if any information is missing or requires modification. He suggested that they begin with the economic development chapter as the Utah Olympics will provide many opportunities for the City. Council Member Hyland agreed and indicated that she had concerns about the chapter. Mr. Spung recommended that the document be viewed with the goal of being comfortable with presenting the information to the public.

Mr. Spung agreed with Chair Steinman that it is important to address Olympic readiness. A clear economic identity is also vital. Chair Steinman stated that economic identity has a lot to do with the transportation component. Cottonwood Heights can either be a billboard that people drive by or a funnel where people actually stop. Multimodal access is necessary to filter and complement recreation.

Council Member Birrell stated that leading into the 2002 Winter Olympics, the owner of Snowbird was excited about potential revenue related to the Olympics. However, Little Cottonwood Canyon did not host any Olympic venues then, and it will not host them in 2034. Snowboarding and freestyle events will be held at Solitude, and Brighton will not host anything. She believes everyone needs to be realistic about the economic opportunities. What they found at Snowbird was that no one wanted to stay in the area because they wanted to be proximal to the Olympics.

Council Member Hyland agreed but indicated that the General Plan can provide economic opportunities like a LivAway hotel instead of the rumored apartments at the Gravel Pit. They are similar to short-term rentals but less invasive to residents. The General Plan could signal that desire. People could stay in Cottonwood Heights instead of elsewhere in the Canyon and still be in Park City within 20 minutes.

Chair Steinman stated that the Town Center and Gravel Pit will be major economic components that also affect transportation and land use, and they needed to refine what transportation will look like to ensure that Cottonwood Heights is not just a pass-through city. The plan should not be solely based on the Olympics, but he believes the Olympics will complement it. People should be able to park at

the Town Center, stay at Canyon Centre, use different resources in the City, and have access to transportation to recreation areas. That will involve collaboration with both the Utah Department of Transportation ("UDOT") and Utah Transit Authority ("UTA"). There could be a micro-bus system throughout the City that stops at main hubs for people to take other transportation up the canyons. They need to consider both identity and whether they want traffic to pass through or funnel into the City. It is currently not necessarily appealing to stop in Cottonwood Heights on the way to or from recreation, whereas Millcreek and Holladay have created very welcoming town centers.

Chair Steinman asked if the Olympics should be a focus, perhaps with watch parties at the Town Center or by encouraging resources like hotels and transportation. He believes that people who come for the Olympics will also want to ski, and those people will need alternate venues to ski in. Council Member Birrell stated that in 2002, they found that visitors did not ski. Mayor Bennion remarked that it was a different time. The Ikon Pass has increased usage, and there has also been a lot of growth in the state.

Council Member Hyland stated that the question is really whether Olympic development should be specifically referenced in the General Plan. Council Member Holton remarked that the development should impact the City for the Olympics and beyond. Chair Steinman stated that a lot of Olympic funding is available that can complement other redevelopment efforts in the City. The General Plan should define the City's identity and how it captures residents, tourism, and guests.

Council Member Birrell stated that the Fort Union Boulevard Master Plan is important because it points out that if you do not slow traffic down, those people will not patronize local businesses. The City must choose whether it wants that to be an area where people want to linger or simply a throughput. That is acknowledged in the Fort Union Boulevard Master Plan, but had not been acknowledged over the last four years. Chair Steinman stated that the Town Center and Canyon Centre areas have significant economic development potential. Council Member Birrell stated that she and Mayor Bennion recently met with constituents who live near Canyon Centre, who indicated that they feel very unsafe getting out of their cars to patronize local businesses because the roadways are designed for regional commuter traffic.

Commissioner Mills remarked that everyone is unified on the need for multimodal transportation and the economic impact of the Town Center. He believes the only reason the Olympics should be mentioned in the General Plan is to provide the opportunity to apply for funding. Given the City's current fiscal situation, it will be difficult to realize aspirational goals for the Town Center. Staff needs the space to find available funding through the State and Federal governments, the Olympic committee, etc. Existing Olympic venues in Utah have continued to thrive and become anchors for the areas they are located in. He agrees with Council Member Birrell that the current Master Plans need to be more clearly referenced in the General Plan.

Council Member Holton clarified that the funding is only available for designated Olympic venues, and the City would need a specific strategy to qualify for those monies. A strong case needs to be made for why Cottonwood Heights should be a venue and other communities should not. Mr. Spung stated that the Olympics may magnify existing concerns regarding recreation and tourism and could change how projects are prioritized over the next eight years, but he does not believe it will have a substantial impact on what is done.

Commissioner Shelton stated that the question is whether visitors and traffic are an asset to be encouraged or a liability to be avoided. Some would argue that avoiding those issues will help preserve the existing way of life. It is a difficult policy question, but it is the question the economic development chapter needs to answer.

Mr. Spung stated that traffic can be both an asset and a detriment. He saw that firsthand in Taylorsville, where a segment of Redwood Road between 6200 South and Interstate 215 is the most heavily trafficked surface street in Utah. UDOT condemned businesses to widen it to 12 lanes and did not provide access to adjacent properties, so it is a dead spot for economic development. In other areas of that city, traffic is a benefit because that metric businesses consider when deciding on locations. The City can shape how people move through it, which has an impact on economic development. That is discussed in the transportation chapter.

Council Member Holton asked how the Transportation Committee answered Commissioner Shelton’s question. Council Member Hyland stated that the committee had only met once. They planned to meet again after the joint City Council/Planning Commission meeting and incorporate topics discussed there into the document. She does not believe it is an “either/or” answer. Center Street in Provo has a speed limit of 15 miles per hour, so people do not drive on it unless they are patronizing a city business. However, they also have alternate routes around that area. That is a struggle for an infill city like Cottonwood Heights, but she agrees that traffic should be slowed around the Town Center. The City has an investment in ensuring that people leave the freeway, enter the Town Center, and spend money to support Cottonwood Heights. She suggested that the Economic Development chapter be reviewed in detail.

Economic Development

Goal 1: Enhance Local Access to Goods, Services, and Experiences to Capture Sales Tax Revenue.

Ensure Cottonwood Heights provides a diverse range of essential goods, services, and recreational experiences that meet the needs of residents and visitors, while capturing sales tax dollars and minimizing leakage to neighboring jurisdictions. This includes prioritizing experiential and entertainment-based retail, local dining, and outdoor recreational amenities that attract both locals and tourists, strengthening the local economy.

Mr. Spung stated that the above goal speaks to the City’s brand and what it can do better. Cottonwood Heights could be viewed as the destination city where people stop on their way in or out of the canyon. A lot of sales tax dollars are leaking out to other places simply because the City does not offer the same amenities.

Council Member Hyland remarked that lodging is missing from the goal. Lodging should be encouraged. Her example of the LivAway hotel would reduce the black-market demand for short-term rentals while also signaling that the City wants lodging. Many of those hotels are currently outside City limits. In response to a question, she clarified that LivAway hotels are nightly stay hotels with full kitchens. They are nicer than other extended stay hotels. She asked that the last sentence be reworded to read, “This includes prioritizing experiential and entertainment-based retail, local

dining, *lodging*, and outdoor recreational amenities that attract both locals and tourists, strengthening the local economy.”

Mayor Bennion stated that developers will look at demand. Lodging was in the plan for the north part of the Gravel Pit, but it was removed because they do not believe the market can support another hotel right now.

Commissioner Shelton recommended that the goal be reworded to state “Enhance Access to Local Goods”.

Goal 2: Prioritize Economic Development in Strategic Commercial Areas.

Strengthening key commercial districts by using zoning, land use policy, and design standards to guide reinvestment, attract desired businesses, and enhance community character.

Commissioner Mills asked if the wording was strong enough. Mr. Spung stated that the chapter narrative supports and clarifies the goal. A third joint meeting will be needed to review the future Land Use Map, and this goal will be a key driver. Commissioner Mills stated that the three strategic areas are the top, middle, and bottom of Fort Union Boulevard. The bottom will have more big box type development, the Town Center will have a gathering spot with a local feel, and the top will be a large economic engine to help improve the City’s fiscal situation.

Chair Steinman stated that the web that goes up to Smith’s Grocery and down through Bengal Boulevard into Fort Union Boulevard redefines part of the City. It should be defined by large, medium, and small-scale development. That can apply to transportation components as well. Council Member Hyland stated that Steamboat Springs has a great example of micro-transit.

Mr. Spung stated that the future Land Use Map functions as a painting of what the City will look like. The Gravel Pit can be identified as a regional center and the document can define what that means. When the City’s zoning policies are updated, Staff can reverse-engineer the goal to produce that result.

Goal 3: Support Redevelopment of Strategic Properties to Serve Both Residents and Visitors.

Use land-use policies, zoning tools, and regulatory guidance to encourage the redevelopment of underutilized areas—such as the Gravel Pit—in ways that support community needs, enhance the visitor experience, and strengthen long-term economic vitality.

Mayor Bennion recommended the goal be reworded to read “enhance the visitor *and resident* experience.” Commissioner Mills agreed and noted that this often comes up in Planning Commission discussions. Developers can be asked to do exactly what the City wants. That can sometimes temporarily mean there is a sidewalk to nowhere, but it is a start. There was pushback from the developer of the north Gravel Pit project because the Commission asked where people would walk and bike, what the transition from the main road would look like, etc. It is important to make it clear that the City wants to partner with developers; it wants them to make money, but the developer needs to ensure that it works for current residents as well as their target market.

Council Member Hyland remarked that the things that are attractive to residents of Cottonwood Heights are also attractive to visitors. Anything that is redeveloped in a way to meet both purposes is a win. She reported that Brian Allen is still trying to secure funding for a visitor center at the base of the canyon.

Goal 4: Strengthen the City’s Role as a Premier Office, Retail, and Residential Community.

Use land-use regulations, zoning tools, and development standards to support high-quality office environments, vibrant retail areas, and a diverse range of housing options that meet the evolving needs of residents and the regional workforce.

Mr. Spung stated that the subcommittee discussed the need to highlight office space as a primary land use moving forward. The Cottonwood Corporate Center is a job center, and it is important for the City to have a workforce that spends money here. It is also important to have space available for corporations that want to relocate to Cottonwood Heights.

Mayor Bennion stated that the Legislature has been focused on redeveloping office areas for residential use. She can see how the area could be refined to support the fourth Key Action, “Refine housing regulations to strategically allow a range of high-quality, attainable, and workforce-oriented housing types while maintaining compatibility with existing neighborhoods,” and hopes that the Council will be open to that if the need arises. Mr. Spung remarked that there has also been talk about infill in that type of setting. Many office buildings have between five and eight parking stalls per 1,000 square feet of building, which results in a lot of empty parking lots. Infilling them with housing is an option to retain the land use while providing residential units. People who live there are away during work hours and vice versa, or they can live and work in the same location.

Council Member Birrell asked if Planning Staff was reviewing suggested Code changes to allow property owners around the Cottonwood Corporate Center to redevelop with workforce housing. Mr. Spung stated that they can do so at the Council’s direction once the plan is adopted.

Chair Steinman stated that a Development Agreement was recently rewritten to transition an office structure in Canyon Centre to condominiums. Council Member Birrell clarified that they are luxury condominiums, not workforce housing. Chair Steinman remarked that multiple housing types are necessary, and the average home cost in Cottonwood Heights is \$800,000. They need to consider what can be done to create more attainable housing, but attainable is not necessarily affordable.

Council Member Hyland remarked that she likes what the bullet point signals. A developer recently did a presentation to consider a condominium complex near Market Street Grill, and that is an example of an area where this type of development can be encouraged. Commissioner Shelton stated that the economic reality is there will not be workforce housing in that area.

Commissioner Mills stated that the City’s parking structures need multiple uses. There is a strong need for parking for skiers, yet Cottonwood Corporate Center’s parking is always empty. It is hard to dictate that for private property owners, the expectation can be set in the General Plan. He believes hard lessons were learned from the Canyon Racquet Club property.

Goal 5: Supporting a Resilient, Diverse, and Future-Ready Local Economy (sustainability)

The City aims to foster a resilient and diverse local economy through targeted redevelopment, business support, and efficient use of existing infrastructure. Innovation, workforce development, energy efficiency, and quality-of-life investments will attract and retain businesses, create jobs, and support long-term economic stability.

Mr. Spung reported that the group had discussed removing the standalone Sustainability chapter and embedding those goals elsewhere in the document. Mr. Howa relocated the elements of that chapter throughout the General Plan, and this goal was mostly related to economic development.

In response to a question from Council Member Hyland, Mr. Spung stated that the ways in which the General Plan would inform Olympic planning are also related to long-term planning. Short-term rentals will be in demand during that time, so the County may consider a temporary ordinance to allow them throughout the City. Council Member Holton stated that many things can qualify a City as a venue, not just hosting a sport or awards ceremony. If the City wanted to provide housing for a certain country's athletes, for example, that would qualify as a venue.

Chair Steinman stated that there is an opportunity here. The 2034 Utah Olympics will be very different from the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics. The City's current infrastructure allows you to be up Big Cottonwood Canyon in 15 to 20 minutes, and Park City in 20 minutes. There will be a lot of activity at Snowbasin Resort, which you can reach in 40 to 60 minutes. He believes the lodging component is a perfect opportunity because people want to lodge in an area where they can get groceries or have drinks. The Economic Development component of the General Plan should support that goal. The City should position itself for recreation, which complements the Olympics.

Council Member Holton stated that in a meeting with Salt Lake City, they indicated that the six-month open house for the Salt Lake Temple will be a greater economic engine than the Olympics because it will generate significantly more visitors. Council Member Birrell agreed that there were other, better opportunities.

Mayor Bennion stated that there is nothing wrong with people getting off the freeway, visiting a Cottonwood Heights hub, and then getting back on the freeway to their destination. The answer to Commissioner Shelton's question is not black and white.

Transportation

Council Member Hyland stated that she loaded the adopted plans into ChatGPT and asked it to generate goals and objectives for the City. The results were then used as a starting point for discussions at the two Transportation Subcommittee meetings. As Commissioner Shelton pointed out in the last joint meeting, transportation should help both your residents and your workforce.

At Council Member Birrell's suggestion, the subcommittee had very good discussions about Goal 1, Objective 2, "Adopt Safe Systems Approach ("SSA") prioritizing projects and policy that measurably improve safety." By stating this objective, the City confirms what it already agreed to by adopting the WFRC's Comprehensive Safety Action Plan ("CSAP"). The subcommittee agreed that strategies of this chapter should take regional resources like the CSAP and the Utah Trails Network into account.

Council Member Birrell stated that the City’s location and uniqueness must be recognized. Commuters drive through Cottonwood Heights from Draper and Sandy, as do recreationists heading to the canyons. The State, UDOT, and WFRC think on a regional scale, not a municipal one, and Cottonwood Heights needs to ensure that it has a strong presence with those entities and the Central Wasatch Commission. Civil engineering students from Utah State University came to the City to advocate for an Intelligent Transportation System (“ITS”), and it is important to use the SSA approach in redesigning residential roadways to make them undesirable cut-through options. Council Member Hyland stated that every road in the City cannot be redone, but that can certainly be considered for future development.

Mayor Bennion remarked that she approves of how the chapter focuses on alternative transportation. She did not know until recently that Utah is third in the nation for car use, so the focus on other modes of transportation is a major change. Multiple studies show that active transportation use improves physical and mental health. She thanked the Transportation Subcommittee for that focus, which really reflects the community.

Council Member Holton stated that the Recreation Subcommittee focused on verbiage like “strive to” rather than “shall”, but that language was not consistent with the Transportation chapter which uses more action-oriented words like “prioritize”, “adopt”, and “reduce”. He recommended that the language be standardized.

Chair Steinman asked how much time the Transportation Subcommittee spent reviewing the adopted 2023 Transportation Master Plan. Mayor Bennion reported that verbiage was pulled from that plan.

Council Member Hyland remarked that a reference to canyon-related travel was added to the Mission Statement because it must be acknowledged that people travel through Cottonwood Heights to reach recreation. It was also important to minimize neighborhood cut-throughs. She does not want to create a scenario where it is so hard to get through the City that people cut through neighborhoods to get around what they cannot get through. If the consultants recommend that the verbiage be changed, she will support that. Staff needs wiggle room because things will be very different in 20 years, and decisions will be naturally constrained by available monies. Mayor Bennion stated that the language needs to be strong to help shift thinking about car use.

Mr. Spung stated that the General Plan establishes the City’s aspirations, but it also includes implementation steps with short-term and long-term priorities. As part of defining the implementation steps, they can consider which plan goals are most important to begin working on immediately. Timing and fiscal impacts must be considered because otherwise the plan is not actionable.

Chair Steinman remarked that the Transportation Master Plan includes both cost and date estimates, and projects are listed by improvement type and phase through 2050. He asked if it would be adopted into the General Plan. Mr. Spung stated that the General Plan is a broader document, whereas the Transportation Master Plan is very specific and includes detailed cost estimates. The General Plan will list the general goals and strategies, but can also adopt that plan as a reference or appendix. Council Member Hyland stated that Draper’s general plan actually includes their transportation plan

as appendix, which draws greater attention to it. It was agreed that the Cottonwood Heights General Plan should do the same.

Land Use

Commissioner Mills reported that the Land Use Subcommittee spent a lot of time discussing verbiage.

Goal 1: Targeted, High-Quality Development and Redevelopment.

The City will work toward focusing growth and reinvestment in strategic areas to support community character, mixed-use development, and overall development quality. Zoning updates and targeted incentives may be considered to help guide redevelopment and advance economic and placemaking objectives.

Council Member Hyland stated that Cottonwood Heights is the oldest average-age city in the county. Baby boomers are between the ages of 61 and 81, with an average age of 71. In 20 years, the average age will be 91. She asked if the subcommittee had discussed how the City will turn over and what that will look like. The question arose because there is a house in her district that has become a drug house; the parents passed away without leaving a will, and the estate is in probate. Commissioner Mills stated that the subcommittee did not discuss it, but the issue has come up for the Planning Commission. Both apartment complexes on Fort Union Boulevard involve one or more properties in that category, and there are a number of homes above 2300 East that are in a similar state. That is an ongoing challenge in the City.

Mr. Spung reported that it is a nationwide trend that may be exacerbated by the older population in Cottonwood Heights. Utah has the youngest population in the country, but Cottonwood Heights' population is one of the oldest in Utah. People do not want to abandon their community, so a strategy is to build housing within existing neighborhoods that can accommodate different phases of life. That includes smaller single-family homes, townhomes, apartments, and condominiums so the population can age in place. It is a very controversial concept in some areas. Cottonwood Heights primarily has the same type of single-family housing. An elderly couple may be living in a 6,00-square-foot house that is better suited to a young family, but they do not want to sell because there is nowhere else to go in the City. The market is another factor; a lot of people do not want to move because interest rates are so high.

Council Member Hyland remarked that the *Wall Street Journal* recently reported that \$4.6 trillion of real estate will be handed down to the next generation within the next 10 years, which will provide younger families with an opportunity they did not have before. She believes it needs to be on their radar because of the area and expected turnover.

Mayor Bennion asked if the General Plan addresses Internal Accessory Dwelling Units (“I-ADU”), which can be a great use of a large home. Commissioner Mills stated that the City’s ADU ordinance is very granular, but it might be good to reference the ordinance in the General Plan. Commissioner Shelton stated that there is more than one tool in the toolbox, and he does not believe that problem can be solved with the General Plan.

Council Member Birrell stated that she believes it is important to acknowledge aging in place and accommodating different phases of life in the Land Use chapter. As written, the goals were very commercially driven, and gentrification and aging in place were not acknowledged. It was agreed that the language should be added.

Mayor Bennion reported that she has met with a builder who is constructing homes with full ADUs. They are built with sound protection, so even if both homes have a dog, the other residents do not hear it. She believes it would be wonderful to identify infill areas for those types of developments. Mr. Spung stated that a lot of people do not think about the fact that an ADU can make a home attainable. Being able to offset the mortgage by renting out the ADU can open up home ownership to people who could not otherwise afford it, or for older family members to age in place. Council Member Newell stated that he spoke with someone who plans to have their caretaker live in their ADU.

Goal 2: Streamlined, Predictable, and Fair Development Processes.

Cottonwood Heights aims to modernize its development review procedures to promote clarity, fairness, and efficiency for applicants and residents.

Commissioner Mills stated that the Planning Department has indicated the need for improving the development review process, and he believes the City Council will be pleased with the outcome.

Goal 3: Strengthen Neighborhood Character and Land Use Compatibility.

New development will enhance neighborhood character through context-sensitive design, appropriate transitions, and pedestrian-friendly site layouts. This approach will ensure infill and redevelopment contribute positively to the City's unique sense of place.

This goal anticipates developments like the Town Center and recognizes that all development affects its surroundings.

Goal 4: Expand Connectivity and Access to Community Amenities.

The City will support and pursue improvements to multimodal connections between homes, businesses, and recreation areas to strengthen mobility and access. Investments in trails, transit partnerships, and public amenities will create a more integrated and accessible community.

Commissioner Mills stated that if schools or church properties were to be surplus, a strategy will be in place for how to approach those issues and consider how any development fits with surrounding areas.

Goal 5: Support a Resilient, Diverse, and Vibrant Local Economy.

Cottonwood Heights aims to strengthen key commercial districts and support the creation of flexible, innovative spaces that contribute to business attraction and retention. Economic development strategies may be used to support residents, visitors, employees, and long-term fiscal sustainability.

This goal seeks to add more flexibility for development where appropriate.

Goal 6: 6.

Embedding Sustainability into Growth and Development Patterns [sustainability].

The City intends to guide its pursuit of sustainability by promoting compact, walkable, and well-connected development patterns that minimize environmental impacts and reduce reliance on automobiles. The City's approach aims to balance redevelopment and housing diversity with the protection of natural resources and the preservation of Cottonwood Heights' distinctive community character.

The above goal was moved from the Sustainability chapter.

Commissioner Mills indicated that Staff and the consultants should be able to identify and correct any conflicts.

Mayor Bennion remarked that fire-wise development should be mentioned in the document. January 2026 has been the driest January on record. Mr. Spung reported that the City adopted its Wildland Urban Interface Code and updated the map in 2025.

Recreation

Mr. Spung reported that there had been only minor verbiage changes to this chapter from its last iteration.

Council Member Hyland stated that the chapter needs to align with the adopted Utah Trail Network, which has multiple trails through Cottonwood Heights that connect to the Bonneville Shoreline Trail. Chair Steinman remarked that the Utah Trail Network Plan should be included in the appendices with the other adopted plans. Commissioner Mills stated that he hoped it was a queue to Staff to go after grant opportunities when they arise.

Mr. Spung indicated that Goal 4 was edited to make the distinction between private and public land and speak to the City's authority to expand the public trail network.

Goal 4: Preserve Open Spaces.

The City will continue to prioritize the protection and stewardship of natural open spaces on public lands, while supporting conservation efforts on private property, such as the use of conservation or access easement where appropriate, to preserve ecological health, safeguard public access, and maintain its mountain-suburban character, all while maintaining private property rights.

Goal 5 was moved from the Sustainability chapter.

Available recreation was discussed. Chair Steinman asked if the City was pursuing any funding to enhance its parks or trails. Mr. Spung stated that Mountview Park is scheduled for a new Master Plan as some of its infrastructure is at or reaching end of life. Council Member Hyland remarked that many parks are actually in the Cottonwood Heights Parks and Recreation Center Service Area and are not actually City parks. Mr. Spung clarified that specific details are discussed in the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

Council Member Birrell stated that Cottonwood Heights is in a unique situation with the Recreation Center. Many residents within their service area have complained about the amount of property taxes they pay. She asked if there should be an audit to determine if it is sustainable, and if that goal should be included in the General Plan. Mr. Spung stated that a broad statement could be included indicating that the City may explore taking on all recreation, but he did not know if the Council would support funding that effort. Council Member Birrell stated that Salt Lake County may have an interest in partnering with the City.

Mr. Spung reported that he will work with Mr. Taylor to create a public engagement plan and update the contract.

3.3 Excuse Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission was excused.

3.4 City Council Board Committee Assignments Discussion. Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion.

Mayor Bennion reviewed the board and committee assignments. Council Member Holton declined to serve on the South Salt Lake Valley Mosquito Abatement District Board, as he believes Council Member Birrell had already been sworn in. Council Member Birrell stated that she was appointed to that board against her will, and she did not believe a Council member could decline an assignment. In response to a question from Council Member Holton, City Attorney, Shane Topham, clarified that the Mayor makes assignments. Council Member Holton stated that they are standing meetings and members are sworn in to their positions, and he will not serve the City well in that position because he does not believe it is fair. Mayor Bennion indicated that Council Member Holton has fewer appointments than his Council colleagues. As it is a committee that affects citizens' health and welfare, she will attend one meeting in his place.

3.5 Discussion of UDOT's Concurrence Request Concerning Temporary Closure of the Big Cottonwood Canyon Trail Underpass During Construction of UDOT's Planned Mobility Hub. Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion.

Mayor Bennion stated that construction will affect the Big Cottonwood Canyon Trail. They do not know how long it will be closed, but UDOT has promised to restore it to its original condition or better.

Council Member Birrell stated that she attended the meeting where the intermodal hub project was discussed. UDOT is being courteous to the City, but they have no choice but to sign off on it.

4.0 REVIEW OF CALENDAR AND UPCOMING EVENTS.

4.1 Lunar New Year Celebration – Saturday, February 7 from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at City Hall.

4.2 Cozy Paint Night –Friday, February 20 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at City Hall.

4.3 The Jazz Ambassadors of the US Army Field Band – Thursday, March 19 from 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM at Butler Middle School. (Tickets required, free event, See City website for additional information).

Mayor Bennion reported that Youth Council Day on the Hill will be Wednesday, January 21.

5.0 POSSIBLE CLOSED MEETING TO DISCUSS LITIGATION, PURCHASE OR LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY, THE CHARACTER AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL, OR ANY OTHER PERMITTED PURPOSE FOR CLOSED MEETINGS UNDER UTAH CODE ANN. 52-4-205 OR OTHER APPLICABLE LAW.

There was no Closed Meeting.

6.0 ADJOURN CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION.

MOTION: Council Member Birrell moved to ADJOURN the City Council Work Session. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hyland. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Council.

The Work Session adjourned at 6:32 PM.

MINUTES OF THE COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS CITY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWAL AGENCY BUSINESS MEETING HELD TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026, AT 6:45 PM IN THE CITY COUNCIL WORK ROOM LOCATED AT 2277 EAST BENGAL BOULEVARD, COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS, UTAH

Present: Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion, Council Member Matt Holton, Council Member Ellen Birrell, Council Member Suzanne Hyland, Council Member Shawn Newell

Staff Present: City Manager, Jared Gerber; City Attorney, Shane Topham; Finance Director, Scott Jorges; Police Chief, Robby Russo; Records, Culture, and Human Resources Director, Barbara Higgins; City Recorder, Tiffany Janzen; Community and Economic Development Director, Jim Spung; Planner III, Sheldon Howa; IT Manager, Matt Ervin; Public Works Director and City Engineer, Matt Shipp

1.0 WELCOME – CEO Jared Gerber.

CEO, Jared Gerber called the CDRA meeting to order at 6:48 p.m.

2.0 ACTION ITEMS

2.1 Consideration of Resolution 2026-01 Electing Officers and Appointing Staff. (By this Resolution the Board will elect officers and appoint staff for the CDRA due to recent changes in the City's elected officers).

MOTION: Board Member Newell moved to APPROVE Resolution 2026-01 Electing Officers and Appointing Staff. The motion was seconded by Board Member Holton. Vote on Motion: Board Member Newell-Yes; Board Member Holton-Yes; Board Member Bennion-Yes; Board Member Hyland-Yes; Board Member Birrell-No. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

3.0 POSSIBLE CLOSED MEETING TO DISCUSS LITIGATION, PURCHASE OR LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY, THE CHARACTER AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH OF AN INDIVIDUAL, OR ANY OTHER PERMITTED PURPOSE FOR CLOSED MEETINGS UNDER UTAH CODE ANN. 52-4-205 OR OTHER APPLICABLE LAW.

There was no Closed Meeting.

4.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of this meeting will be approved through the following process: The Agency's secretary promptly will circulate a draft copy of the minutes to the Board members, who then will have three business days to provide any proposed corrections to the secretary. The secretary will then circulate a revised draft of the minutes to the Board members, and the same review process will continue until such time as no corrections to the draft minutes are received within the three business days review period, whereupon that draft of the minutes will be deemed approved and will become the final minutes of the meeting.

5.0 ADJOURN

MOTION: Board Member Hyland moved to ADJOURN the CDRA Meeting. The motion was seconded by Board Member Birrell. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Board.

The CDRA Meeting adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

**MINUTES OF THE COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS CITY COUNCIL BUSINESS MEETING
HELD TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026, AT 7:00 PM IN THE COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT 2277 EAST BENGAL BOULEVARD,
COTTONWOOD HEIGHTS, UTAH**

Present: Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion, Council Member Matt Holton, Council Member Ellen Birrell, Council Member Suzanne Hyland, Council Member Shawn Newell

Staff Present: City Manager, Jared Gerber; City Attorney, Shane Topham; Finance Director, Scott Jorges; Police Chief, Robby Russo; Records, Culture, and Human Resources Director, Barbara Higgins; City Recorder, Tiffany Janzen; Community and Economic Development Director, Jim Spung; IT Manager, Matt Ervin; Public Works Director and City Engineer, Matt Shipp; Unified Fire Authority, Riley Pilgrim

1.0 WELCOME

Mayor Gay Lynn Bennion called the City Council Business Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2.0 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Newell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3.0 CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mayor Bennion opened the Citizen Comment period and reported that several online comments had also been received.

Casey France stated that she is 12 years old, and she was present to speak about the Utah Renewable Communities program. Utah is known for its snow; it is even on the license plates. What is Utah without snow? She wants to stay in Utah because she is having a great experience with the amount of wildlife and outdoor options, but she has realized that those options are becoming less and less. An example is the trail across the street from her house, which is now private property so she can no longer hike there. One of her favorite outdoor activities is snowboarding. If the snow melts, she will lose that option. Her generation will have to fix the mistakes that have been caused and try to get the snow back. She would feel much better if she knew her community was trying to make the world a better place. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.”

Chester France stated that he lives on Top of the World Drive. He asked the Council to continue supporting the Utah Renewable Communities program. It is nice to have the option to not litter or continue adding CO2 to the atmosphere. A total of 77 statements were collected from residents who used the trailhead at Top of the World Drive. The Council approved hiring an attorney, and he wants

them to keep trying. The property owner has been enforcing no trespassing, and the trail is greatly missed.

Council Member Birrell stated that she appreciated the comments. She and Mayor Bennion are taking the matter very seriously.

John Adams stated that he is a resident of Cottonwood Heights. He understands that the General Plan is being updated, and he hopes that the process is as transparent as possible. He would love to see the City continue to be a part of the Utah Renewable Communities program. All the ski resorts belong to the National Ski Area Association, which cites climate change as the biggest threat to its business model. It is a predicament because as they try to grow their businesses, they produce more energy and greenhouse gases. A resort in Aspen retrofitted its snowmobiles to electric and moved to all LED lightbulbs but determined that over 50% of their emissions were from electricity that was not generated onsite. They worked for over 10 years to convince their utility provider to switch to clean energy, and that one change was significant. Cottonwood Heights has the means to be a leader in clean energy, and it should take the opportunity to do so.

Maggie Mills provided updates on upcoming Whitmore Library activities. The first Lego Club meeting was a big success, with over 30 children in attendance. A lot of the parents indicated that they learned of the event through the City newsletter. Steam Club was scheduled for Wednesday, January 21 at 4:00 p.m. Storytime is every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday at 10:15 a.m. Saturday Morning Stories is on January 24 at 10:15 a.m., and Pajama Story Time is Monday, January 26 at 7:00 p.m. The Utah Puppet Theater will perform on Wednesday, January 28 at 11:00 a.m. The calendar of events is available on the library website and Cottonwood Heights “Between the Canyons” newsletter.

Daniel Kovak stated that he attended the Work Session. He finds those meetings illustrative as they provide an understanding of what the City Council members actually value and provide insight into who they are. He values clean air and the planet, and he believes it is a reasonable idea to ask citizens what they care about. He loves the FlashVote surveys. He learned that the surveys are limited, and he does not know why. The City has spent money on things he cannot understand, like international trips instead of finding out the will of the people. He got the impression that a majority of Council members were not in favor of the proposal and did not even want to know what the people who voted them in care about. That is happening in a lot of places, and he does not like it. He thinks the City should spend more money on FlashVote surveys and publish the results so everybody knows what the people care about. The upcoming Olympics will be very different from 2002, and he does not know if there will be snow or a breathable area. If they care about families, they should prove it, because they are already proving that they care about money.

Ethan Millard stated that he lives on Stone Hill Lane and has been a resident of Cottonwood Heights for nine years. Regarding the Utah Renewable Communities program, Cottonwood Heights is a community that believes in sustainability and protecting the environment. He knows that those things have fallen out of favor. However, the world is a wheel, and it will come around again to people seeing the value in long-term responsible thinking. He believes that it should continue to be a priority for the City. He has enjoyed being able to participate in the City’s well-organized public input opportunities on planning. Cottonwood Heights has changed a lot since he has lived here, and it will

change a lot more in part because everyone is interested in their community. The City would do well to make public input a priority at the beginning of and all the way through the process. That will slow things down but produce the best possible outcome. There is a lot of outside interest in Cottonwood Heights, and those interests do not want to hear from the public. They will always push for things to move faster and decisions to be pulled away from the community. He works in the financial industry, and he has learned that it is a mistake to replace long-term thinking with the pursuit of short-term opportunities or short-term fears. The community will be here in 150 years, and the Council should not allow outside interests to separate its residents from those decisions.

Mikki Harris stated that residents are very invested in their City and ensuring responsible growth. She does not want to wake up one day to learn that these foundational decisions have been made for her. She is concerned that there is not enough public input on the General Plan. There was a lot of input on the Fort Union Boulevard Master Plan. She agrees with Mr. Kovac on FlashVote. She respectfully asked the Council to tap the brakes and allow citizens to be part of decisions that will affect them and their children.

Dru Tidwell stated that she has lived in Cottonwood Heights for 21 years. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The time is always right to do what is right." He believed moral action should not be delayed. Every moment is an opportunity to stand up for what is right and what makes a difference. She was present to advocate for Cottonwood Heights and her fellow residents to support the City's participation in the Utah Renewable Communities program. She believes it is a privilege to participate, and the benefits will multiply over time. Her understanding is that the cost per household is approximately \$4 per month. She realizes that everyone has seen increases in taxes, insurance, food, housing, and energy prices. However, the return should be weighed. The program will benefit the City mildly in the short term, but provide great benefits for those who follow. Citizens are responsible for doing their best to preserve the beauty that has been bestowed upon them. They observe it daily when they enjoy their view of the Wasatch Mountains and recreationally in the mountains, desert, and nearby parks. She views it as a balancing act in Utah. There is great access to geothermal, solar, and wind resources, and the energy infrastructure should be built to prioritize those resources. It has been assured that oil, coal, gas, and likely nuclear will be a part of the energy future. However, those with vision know that renewable energy needs their support. Our planet, children, grandchildren, and wildlife will thank us. She asked that the City Council join her in advocating for this crucial community participation. Eighteen communities in Utah support renewable energy, and a simple Google search will provide a depth of knowledge on the topic.

There were no further comments. The Citizen Comment period was closed.

Mayor Bennion stated that there was public engagement on the General Plan in 2021. The City Council has been working on the update since September 2025 and is now ready to re-engage with the public.

4.0 RECOGNITION

4.1 CHPD Promotion – CHPD Chief, Robby Russo.

Police Chief, Robby Russo introduced the newest members of the Cottonwood Heights Police Department and reported that two officers had been promoted to sergeant. Sergeant Jeff Gainey, Sergeant Josh Comber, Officer Rebecca Potter, Officer Tyler Davis, and Officer Charity Griffith were present. Officer Nicholas Swallow was unable to attend.

City Recorder, Tiffany Janzen swore the police officers in. Photographs were then taken with the City Council.

Mayor Bennion stated that a citizen contacted her to compliment the Cottonwood Heights Police Department. Two officers saw her shoveling snow after a storm and finished shoveling for her. The City is very grateful for its officers.

5.0 ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Consideration of Resolution 2026-07 Awarding a Retiring Police Officer His Badge and Approving His Purchase of a Police Firearm.

(Sgt. Dan Morzelewski is retiring from CHPD after 32 years of public service, including 17 with CHPD. As is customary and as authorized by city code, by this resolution the council will award Sgt. Morzelewski his badge and approve his purchase of his sidearm).

Mayor Bennion reported that the above item was discussed during the Work Session.

MOTION: Council Member Holton moved to APPROVE Resolution 2026-07 Awarding a Retiring Police Officer His Badge and Approving His Purchase of a Police Firearm. The motion was seconded by Council Member Newell. Vote on Motion: Council Member Birrell-Yes; Council Member Newell-Yes; Council Member Hyland-Yes; Council Member Holton-Yes; Mayor Bennion-Yes. The motion passed unanimously.

5.2 Consideration of Resolution 2026-08 Ratifying Committee Assignments.

(By this resolution the council will ratify the assignments made by the mayor for liaison coverage of various “outside” and “inside” committees and boards, as contemplated by the council’s internal policies and procedures).

Mayor Bennion reported that City Council members serve on various boards and committees outside of Cottonwood Heights. The item was discussed in detail during the Work Session.

Council Member Birrell thanked Mayor Bennion for bringing greater transparency to the process.

MOTION: Council Member Birrell moved to APPROVE Resolution 2026-08 Ratifying Committee Assignments. The motion was seconded by Council Member Hyland. Vote on Motion: Council

Member Newell-Yes; Council Member Hyland-Yes; Council Member Holton-Yes; Council Member Birrell-Yes; Mayor Bennion-Yes. The motion passed unanimously.

5.3 Consideration of Resolution 2026-09 Approving a Temporary Occupancy Concurrence Request by UDOT.

(UDOT has informed the city that the underpass from the Big Cottonwood Canyon Trail to UDOT's planned mobility hub on the east side of Wasatch Blvd. must be temporarily closed during construction of the proposed bus-only transitway from the mobility hub to Big Cottonwood Canyon Road, and requested the city's written concurrence that such project meets the criteria for application of the temporary occupancy standards under 23 Code of Federal Regulations Section 774.13(d)). This resolution will provide that concurrence).

Mayor Bennion reported that the above item was discussed during the Work Session. UDOT will be working on a mobility hub in the Gravel Pit area. The mobility hub will require that a road be built either under or over Wasatch Boulevard, and the top of Big Cottonwood Canyon Trail will be temporarily closed during construction.

Council Member Birrell stated that it will be an inconvenience but it is part of the process of getting the intermodal hub without creating more congestion near the mouth of Big Cottonwood Canyon.

MOTION: Council Member Birrell moved to APPROVE Resolution 2026-09 Approving a Temporary Occupancy Concurrent Request by UDOT. The motion was seconded by Council Member Holton. Vote on Motion: Council Member Holton-Yes; Council Member Hyland-Yes; Council Member Newell-Yes; Council Member Birrell-Yes; Mayor Bennion-Yes. The motion passed unanimously.

6.0 CONSENT CALENDAR

6.1 Approval of the Minutes for the City Council Work Session and Business Meetings of January 6, 2026.

Mayor Bennion reported that this item would be tabled until the next City Council meeting.

7.0 ADJOURN

MOTION: Council Member Hyland moved to ADJOURN. The motion was seconded by Council Member Newell. The motion passed with the unanimous consent of the Council.

The City Council Business Meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing represents a true, accurate, and complete record of the Cottonwood Heights City Council Work Session, Community Development and Renewal Agency, and City Council Business Meetings held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026.

Teri Forbes

Teri Forbes
T Forbes Group
Minutes Secretary

Minutes Approved: _____