



**Minutes**  
**January 25, 2024**  
**Crested Butte**

**I. Call to Order & Introductions, Jonathan Godes, President**

**II. Welcome to Crested Butte, Mayor Ian Billick**

The Mayor is proud of the planning they are doing and is committed to being bold as outlined in the Community Compass. Seventy percent of the town's residential units are lived in full time. They are updating their climate action plan and looking at infill. Transportation is the nexus to many issues. They are looking at land conservation, and the local concern that the town is being loved to death. Climate change will drive more people to our communities.

**III. Electrification – Politics and Pragmatism**

*Moderator: Ian Billick, Mayor of Crested Butte*

The most rapid climate change in north America is happening in Western Colorado. Climate refugees will come to our town, but some won't have this ability due to the high cost of everything. The politics of climate change is changing over time with support increasing. There was great support locally in Crested Butte for electrification. Arguments to electrify Crested Butte were health, efficiency, cost, redundancy, the electric grid is getting cleaner. Some members of the building community supported electrification as well. The natural gas industry challenged the move.

*J. August Hasz P.E., President & Principal Engineer, Resource Engineering Group*

Mr. Hasz does consulting with municipalities and others. RSG works to lower the impact of building, has worked on affordable housing projects, many of them net zero. They work to build affordable housing with a low carbon footprint.

*Mr. Farnell does large scale projects including the local library, community center and performing arts center. A single system is more cost effective than having both electric and gas. Ground source geothermal pump systems have been used in a project in Gunnison County and they are performing well. The argument of needing gas for back up doesn't make sense because it doesn't work without power.*

A bond passed in CB for the design of a new school, and because it would reduce long term energy costs, it made sense to electrify. Geothermal has been implemented on the renovation of county courthouse in Gunnison. Finding builders and developers that know the technology is a critical step. Builders might say a project can't be done when in reality they just don't know how to do it. An education process with builders and installers is important. Electrification requires a thoughtful design. A big challenge for building is the placement and design of the heat pump.

*Don Smith, SmithWorks Natural Homes*

Mr. Smith completed three all-electric homes with heat pumps and did a geothermal project. It is working well. Net Zero is attainable and requires attention to some details such as being air tight and not using foam.

Discussion:

The next push in this space will be due to a community need to reduce the embodied carbon of buildings. In a small community, there aren't many contractors that are receptive to electrification. Change is difficult. Demand and interest from the consumer to build all electric is growing. There is perception that the grid can't handle electrification, but

multiple rural electric coops are not concerned about it. It is expensive to electrify existing buildings. Remodeling is expensive. Each project will require very thoughtful consideration. Going after the older buildings is bold. Government subsidy will be required to get folks to retrofit older homes, as it will be expensive. Green Deed is a program that partners with the housing authority to do energy audits on deed restricted properties and implements/funds improvements.

Salida is exploring geothermal but was told it wasn't feasible for a ground source heat pump. Panelists believe it is probably the economics that isn't feasible. Instead consider air source heat pump. Where to locate the outside heat pumps is a challenge on small lots. RSG has utilized a hot spring well in a successful project. The high mineral content of the water can be problematic.

Steamboat Springs Resort is determined to build a snowmelt system, while the City wants it to be powered by renewables. It is important to have the facts to justify what you are arguing for.

Why do we renew contracts for natural gas lines if we want to move to electric? It is political. Communities should work towards sunseting these agreements.

The Colorado Energy Office offers a grant for code enforcement and adoption, and to educate builders around the new building codes. They also have a great toolkit.

Building codes are something that community's control. It takes a lot of work, smart people and a good team. It is important to be careful and get it right so there isn't a backlash.

Do electric-based Snowmelt systems exist? It is challenging but RSG has done it. These systems are extremely energy intensive use. It is more cost-effective to use design to better manage snow so the need for snowmelt systems is reduced. RSG did a study on snow removal on CB's Elk Ave and there is a 100x less carbon footprint to move snow rather than melt it.

Leaders are encouraged to follow the Colorado Micro Grid Discussion. Micro grids are quite expensive, but they are improving. Batteries are toxic but improving. Storing power on batteries isn't efficient.

#### **IV. Beyond Housing: Affordability in Mountain Communities**

*Discussion facilitated by Crested Butte: Troy Russ, Community Development Director; Mel Yemma, Long Range Planner*

The housing market is broken, and it doesn't make sense for a developer to address the issue which is why local government is having to support affordable housing. Jobs to housing ratio is an important metric. Livability is breaking down in many resort communities. Approaches to solving challenges can be addressed strategically or tactically and there are pros and cons to each approach.

Shannon Haynes, Manager shared that Breckenridge has established destination management goals and will soon add DEI to the goals. The Breckenridge Tourism Office did a resident sentiment survey. The town is working to tie their mobility elements together. The relationship of housing then child care is closely tied. 74.5% of homes in Breck are STR or 2<sup>nd</sup> homes. The Town feels they take two steps forward and one step back on affordable housing. Xcel is talking with Breck on a ground source heat pump pilot, although they are still wanting an injection site for natural gas in town. It isn't clear what the child care needs are statewide and how school district changes impact child care systems. The town recognizes they need to adapt and pivot to constant changes.

Clint Kinney, Manager of Snowmass Village explained that each new council adopts a goal statement. The goals this year are housing, more engagement and supporting locally owned/locally-serving businesses. Snowmass Village is quickly losing those types of businesses. Redevelopments lead to higher rents and making it challenging for those small

businesses to stay. The town is moving on some ideas. They have a program to help businesses with technology such as getting on Google Maps as well as supporting professional photography to boost their marketing efforts. The town used to do big events, but those don't build character or community, so have shifted from big events to smaller ones. The underlying premise of events is if it is good for locals, it is good for the tourist. Last year they spent \$9B on tourism promotion but are trying to follow that bigger is not always better approach.

Crested Butte is committed to strategic planning and follows the Crested Butte Community Compass plan. There are resources from the State to support such planning.

Wholistic planning for affordable housing is critical. Housing staff needs to talk with mobility, sustainability and open space staff to consider all aspects related to that housing project. Engaging with the community early is helpful in heading off NIMBY issues.

Mobile home park electrification- Gunnison County has done some work on this.

Zero Parking Requirements: Snowmass is working towards one spot per unit on a project. Breck tried it in the town core on some deed restricted units. It didn't work even though the project was in town and on transit line. Breck is focused on shared parking instead of building more. The CB transportation plan showed they have surplus parking on Main Street but needs to be coupled with a neighborhood permit system. CB looking at car share in addition to public transit. Frisco is looking to make some changes to their parking requirements, and it is a big change. Mountain Village has two projects underway, and one will be a micro dorm that will be leased to businesses.

## **V. Base Area Development: Opportunities and Challenges**

*Discussion facilitated by Park City: Matt Dias, Manager & Erik Daenitz, Dir. of Economic Development*

Park City recently received a development application from Deer Valley. The City felt like they were missing a toolkit to address the development applications and they want to approach the process analytically. They looked to other communities for information and built statistical models to look at the potential impacts of the project.

Park City had the opportunity to engage in a Public Private Partnership (P3) and Eric built a statistical model, so they knew what metrics they wanted to focus on to mitigate impacts of the project. The initial approach was using data to identify key conditions and targets. Next, they had to figure out how to achieve improving the metrics. But data is only part of the process and doesn't measure authenticity and community character, for instance. There is apprehension about the municipality partnering with a developer, but the City saw potential benefits to doing so. A partnership needs to look and feel right and also has to perform and make things better. It was a two year process. They really targeted the day skier/driver and parking which was very controversial for resort owner. The agreement included a \$15M cash match from Deer Valley for funding transportation infrastructure and affordable housing, a 20% reduction in parking spaces, integrated lift infrastructure, and pedestrian friendly elements. They moved parking to a remote lot and the town increased transportation service. Another Deer Valley project is what was called the Mayflower. Through a P3, they integrated ski area connections, affordable housing, emergency/utility access, and maintained public access to a key road. A Public Infrastructure District is part of the deal they struck. The new Deer Valley Resort will need significant snow making. The state legislature is in the development game, and water rights/availability wasn't a consideration. Park City has no jurisdiction so no control over that outcome.

Nothing happens without authentic leadership. A united mayor and council are critical as well as a supportive staff. Locals care loudly and wealthy homeowners hired professionals to throw wrenches in the process. The City grappled with whether they were getting enough or giving up too much out of the partnerships. They had great leadership from the resort.

In advance of this meeting, Park City surveyed CAST members and 20% of respondents say they have active applications for a resort redevelopment. These members are willing to work with resorts and consider options to make the projects the best they can be. Park City intends to build a toolkit over time, with contributions from CAST members. CAST could be the repository of this information. There was interest from members to collaborate on a toolkit.

## **VI. Check out Crested Butte's EV Fleet & Networking Break**

Crested Butte's fleet includes 18 all electric vehicles and 3 hybrids. The first was purchased in 2005. They have neighborhood electric vehicles (NEV), light duty, and heavy duty hybrids (loaders). Dump truck conversions are being considered and they are planning to get DC fast charging for the public works building. They are converting old vintage vehicles to EV so reusing not scrapping. Staff buy-in is critical. The Fleet Zero-Emission Resource Opportunity grant from Colorado Energy Office is being explored and the eligible costs are many. Climate impacts is what is driving the electrification of their fleet.

## **VII. Legislative Update**

John Whitney and Matt Kireker, Sen. Bennet's Office

They are still working on the CORE Act. Sen. Bennet and Rep. Neguse are leading the SHRED Act which would bolster USFS recreation budget through the \$27M that would be kept on local forests in Colorado. . CAST was a big part of the Flexible Partnership Act. The bill is tied up with the reauthorization of Farm Bill but active under a one year extension. There are administrative challenges to allow for longer leases, but they continue to push for this. They are also working to draft legislation to expand this authority to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Members should have received an email regarding the process and an interest form for Congressional Directed Spending.

Sen. Bennet and Rep. Neguse staff met with USPS postmaster general. USPS did an independent audit and report, looking at 13 locations and found mismanagement, lack of staff and lack of training. 10 recommendations were made for CO & WY and by April 30 the USPS is supposed to address staffing, training, tracking, processing, and space constraints.

Julie Sutor. Congressman Neguse's Office

As stated, there is progress but not perfection on USPS issue. They are pleased that there is some action, and they will hold their feet to fire on recommendations. Thanks to Jonathan Godes who testified on the Flexible Partnership Act on behalf of CAST. The BOLT Act requires the federal government to identify bike trails and there is a bill regarding guiding services. The EPA announced clean school bus funding resulting in 16 EV buses in Western Slope school districts.

There was discussion around the Clean Water Act. It will be hard for a bill to get through Congress.

## **VIII. Hot Topics Roundtable**

Ouray: Problems with homeowners securing private residential home insurance due to wildfire risk. It is affecting home sales. There might be a bill for a state backstop on private insurance.

Routt County: They are having to address permitting private ski areas and private golf clubs. They are looking at large scale conversation to renewable and looking for staff/expertise.

Crested Butte: Streetscape planning has raised the issue of snowmelt systems. It is a safety issue, but contrary to climate action plans.

Steamboat: They are looking at Destination Management and funding the chamber to do this work. Balancing marketing and a focus on community and environment is tough. Ouray defunded the tourism office and brought a tourism director onto staff with a focus on stewardship and education. This person is answerable to all citizens and not

just business owners. The Colorado Tourism Office's Destination Blue Print has been helpful. Economic Development is of interest.

Jackson: Community outreach resulted in thousands of responses on the question of tourism marketing. They want the focus on education around being a responsible, sustainable visitor.

Telluride: Passed a regulatory fee on STRs and are being sued. They are working with Mountain Village and the resort to consider a lift tax or fee.

Pitkin: What are towns doing about overcrowding in the backcountry? Funding is identified as a need but how do we use funds to mitigate the impact? Routt County has a group to discuss recreation impacts on public lands. They are looking at impact fees. Frisco has tied recreation and wildfire management to protect lands around the town. A study fast-tracked funding for that.

Salida: New deed restriction program in process. The gap between market rate and affordable is large, but manageable. What are communities doing with deed restriction that aren't tied to limiting appreciation on resale? Park City has used buy downs but really moved away from for sale and is focusing on rentals. Pitkin county residents can buy into a property with 9% appreciation. Winter Park has a 2% appreciation for three years and 1% thereafter. They have gotten some push back.

Jackson: Has an Equity Task Force to advise council on equity issues. After two years, they made recommendations to improve access to government and services. Their efforts have inspired Telluride to work in this space. The conversation has gone to term limits on volunteer board and commissions as it would allow new and more diverse voices. Summit County has a Climate Equity Plan funded by an EPA grant. It will be a living document focused on community partnerships to ensure underserved parts of community benefit from climate action.

Pitkin County: They are looking to do an Employee Generation impact study and would like input and suggestions for firms.

Winter Park: There is concern around losing community character and are looking at how to keep the culture and uniqueness alive.

Durango: A lodgers tax funds marketing and they are looking to possibly reallocate some of that tax to other issues. They were required to spend 25% of the money on events that support the local culture.

Silverthorne: First Fridays are events for the locals with engagement of local nonprofits and businesses. It has been hugely successful and a chance to engage immigrant populations and nonprofit organizations. Telluride is putting in code that mandates large events implement a local's ticketing program. Part of the sales tax fund goes to local nonprofits that do a local event. In Park City there is event fatigue and locals are pushing back.

## **IX. New Business**

-Approval of Minutes: Dara MacDonald made a motion to approve the October 2023 Meeting Minutes, PT Wood seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

- Meeting Schedule: The Annual Legislative Meeting is March 7. Durango will host the August meeting. The October meeting will be in Jackson, WY in conjunction with MT2030.

## **X. Tour: Nordic Center – All-electric expansion and community partnership**