

PAYSON CITY
CITY COUNCIL JOINT WORK SESSION WITH ELK RIDGE CITY
Payson City Center, 439 W Utah Avenue, Payson UT 84651
Thursday, April 11, 2024

CONDUCTING William R. Wright, Mayor

PAYSON ELECTED OFFICIALS Brett Christensen, Taresa Hiatt, Brian Hulet, Anne Moss,
Ryan Rowley, William R. Wright

PAYSON PLANNING COMMISSION Ryan Frisby, Blair Warner, Kirk Beecher

PAYSON STAFF PRESENT David Tuckett, City Manager
Kim E. Holindrake, City Recorder
Jason Sant, City Attorney
Robert Mills, Development Services Director
Jill Spencer, City Planner
Michael Bryant, Planner II
Travis Jockumsen, Public Works Director/City Engineer
Tracy Zobell, Parks & Golf Director
Karl Teemant, Recreation Director

ELK RIDGE ELECTED OFFICIALS Robert Haddock, Jared Peterson, Cory Thompson, Tanya
Willis, Charles Wixom, Melanie Paxton

ELK RIDGE PLANNIGN COMMISSION Maureen Bushman, Ron Gailey, Lisa Graham, Greg
Shelton

ELK RIDGE STAFF PRESENT Royce Swensen, City Recorder

CALL TO ORDER

William R. Wright, Mayor, called this joint work session of the City Council of Payson City, Utah, to order at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was properly noticed.

Prayer offered by Bill Wright.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Brett Christensen.

Robert Mills welcomed everyone and asked that they introduce themselves and what summer food they are looking forward too.

Staff from both cities have been approached various times by citizens, developers, and landowners regarding the possibility of development or expansion of recreational uses in the area south of Gladstan Golf Course and the Forebay area. In these meetings with staff, we have come to a good place on shared goals and ideas for further discussion. Staff is at the point where further direction is needed from city officials regarding future planning efforts and to discuss next steps. He reviewed a map showing the Payson City boundary, Elk Ridge City boundary, Gladstan Golf Course, and Forebay area.

Discussions tonight will cover preservation, recreation, and development. He asked everyone to access menti.com through their phones to answer survey questions.

Thinking about this general area, what do you feel should be preserved?

- The top five responses included open space, Forebay, trails, mountain access, and natural landscape.
- Discussion: Kirk Beecher stated open space helps protect the surrounding areas, gives the ability to do many things, protects the watershed, and allows for trails and access. It doesn't allow homes or other things. Cory Thompson said open space provides a beautiful environment such as mountain, trees, and trails. It would be a true shame to lose it. Ron Gailey said Forebay preserves the watershed. Forebay is a large area, and a gift to the people. It's ugly at the moment but has so much potential. Brian Hulet said because Forebay is owned by Payson City, it can be protected and preserved for future generations. It will be difficult in the future to keep areas this big protected. Forebay provides hiking, biking, horseback riding, and picnicking. He hopes to see a water pond in the area. It's a great place for generations to come.
- Robert Mills asked what preserve means to everyone. Ryan Rowley stated preservation means having wide access and use by the citizens and to expand the amazing trail system. Also facilitating a way for future generations to use and enjoy without fear of detrimental change by building. Blair Warner said most of us grew up here and have taken for granted that we can jump in our vehicle and be in a remote area enjoying nature. This is rare for most people in the country. It needs to be preserved and not let development or other things get in the way. Ron Gailey said there are beautiful parks that have been enhanced. There needs to be restrooms but no other buildings. Mayor Wright noted creature comforts are needed. Preservation means we get once change; we cannot lose it. Robert Mills said he likes the natural state of Forebay, but there are parks that have been made better for citizens to enjoy. It can be preserved but also enhanced with restrooms to reach its potential. Maureen Bushman noted preservation requires thoughtful planning and a vision. Things will not remain the same. It won't be preserved if nothing is done, and a goal isn't set. There needs to be a vision.

How do you use the area for recreation?

- The top five responses included biking, hiking, picnicking, walking, and horseback riding.
- Discussion: Melanie Paxton stated she put 'subdivide to make budget' because wants to see development but wants to keep a budget as well. Tanya Willis wrote 'staring over locked gates' because property owners have put up locked gates and stopped access. Melanie Paxton clarified the gates are locked because the property was owned by a woman who put it in a trust, she passed, and the executor locked it up. She has lived in Elk Ridge 28 years and has always had access. Brian Hulet noted there are a lot of biking trails but few hiking trails. Ron Gailey said when Forebay was opened in general, ATVs made it difficult to go hiking. Melanie Paxton noted she is just happy to be there, and the ATVs don't bother her. Mayor Wright stated the cities will need to work with the property owners because they have property rights. We don't want to infringe on them, but many people have been able to use the area over the years. Robert Mills stated additional planning and direction is needed. Property owners have their rights, but we also want to make sure the property is used as intended. Some people will have different intentions than others. During the planning process those intentions will come out.

What (if any) recreation options would you like to see expanded in the area?

- The top five responses included access, camping, parking, trails, and reservoir.

- Discussion: Ryan Rowley stated for Payson City the new brand is Home to Adventure so it's prudent to have Forebay in our boundaries to recreate whether for camping, hiking, or biking. The use of Forebay is quite high so it's important to preserve and expand the trail system as well as provide adequate parking.
- Robert Mills noted this discussion is more than just Forebay. He asked if the items listed are universal to the area or specifically targeted to Forebay. Forebay is a Payson City resource; owned and maintained by Payson City with an intended use. He questioned what about the rest of the properties. Maureen Bushman said she thinks about the Elk Ridge boundary and what isn't developed yet. Trails get you through the area, but there is private ownership. It's important to work with land developers and have parks for the public in the area to give more access and recreation. It would be great for Elk Ridge to have access to Forebay, but Elk Ridge also needs its own parks. Ron Gailey added it would be interesting to see if Elk Ridge could acquire some of the private land. Melanie Paxton noted access needs to connect Salem, Woodland Hills, Elk Ridge, and Payson to these areas. Brett Christensen asked about the location of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail. Jill Spencer noted Payson looks at the Highline Canal Trail for connectivity, which isn't at the 5,200 level of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail. Tracy Zobel noted the Bonneville Shoreline Trail would go right through the Gladstan Golf Course clubhouse. Mayor Wright stated resources such as Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) can be used for coordination, help with access points, and funding. There are conservation sources as well if the right ones are used.

What (if any) development options would you support in the area (entire area, not just Forebay)?

- The top five responses included open space, reservoir, parks, limited residential, and recreation.
- Discussion: Charles Wixom stated landowners have their own vision for their property, which we need to know to see what may work for open spaces, parks, and trails. Others are looking for development. We need to poll the landowners to get their thoughts and feelings. Anne Moss stated the most important issue is preservation and conservation. We lose the feeling we love there once we allow residential development. She wants to keep the Forebay area as natural as possible and accessible for outdoor recreation only. She grew up in Cedar City and St. George. The areas she used to hike are all gone; she doesn't want that to happen here. Ryan Frisby agreed that property owners have their rights, but the mountain feel needs to be preserved, which can be controlled through zoning. Lisa Graham agreed with Anne Moss. None of us wants to see another Lehi or Pleasant Grove that is so dense, and all sense of nature is lost. Nature and the beauty are what drew us here. Brett Christensen noted when looking at the area from a developer's point, it may be tough to require open space and trails. It's difficult and expensive to get sewer and water that high. Payson bought Forebay for another reason but has been turning it around for citizens to use. There needs to be a balance. Mayor Wright noted it will take negotiations between the developers and the entities (Payson and Elk Ridge) to ensure the amenities are preserved. Tanya Willis stated Elk Ridge has a hard time with access into the area. Property owners presented information to them that Payson was okay pushing a road from this area up the canyon. Robert Mills stated access probably needs to be discussed the most. Is development allowed because it's contingent on access? We don't have the answer to this question yet but hope this process will further refine it. So many questions still remain. Maureen Bushman noted that the Gladstan Golf Course is owned by Payson but accessed through Elk Ridge. She questioned if there are plans to expand the course or access it from a different direction. Robert Mills stated there are plans to expand the course, but access is the most important part of it. Payson recognizes access is through Elk Ridge. This will be a future discussion.

Future Planning Needs:

- An area plan should be prepared that addresses the elements of preservation, recreation, and development. Payson anticipates hiring a consultant that would prepare a plan focused on the following:
 - Land Uses – Land preservation, recreational opportunities, development limitations and design standards, zoning, etc.
 - Transportation and Access – Roads, trails, easements, etc.
 - Utilities – Water, sewer, power, communications.

Next Steps:

- Payson City has tentatively budgeted money to go toward a planning study for the area to help answer these questions.
- Does Elk Ridge want to partner financially to help with this planning study?
- Application could be made to MAG for a technical assistance grant that wouldn't be awarded until May 2025.
- Payson City has been approached by landowners currently in Elk Ridge about the possibility of disconnecting from Elk Ridge and annexing into Payson. Payson has not moved forward with any of those requests because it does not have a plan in place.

Final Consideration:

- There has been discussion in the past about the possibility of Payson and Elk Ridge combining into one city. How does each council currently feel about that? Is it something worth evaluating in a study moving forward?
- Discussion: Mayor Wright stated he hopes this isn't controversial. He has long been an advocate for the two communities to come together, but studies are needed for both communities. The Utah Legislature is pressuring for dense housing that Payson can accommodate. Dense housing doesn't belong in the Elk Ridge area. Payson can help with water issues and attracting businesses. He talked with Mayor Haddock about a survey. Robert Mills asked if it's worth having the continued conversation. Lisa Graham is open to the conversation because Elk Ridge faces issues moving forward that get bigger and bigger. She thinks there is interest from the community. Ron Gailey thinks it's worth the discussion as well. The pros and cons need to be gathered and discussed, and then given to the citizens to make an informed decision. Brian Hulet noted it's important to survey the citizens from both cities because if the citizens are against it, there's no reason to move forward. If interested, information is put out there for an informed decision. Ryan Rowley stated he loves Payson and Elk Ridge. He attended Salem Hills High School and spent a lot of time in Elk Ridge. The future is uncertain especially if small bedroom communities can survive without bending to the will of the Legislature and being ruined with high-density housing. Payson can offer a sound tax base and allow nice estate housing in Elk Ridge. As one city, we can further control and preserve these areas in a positive way. This is a wonderful idea to explore. Mayor Haddock is open; but if Elk Ridge is paying for a study to see if it makes sense for Payson to annex Elk Ridge, the cost shouldn't be 50/50. Elk Ridge has no debt, has advantages as a small city, and isn't subject to affordable housing for now. There are homes in the northern part that qualify for accessory uses. He doesn't want to sell it to the citizens until he knows what he's selling. He would love access to the Forebay area; it would be a huge win. Brett Christensen noted as we try to sell this to the citizens, a new form of government may be needed with representation from

regions/areas. Melanie Paxton served on the planning commission where a discussion was held to put a trail along the golf course for immediate access. Taresa Hiatt stated she thought the discussion tonight was about help with the Forebay and surrounding areas.

Robert Mills stated the question of the trail can't be answered tonight but would be answered through the planning process. He expressed his appreciation for everyone coming and discussing the topic. There is a lot of data gathering and work to do. Residents, landowners, etc. need to be involved in the process. This is a planning process, and there is safety in creating a plan.

Further Discussion:

Payson is finalizing the next budget and will then move forward with finalizing an RFP to find a consultant. The next meeting could be in June to finalize budgets and determine a direction. To determine a cost for the study, an outline of the area to consider based on typography and viability is needed as well as addressing access, utilities, recreation expansion, etc. It's probably in the \$125,000 to \$150,000 range. A grant from MAG would help defray costs significantly.

Mayor Wright thanked everyone for attending and looks forward to additional meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

/s/ Kim E. Holindrake
Kim E. Holindrake, City Recorder