ELK RIDGE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AUGUST 8, 2023

TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING

This regularly scheduled meeting of the Elk Ridge City Council was scheduled for **Tuesday, August 8, 2023, at 7:00 PM**. The meeting was held at the Elk Ridge City Hall, 80 East Park Drive, Elk Ridge, Utah. Notice of the time, place, and Agenda of this Meeting, was provided to the Payson Chronicle, 145 E. Utah Ave, Payson, Utah, and to the members of the Governing Body on July 10, 2023.

ROLL CALL

Mayor: Robert Haddock
Council Members: Nelson Abbott, Jared Peterson, Cory Thompson, Tricia Thomas, Tanya Willis
Others: Royce Swensen, *City Recorder,* Deputy Monsen, Laura Oliver *Deputy Recorder*
Public: Kelsey Cain, Jamie Elder, Tom Hazen, Leza Hazen, Erin Clawson, Faith Hazen, Jonathan Hyde, Mukesh Jethwarli, Phillip Thaut, Doug Howell, Barry Burnette, Dean Thornton, Lecia Thornton, Emma Willis, Dale Rice, Trent Uresk, Victoria Williamson, James Thomas, Dorothy Thomas, Tom Christensen, Adam Burton "Seabass", William Black, Stuart Collyer, Cindy Collyer, Natalie, Anderson, Alaina Peterson, Scott Harms, Clint Ashmead, Terie Righettini, Laura Saure, Lisa Graham

OPENING REMARKS– INVITATION

Opening remarks were offered by Clint Ashmead
Pledge lead by Nelson Abbott

COUNCILMEMBER PETERSON MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AND TIME FRAME
COUNCILMEMBER THOMPSON SECONDED.

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) APPROVED

PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE

Mayor Haddock stated the Planning Commission has been working on updating the General Plan.

Mayor Haddock stated last Tuesday there was a meeting in the park concerning the deer mitigation. It was not an official public meeting. Things got heated. There is a lot of misinformation out there. He was unsure how effective it was. This meeting is different there are rules and procedures that have to be followed. This is not a debate to a question-and-answer session. This is not a melodrama please try to subdue your reactions. Some things he has observed over the past 2 weeks. As a community we are pretty tight knit. A lot of us have the same values. He had someone in the community that was going to head up a committee that would have really helped the city. After she saw how people were acting, she was probably not for it, but she didn't want to be lumped with the crowd over here and she didn't want to be lumped with the city because they were being pushed over there. We are being divided. We need to be here, in the middle to have a civil discussion. That individual decided she could not serve because she didn't want to be labeled and she didn't want the abuse and the hate if she was associated with the city. That's pretty sad in his book. We have had outside influences that are pushing the agenda. We need to comeback together and we need to be civil. If you signed up for the public forum you will have 2 minutes to make a statement or a rhetorical question. The council will not be responding. Please do not interrupt and let's show respect for everyone. We all do live in America, we can disagree. If anyone gets unruly, they will get one warning and then asked to leave. This meeting is recorded so don't talk over each other or interject. Please go to the mic to make your statement. The public forum will be limited to 30 minutes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kelsey Cain – stated he has been a resident here for 20 years. The deer were a novelty at first then the deer killed the trees and flowers. He has read the city plan with the DWR, and it looks like the city has a solid plan. He does have issues with getting a flyer on his door and having people coming into a church and commandeering the microphone and bringing their radical left-wing ideologies and try to preach to us in our sacred church meetings. This is small town America, this is Elk Ridge; we don't need big money coming in here to tell us how to save the deer, whales, or

mustangs, we can solve our own problems here. At some point you have to realize that deer propagate, the double in size and double in size and before long there is a problem.

Jamie Elder – wanted to thank the city and city staff. We truly care for each other and hope that we can work through this. He loves the deer; they eat his trees and sleep in his yard but that is ok. We all feel generally the same, we all love the deer. When this all came out, he did some research in what is actually healthy, and the info is hard to find. The natural densities for deer are anywhere from 5 to 25 deer per square mile. Elk Ridge has more like 130 deer per square mile. Higher densities have more rabies, ticks, bovine Tuberculosis and Chronic wasting disease which spreads quickly.

Erin Clawson – Has some concerns. She loves the deer and wants to thank the council who has responded to their questions and concerns. In Feb 2020 was the first that she could see of an urban wildlife management study to formulate a plan to count the deer through drones and cameras so that deer are not double counted. The cost would be $2000. She does not know who did this and would like to know. The deer are 1200% higher than predevelopment and the deer are not healthy. Is that 100% not healthy, some not healthy? Her biggest concern is that it would be done with bows, and no one would know and there was a discussion as to whether the resident would want this which she appreciated. It did not say how the discussion went and assumed it was unfavorable. She could not find anything in the minutes for 2021 and 2022.

Phillip Thaut – He thanked the council for their services. He has lived here for 32 years and one of the greatest benefits of living here is seeing the wildlife and feeling closer to nature and to get away from the urban sprawl. The problem is at some point you have to say enough is enough the wildlife was here first. In his opinion he has not seen an increase in deer, and he lives right on the edge of the canyon. It is the same as it always has been. When he drives around Elk Ridge, he doesn't see any deer other than the golf course. If you plant fruit trees, they will draw the deer. He is extremely disturbed that the deer would be caught in nets, He strongly disagrees. There should have been a referendum.

Doug Howell – Has been a resident for 29 years they like to see the deer in town. I would like to continue seeing them. When I first moved here, we use to see a large heard of elk during the winter months around his home, and mostly in the undeveloped areas that had mostly brown dry grass. The growth of the city especially in the last 10 years has created a large unnatural habitat for the deer replacing the brown dry grass with landscaped yards. This has caused a substantial increase in the number of deer then what would have occurred naturally in this area mostly because the deer natural predators, mountain lions and coyotes, have left the area although they do enter the city at times because I have seen them. The last coyote he saw was chasing someone's cat. I see both sides of the issue being discussed here . Although He enjoys looking at the deer like everyone else, he sees the problems they create. Last year he had 2 deer in his yard that were there every day, but they had severe dysentery. The grandkids could not play in the yard without getting them on them which was disgusting. He has now done his part by relandscaping, tearing out the plants they feed on and replacing it with and installing fencing. A lot of people are against removing the deer who see only the cute side of the deer which he sees too but he also sees the problems. He knows people in the sheriff's office, and they are constantly called to put down an injured deer by the side of the road. These are deer that have been hit by a car or have eaten something that is poisonous to them or from chronic wasting disease or some other sickness that is causing them to die. They have had to put down fawns that have open sores filled with maggots and Bot flies. Because of the disposal process sometimes it takes several days for them to come and pick them up. After speaking with the DWR and understanding the diseases he agrees that the city should carry out the seer mitigation program.

Barry Burnette - has been a resident of Elk Ridge since 2017. Most of you know him as the guy who walks down Goosenest every single day of the year. He has been a hunter since he was 12 years old. There are benefits to culling the herd to keep it healthy. He has literally been run over by a group of doe, he helped a buck with its horns caught in the orchard fence which was so skinny he could see his ribs. He also pulled a yearling fawn out from the barbed wire fence. Since walking that road especially around July and August he has to put something over his face because of the smell of carcasses. You can call dispatch to have animal control to pick up carcasses. The fact of the matter is that a little animal control for the deer population will only make them healthier. It sucks that it has to involve death at the same time. He has been involved in the program and has seen some of the deer taken down and the meat was immediately given to a family to feed their family. In all they can probably agree that sometimes hard decisions have to be made. Sometimes these decisions are a little unfair but there is a problem. If anyone has a different solution, he is sure that the council is willing to listen. Again, this is not something that has just been invented. Culling the herd will only make it healthier.

Trent Uresk - He has lived in Elk Ridge for 6 years and enjoys the deer herd and seeing them in open areas of the city. Recently with all the development they have been pushed to higher concentrated areas, for one his yard, two which invites predators. In recent years they have had mountain lions in his front yard dragging carcasses around

and storing them under bushes. He feels like this mitigation plan has been well thought out. The research behind it has been well proven. There are obviously drastic opinions in both directions. He is in favor of the mitigation plan for both the health of the herd and the safety of the city.

Victoria Williamson- Did anyone get their information from the support site from the state PPMC (?) (Public Notice Website) There is a place where you can get all this information. If you want more information, we will get it out to you. That way you can see what is going on even if you can't be here. Most of the time she has to work on Tuesday nights.

Tom Christensen - He moved to Elk Ridge in 1985. He has seen a lot of growth and a lot of people and deer. He has seen the Elk come in. He is not so much against control but the way it is being done, as he understands it, 50% will die. There was a resident here named Dale Bigler, he had a lot of weddings in his yard. Never once did he complain. I don't think anyone here has a yard as nice as Dale Bigler. He never once complained about the deer in his yard. Take a look at what you plant in your yard. We did. He had 15 deer sleep in his yard all winter long and not a problem. They stay there, they eat his shrubs, but he does not believe that trapping and killing is the answer. All the people moved into their turf. Nobody here has grazing rights. The deer did not sign off for us to move in here and take their grazing rights.

Dale Rice - would like to state his support for the deer population. He lives in the Elk Ridge Assisted Living Center. He has a small vegetable garden that he has yet to harvest because the deer keep eating it. There is a high population of deer. It's not that he does not like deer, he had 7 acres in Alaska that had deer they would come up to the house, but he had dogs that would run them off. Those dogs ran off a 6-foot grizzly. The deer population will bring in predators and controlling the population will decrease the risk from predators.

Adam Burton (aka Seabass) - He agrees with everyone but Tom, but he still loves Tom. He was born and raised in Elk Ridge. These deer are different. The deer used to run up to you, now they run at you. I've seen some real mean people online saying some mean stuff; Saying you want to do something to the deer You're a murderer! I could also say you also want to keep these deer and let them suffer, get hit by a car and have a broken leg? I wouldn't say that about somebody. I could but I am an entrepreneur. I have an idea. I have a website where we could sell deer jerky. It's a win-win situation. Thank you.

Natalie Anderson - I know this is a difficult topic. Complicated topics usually require complicated resources to solve. I know this has been a lot for the 6 of you to have on your shoulders. Those of us sitting on this side didn't step up to do it. She thanks the council. She is on the middle of the issue. She can see the wisdom of it but does not like how it is being done and agrees with Councilmember Thomas. She would like to see some nonlethal solutions such as contraception, sterilization, and educating the public on how to landscape in a way that the deer won't be an issue. It has taken her 15 years, but she fingered it out. At the meeting last week someone said they had been feeding the deer and that they didn't know. Sometimes the residents don't know, we don't read the website, we should but we don't. It would be nice if some of these other options would be looked into before we just go straight to extermination. She wants the deer to be healthy too. In the end she wants us to feel like we are the kind of community they were after the fire and that is who we are. We love each other and this kind of thing will hurt us more than the deer ever could.

Mayor Haddock checked to make sure everyone who checked that they would like to speak had. He thanks all those who commented. He asked if the council wanted to make a comment.

Councilmember Abbott thanks all those who took the time to send an email, call, come by and visit and share their feelings. If there are those of you here that have not taken that opportunity, please do so. He has not closed the door on anybody and said I will not talk to you. If you feel like you need to communicate additional information to him his contact information is on the city website as well as the other councilmembers and would encourage you to take advantage of that opportunity because he thinks that through this particular method, you are not limited to time and you can think about what you are putting down before you hit send. That way we can have a civil dialogue and work through this issue and come out with something that we can own so that at the end of the day all of us can have something we can be proud of.

Mayor Haddock stated it's always easy to find problems. He did drywall in college, and he could go into someone's house and point out things that are right. It's not productive, it doesn't help anybody. But it is easy to do. It is easy to find fault in others, nobody here is perfect. It is a lot harder to be part of the solution. The coolest thing about this job is seeing people stepping up and doing things and going the extra mile and making the community better. I don't know if anyone knows Michelle Birch, she is a member of the community and she is not involved with the city government, but she took a weed patch and turned it into something beautiful and has spent thousands of dollars of her own money.

Councilmember Thompson thanked everyone for coming. As you have probably seen the city has had a pretty significant amount of discussion over deer mitigation. He would like to make a sincere plea. Council deals with a lot of stuff, deer, rezoning, water rates, electricity, stop signs, speed limits, policing, trespassing; almost nobody shows up to help us. Almost no one. He sees a few people who come from time to time, and I mean this in most sincerity; He loves it when people come because there are only 6 of us that are trying to solve some very hard, hard things. It would be amazing to get more feedback. It sucks to come down here on a Tuesday night, but the council does it all the time. The Planning Commission meets on Thursday, and they have the similar desire to have help. There was a ton of nastiness that went on around this deer thing, tons. He was one of the councilmembers that voted against this mitigation. I didn't think it was a great idea. He also talked to some people who also thought it was not a great idea. However, he needs everyone to know this - my attitude and appetite to continue to be an advocate to remove the deer mitigation is significantly reduced because of the bad behavior that was directed at myself and everyone up there. I 100% do not want to reward any bad behavior. He does not want to reward name calling, being a bully, trashing people, sending nasty death threats to our families. None of that is appropriate and he would just ask please, please stay involved please come. He would gladly take phone calls, emails from anyone in this room. If you have any ideas, he would love to hear ideas on how to address the problems in the community without doing trapping and killing. He would love it. Thank you.
Someone asked how to get a hold of him if they don't use the internet.
Councilmember Thompson gave his phone number 385-219-1351 (he does work so call after 5pm)and their email addresses are on the website.
Councilmember Thomas stated she also voted no on the deer mitigation, but she supports the councilmembers whatever decisions are made. I will always support whatever they do, I know the councilmember's integrity and does not question it. As Councilmember Thomas said she does not reward her children for bad behavior and getting on her daughters Instagram mission call post and trashing her and leaving nasty voicemails threatening her saying every vulgar word is so mean. I will not reward that behavior. In her mind the council should not do anything and put it to a vote in November and let's do what the rest of the council wants. She does not want to reward bad behavior; it has just gone too far.
Councilmember Willis stated her family has been the recipient of very bad behavior. People drove cars at her children repeatedly. The outpouring of support from kind people, who completely disagreed with her vote, who showed up on her porch to apologize for those people… This place is full of amazing people, even with outside sources this city will pull together. I am amazingly proud of this city this week.
Councilmember Peterson stated he championed the Elk Ridge deer mitigation which has been taken into consideration for the past 3 ½ years of which Councilmember Thompson stated, no one showed up. There was a few and their opinion was accepted into this program. It has been done with professionals, the DWR although he doesn't agree with everything they do, the team that deals with this issue has been excellent. They have proven methods, proven results, so they put this plan together. He does not need to repeat the things that have been said and agrees with what has been said about the bad behavior. People just need to get involved, that is what he did, he got involved. He is not up here for the money, he gives it all away; Eagle Scout projects, helping pay bills for residents in need when their water line breaks and things like that. He does not keep any of it. He got involved to get involved and believes that the people up here are there for the same reason. Usually, he is very quiet and reserved, people that know him come talk to him, so come talk to him, he is not ashamed of where he lives. If you see him in the supermarket, come talk to him. His wife hates it because he talks. Some of the stuff that has gone on has just infuriated him. It's not right. One of the good takes is everyone is here and sharing opinions and wished everyone was here at every council meeting to help us along. Hopefully more people will get involved. If you are passionate about something he wants to hear it, if you're not he wants to hear it. The sewer rate is on the agenda tonight, maybe that's why some of you are here.
There were some suggestions from the audience on ways to communicate to the residents the agenda.
Councilmember Willis stated to go to signup on the Utah Public Notice Website and you will receive notification of everything that is posted for council and planning commission meetings. The link is on the website, Councilmember Abbott shares it on social media.
Councilmember Abbott stated the website is also in the Payson Chronicle.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. **RATIFY POLL VOTE – CLAYSON SUBDIVISION**

COUNCILMEMBER PETERSON MOTIONED TO RATIFY THE POLL VOTE FOR THE APPROVAL OF CLAYSON ACRES SUBDIVISION COUNCILMEMEBR WILLIS SECONDED

VOTE	AYE (5)	NAY (0)	ALL APPROVED
Councilmember Willis	AYE		
Councilmember Peterson	AYE		
Councilmember Abbott	AYE		
Councilmember Thomas	AYE		
Councilmember Thompson	AYE		

2. **RESOLUTION 23-07-11-1R CITY FEE SCHEDULE, SEWER RATE INCREASE**

Mayor Haddock stated as many of you know the sewer waste goes to Payson. The city has talked to Salem, and they said Salem does not want Elk Ridge sewage. When Payson raises the rates, Elk Ridge has to raise the rates. The city has looked at doing its own sewer plant, but it is millions of dollars and would have to bond for it; discussion has been back and forth on the subject. Councilmember Willis said it would be short term higher cost and long-term savings. Councilmember Thomas stated council has talked about a councilmember being on the sewer plant committee to have a voice, is there a board? The city has to have someone on that board if the city is getting charged this the city needs representation. Councilmember Willis would like to see a presentation, like they had when the water rates were increased, to see the depreciation and all the aspects of the sewer lines etc. Councilmember Abbott stated the city needs to look at the indoor water usage figures and get what Payson is using as a factor to determine if what the city is being assessed is accurate and thinks that what the city is being charged is too high. All of his family, who live in Payson, are not paying as much. Councilmember Thompson would like to know more about what Payson residents are paying and doesn't want to fund the new plant completely. If Elk Ridge is funding a big portion of it, then the city needs to have a say. Mayor Haddock stated they raised it 6% and have done so every fiscal year after they raised it 15%. Councilmember Abbott stated that all of the money was supposed to be going into a savings account for the plant that was supposed to be done by 2016 and still hasn't been started. The city is paying more for a facility than if they would have completed it when they were supposed to, and the cost are just increasing. It would cost ½ million dollars to put a meter in the ground to meter all the wastewater that goes to Payson. Payson said they would charge the city the metered rate. The city has to do its homework before it goes in halfcocked. Councilmember Willis stated the city doesn't want to make Payson mad and have them stop taking the city's waste. Councilmember Abbott stated even though the plant hasn't been built the city does have some ownership there since the city has been paying an extra $15 a month for that plant. Payson residents are paying that as well. Councilmember Willis stated if you crunch the numbers building its own plant it will be a significant increase over what residents are paying now, but then if the city had built one 20 years ago it would have been in a good position and in 20 years from now the city will be saying why didn't it build a plant 20 years ago. It's a hard sell. Councilmember Thomas and Willis would like to see the numbers in detail and then have a good discussion. Councilmember Abbott would like to have an interlocal meeting about sewer, trails etc. after the figures are understood. The spreadsheets from the water presentation have the figures for the water consumption which should give us a calculation on the wastewater and Curtis Roberts should have the depreciation of the sewer infrastructure.

COUNCILMEMBER ABBOTT MOTIONED TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 23-07-11-1R CITY FEE SCHEDULE SEWER RATE INCREASE EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 2023, COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS SECONDED

VOTE	AYE (4)	NAY (1)	APPROVED
Councilmember Willis	NAY		
Councilmember Peterson	AYE		
Councilmember Abbott	AYE		
Councilmember Thomas	AYE		
Councilmember Thompson	AYE		

3. **CITY COUNCIL MINUTES FOR MAY 23, 2023**

COUNCILMEMBER ABBOTT MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR MAY 23, 2023, COUNCILMEMBER WILLIS SECONDED

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) ALL APPROVED

4. **CITY COUNCIL MINUTES FOR JUNE 13, 2023**

COUNCILMEMBER PETERSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR JUNE 13, 2023, WITH CLARIFICATION ON LINE 57 AND CORRECT TYPOS ON LINE 132 COUNCILMEMBER ABBOTT SECONDED

VOTE AYE (4) NAY (0) APPROVED
Councilmember Abbott Abstained

5. **CITY COUNCIL MINUTES FOR JUNE 27, 2023**

COUNCILMEMBER ABBOTT MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR JUNE 27, 2023, COUNCILMEMBER WILLIS SECONDED

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) ALL APPROVED

6. **CITY COUNCIL MINUTES FOR JULY 11, 2023**

COUNCILMEMBER PETERSON MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR JULY 11, 2023, COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS SECONDED

VOTE AYE (4) NAY (0) APPROVED
Councilmember Thopson Abstained

COUNCILMEMBER ABBOTT MOTIONED TO ADJOURN TO A CLOSED SESSION PER UTAH CODE 52-4-205 FOR PENDING LITIGATION AND REAL ESTATE MATTERS COUNCILMEMBER THOMPSON SECONDED

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) ALL APPROVED

COUNCILMEMBER ABBOTT MOTION TO ADJOURN TH EREGULAR MEETING COUNCILMEMBER THOMPSON SECONDED.

VOTE AYE (5) NAY (0) ALL APPROVED

Laura Oliver
Laura Oliver