

SPECIAL ALPINE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Alpine City Hall, 20 N. Main, Alpine, UT
July 18, 2017

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Mayor Sheldon Wimmer called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

A. Roll Call: the following were present and constituted a quorum:

Mayor Sheldon Wimmer

Council Member: Troy Stout, Ramon Beck, Roger Bennett, Kimberly Bryant, Lon Lott

Staff: Shane Sorensen, Marla Fox, Police Chief Gwilliam

Others: Jordan Larsen, Megan Hansen, Ed Bush, Everett Williams, Mary Wimmer, Rob Schoen, Sullivan Love, Bridgette Server, Kristy Kimball, Kathleen Rasmussen, Ronald Rasmussen, Trent Edwards, Penny Linford, Bev Irwin, Alan Jensen, Breezy Anson, Jennifer Stout, Sylvia Christiansen, Howard Christiansen, Jane Griener, Sarah Blackwell, Gale Rudolph

B. Prayer: Lon Lott

C. Pledge of Allegiance: Sheldon Wimmer

II. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Lambert Park Rules – Closing Lambert Park to Motorized Vehicles. Mayor Wimmer updated the Council on the status of the fire which started several days earlier on July 15, 2017 on East Mountain. The Forest Service had provided fire suppression efforts. Heavy Blackhawk helicopters from the state had come in on July 16th and made a lot of headway in containing the fire by dumping thousands of gallons of water. Among other things, they were lucky to have the Great Basin coordinating group. The fire in Alpine was rated as the 3rd priority because of its proximity to homes so they had Hotshots out of other states fighting the fire. Mayor Wimmer said that in addition to help from other agencies, he was very proud of the Lone Peak fire department and the firefighters from neighboring cities, who responded immediately. He also thanked the public for bringing food, drinks, and supplies to those who were evacuated.

Mayor Wimmer stated that this meeting was not a public hearing. The Council would be discussing measures to protect Lambert Park from possible fires and other damage. The City had an ordinance in place that allowed the City to enact necessary measures to protect public open space.

The fire started in the Lone Peak Wilderness area from target shooting, but spread into Lambert Park. Mayor Wimmer said Alpine City had an ordinance in place that prohibited shooting within city limits, but the federal government allowed it on forest land. People would drive through Lambert Park to get to the shooting range on forest service land. He said that Council would discuss how to manage the use of Lambert Park.

Troy Stout said Alpine was unique because they were immediately adjacent to wilderness, and the only thing that separated them was a fence. City property had been abused by people dumping their trash in the park. Now there was a fire. He said he had a conversation with the Shane Sorensen earlier and was frustrated that the City had not put the boulders in place which were approved by the Council at a previous meeting. He knew they had a small staff which was very busy but they needed to have priorities, and this was a safety issue. Steps the Council took may be unpopular with some residents but they needed to take action to protect the life and safety of others.

Lon Lott agreed with Mr. Stout's comments. In the past couple of months, they'd had two different fires on that mountain. As they discussed motorized vehicles in Lambert Park, it became evident there was a split among the citizens: there were those who wanted to allow motorized vehicles in the park, and those who did not. Putting up a fence along the southern border of the park would force people to use the entrance the City would like them to use which was by the LDS stake center near the restrooms. He didn't want to make a rash decision that evening based on a reaction to the fires. There were a number of viewpoints and issues that needed to be considered. Mayor Wimmer had been working with the forest service for months to curtail shooting on forest land. There were people who wanted to see the poppies but couldn't get to them without a motorized vehicle. Perhaps they could have a seasonal period when motorized vehicles would be allowed.

Troy Stout said that what they did that evening may not be permanent, but they needed some sort of control for safety reasons.

Lon Lott noted that the Planning Commission would be discussing a master plan for Lambert Park at their meeting later that evening. The Council should give them some direction.

Kimberly Bryant said the Council had been discussing Lambert Park for 14 years. She had fought hard to keep motorized vehicles in Lambert Park because she had grown up riding her horse and her motorcycle up there. More recently because of problems with her leg, she had to drive up to see the poppies. She hated to see it closed to motor vehicles, but for now she was in favor of closing it until they could come up with a plan to protect it. It was awful seeing fires on the mountain. Not only did the fires destroy vegetation and threaten the forest and homes and property, it threatened the lives of firefighters, whom she knew personally. She had fought to allow motorized in Lambert Park for 14 years, but tonight they needed to take a stand to protect their mountains, and close it to motorized vehicles.

Ramon Beck said the real issue was there was still a shooting range up there even if they closed the park. He had calls from people who were in wheelchairs who liked to go up there to shoot. Maybe they needed to issue permits, but then there would be the problem of enforcement. There were people with health conditions who couldn't walk into the Lambert Park, but would like to be able to drive there to see the poppies. He hesitated to close the park to motorized vehicles but hated to see the mountain on fire. What if it jumped to North Mountain? He said he was okay with closing the park the park to motorized vehicles at least temporarily.

Roger Bennett said he had been in favor of closing Lambert Park to motorized vehicles for years, and driving up there was the only way he visited the park. However, he was in favor of shutting it down to motorized vehicles until the snow flies. He suggested they talk to property owners on the south and see if they would close off access from that end.

Mayor Wimmer said he had met with the Forest Service about reseeding different areas. Regarding fencing, he said that if they installed a buck and pole style fence, they would still have to put a boulder field in front of it so cars wouldn't drive through the fence. They wouldn't want to close the rodeo grounds on the north. On a case by case basis they could open roads when the poppies bloomed. Authorized vehicle would still need to access the park for utility work. The second part was that they had the delineation for the fence and they had the bids so they could go to work on awarding the bid.

Troy Stout said they had talked about a fence for Lambert Park for a couple of years, and nothing had been done. He would like the City Council to mandate a timeline and put the fence in immediately. They already had the resources dedicated to Lambert Park to do it.

Mayor Wimmer said Shane Sorensen had bids and they were within the scope of the amount they had. He read from the **Alpine City Municipal Code, Section 11-400 Motorized Vehicles Prohibited on City Parks and City Trails**. "It shall be unlawful to use any motorized vehicles upon the parks and trails of Alpine City unless the area to be used is clearly posted by the City by sign as open to off-highway vehicle use."

Mayor Wimmer said that he had spoken with David Church and they had the latitude to close the roads immediately.

Shane Sorensen said that in the next few days, they could begin work on making signs for road closures. The other plans would take a little longer. He said there were pros and cons with closing a road. Boulders could be a hindrance to emergency vehicles.

The Council discussed notifying people about road closures. Besides signs they could send out a Parlant message. It was noted that a lot of the people who came to Alpine to shoot were not from Alpine so signs would be an important way to inform them of the closure.

Troy Stout wondered if Alpine City should open a shooting range so people had somewhere to go shoot. Sheldon Wimmer said there were 160 acres on the other side of the lake where people could shoot. Kimberly Bryant said that if they went down that road, they would need to be really careful.

Roger Bennett said they could shut the park down to motorized vehicles very easily. He remembered when they closed the wilderness area. All they needed to do was put an off-duty officer up there and impose fines.

Troy Stout said they should look at that as an agenda item for the next meeting. He asked about the possibility of shuttling people up to see the poppies or tour the park who couldn't walk or bike up there. He also asked about enforcement. He thought it would be easier to enforce no vehicles than allow some vehicles.

Police Chief Gwilliam agreed that it would be easier to enforce the restriction if no vehicles were allowed. He said they could put an officer in the park in the beginning until the word was out. Make it an educational process for the first few days then issue citations.

The City Council had a discussion about the emergency access road and whether crash gates should be installed. They also discussed other areas in the park that could be gated. Shane Sorensen said his Public Works staff would need a remote gate because they had to get into the park multiple times a day.

Troy Stout asked Shane Sorensen if the city had resources to help get people in the park. Mr. Sorensen said the city did not currently have the resources or the manpower right now. The City Council discussed the possibility of a volunteer program such as the Nature Center to help address this issue.

Kimberly Bryant said she was one who could use a shuttle service, but for the 90 days that motorized access would be banned, she hoped that people would understand that they couldn't access the park during that time. Mayor Wimmer said he expected the restriction would be longer than 90 days.

Roger Bennett said he would love it if he could climb the mountains again, but that didn't mean he could call the Forest Service and ask them to come pick him up and drive him around the mountains.

The City Council members and the Mayor all said they've received phone calls about the shooting that had gone on near the east side of Lambert Park. People needed to realize that the City did not have control over forest service land and that was where the shooting occurred.

The City Council had a discussion about Alpine Days and the rodeo grounds. Lon Lott pointed out that the ordinance already specified an exemption for city maintenance vehicles and city sponsored events such as the rodeo.

Shane Sorensen said they needed to have a map and know where to put signs. They also need to consider access to the Bowery because people already had reservations to use the Bowery.

MOTION: Troy Stout moved to close motorized access to Lambert Park with an exception of the road that led to the Bowery and the Rodeo Grounds from this date until January 1, 2018 and any violators would be fined \$500. Kimberly Bryant seconded. Ayes: 5 Nays: 0. Troy Stout, Ramon Beck, Roger Bennett, Kimberly Bryant and Lon Lott voted aye. Motion passed.

Roger Bennett said he didn't think they could enforce this until signage was put up. Shane Sorensen said they could put up some temporary signs.

Kimberly Bryant thanked Chief Brian Gwilliam for his work on the fires. With the resignation of the fire chief, he had been doing double duty on two fires, and had done a tremendous job.

MOTION: Lon Lott moved to adjourn. Troy Stout seconded. Ayes: 5 Nays: 0. Troy Stout, Ramon Beck, Roger Bennett, Kimberly Bryant, and Lon Lott voted aye. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.