

Historic Downtown Economic Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 4, 2020 5:30 pm

Council Present: R. Scott Phillips

HDEC Members Present: Mindy Benson, Evan Vickers, Mark Baruffi, Jennie Hendricks, Chris McCormick, Alan Jones

Staff Present: Brad Abrams

Call to Order: Chris McCormick

Pledge of Allegiance: Evan Vickers

Approval of Minutes:

***MOTION:** Scott Phillips mad a motion to approve minutes from last month's meeting. This was seconded by Jennie Hendricks. And unanimously approved.*

Public Agenda:

Chris McCormick: I worry a lot about the fact that we are going to lose so much revenue in the community because of the fact that we won't have anything here. So, we at the Chamber have been talking about doing something. We don't yet, but we'll get together next Monday and brainstorm some ideas on something we can do to bring some smaller groups in in any way and find any ways to bring activities in. We're not really sure what that is, just a brainstorming session. I will be able to report more later. Looking for any ideas any groups and discussions with any groups of anyone we might be able to pull in for some kind of activities to help a little bit, I mean a little bit's something.

Scott Phillips: We just came from a meeting and I don't know if Jennie or Maria is going to talk about it. But it will have an effect on downtown.

Chris McCormick: No that's great. We need all the help we can get I'm sure. Let's jump up the line. Jennie do you want to give us a recap of Downtown Alliance meeting.

Business Item #1: Recap of downtown Alliance meeting

Jennie Hendricks: There was a lot of really good information shared. I wish that more businesses could have attended. But I did post it on the Facebook page, and I think more people have seen it. I think it was a good kick off. Maria had some fantastic information but depressing, but still good information, nonetheless. It was great information. I was really shocked by the on the amount of revenue/economic impact that has already been lost. The consensus of meeting was doing what we can for the downtown businesses to get the traffic downtown. Heather Stein who owns Posers and the bookstore suggested some type of event. And Like he said we just came from a meeting that would be a great catalyst. That's really the extent of it. If you want to see that zoom meeting, it's on the Downtown Alliance page and there is a password in the post.

Evan Vickers: I've been trying to figure out what to do. We're not seeing the out of town traffic. We've seen a fair amount of local traffic. Mark, I know you guys are heavily dependent on visitors. For us May was fine, but June, July and August, that's where it's really going to be telling.

Mark Baruffi: We have been, it's weird, we're actually comping over our numbers from last year pretty good. I attribute it to the flow of traffic from the states that are a little bit more locked down and once that faucet kind of turns off and the flow starts going other directions we'll feel that from the loss of Shakespeare. I am anticipating that dip and trying to prepare myself for that. We'll take what we can get for right now in a half restaurant doing what we do. But will it sustain us? Anything can help. Even when other states open up, they're going to want to get on the road and get out of

that state and travel still and I feel we're aligned just right for that. And I feel we might see a population boom. You know people just fed up with those states and they realize they can work from anywhere now.

Jennie Hendricks: There are going to be a lot of employers now and employees that realize there can be productivity. And the employees realize they can get a better-quality life in a more rural area. That's the prediction industry wide.

Chris McCormick: I got a couple calls just yesterday and wanting information of moving here. I was in a meeting in Parowan and they were thinking

Scott Phillips: There seems to be a spike every Fri, Sat, and Sunday, with people wanting that weekend getaway from, Vegas, or Northern Arizona, Southern California etc., coming up for three or four days. Because we're a lot more open for that.

Mark Baruffi: And people don't want to fly right now so they're hitting the road. We'll drive somewhere close and not fly.

Maria Twitchell: That's what we're banking on.

Evan Vickers: We were at a cabin over Memorial Day and that's the busiest I've ever seen the place. At Panguitch Lake and every trailer slip was full. Of course, everyone is at their cabins and there was a lot of California and Nevada vehicles. It was crazy actually.

Maria Twitchell: Memorial Day occupancy wise we matched the year before. Last week we were pretty close to the same week. People are hesitant to fly, so the road getaway is the new vacation. The three-day vacation is what we're focusing on now. We're placing more advertising in this region now, Vegas, SLC, Colorado, Southern California, Arizona, etc. Basically, within an 8-hour drive. We saw this same thing with 9/11. We don't rely on international tourism as much as Bryce and Zion. We are an affordable, close, and easy place.

Evan Vickers: Which is so unfortunate with Shakespeare, because this could have been a banner year.

Maria Twitchell: It could, but my approach and my idea is, "What if we did better?"

Scott Phillips: I hope some businesses will start thinking outside the box. What can we do different?

Maria Twitchell: Their level of sophistication in packaging and partnering has never been there before because they've always relied on The Shakespeare Festival to fill their rooms or fill their restaurant. They've never had to technically advertise outside of that realm. We are struggling a little bit on creating that partnership.

Jennie Hendricks: I think that the marketing piece is huge. That is one thing that came out of this call is Craig Isom said that his office is going to get I think seventy thousand dollars from a grant to strictly for the purposes of small businesses figure out their marketing and that is something that I think we need to be talking to these businesses about. They've never experienced this before and could use the boost.

Maria Twitchell: I have seen some businesses do really well. Some businesses have pivoted. But if you keep doing what you've been doing things the same way over and over again. Of course, you're going to struggle through this. The fail rate is pretty high.

Jennie Hendricks: We need to emphasize to these businesses about taking responsibility for their business model. Because whatever their business plan was at the beginning of the year, it's not the same.

Scott Phillips: And that's where Craig really needs to help. I am no expert, but I did marketing for a lot of years and I would be willing to sit down with Craig and talk some ideas and notions. But they have to be willing to listen.

Mark Baruffi: Give them options but really nothing more than that, if they're not able to adapt during this time and make those pivots, then it is what it is. If we try to force feed them marketing and say here's what you need to be doing. Then it's just going to go over their head anyway, or it's too much trouble or whatever the reason is.

Maria Twitchell: We are definitely putting the opportunity out there. We're creating more and we're going to try it. We've put a family reunion package together. We're trying to stay away from the word "staycation", but we have a roam in your backyard campaign that we're doing that we would love the businesses to be a part of. But a lot of them thing they need to provide discount. It's not about discount necessarily, it's about provided something valuable for a price. It doesn't really have to be a discount; it could just be something unique.

Scott Phillips: I was in Idaho, and we decided to stay in Richfield. I couldn't find a room in Richfield for less than \$119. But here we were selling them for \$59 and I thought they have no better lodging than we do, but I had to pay more.

Maria Twitchell: I don't think that anybody needs to discount. I would deter it.

Chris McCormick: It's a quality experience. On purpose marketing they put out videos each week. And they're short, just 5-8 minutes long. With tips on marketing and different things you can do to strategize and look at different ideas to help your business. People need to explore options and be proud of their product.

Mark Baruffi: Maria, as far as packaging with hotels is there, are you coming up with something, like a phone call to the business? Maybe asking what do you need? Am I going to have to find you a logo or anything? Is it a turn-key?

Maria Twitchell: That was our intention. We wanted it to run through the lodging. Because the lodging is the one that can make it happen. They would just combine everything into the rate and then book it all. They do this in St. George. Well they do it everywhere, but St. George is the closest example. They do it with golf and Tuacahn. That was what we were pushing with these businesses is just book it with you so that it's makes it easy on behalf of the customer. There many hotels that aren't sophisticated enough to know how to do that. Basically, it's a reservation form. Or a link to the reservation system. That's what we wanted. We want it to go through the lodging. And there are companies out there that we could have work on everyone's behalf and it's commissioned based and we can bring them in. But if they take the other route it would be much easier. I mean, look what happened through door-dash and grub-hub. They got greedy because the commissions were too high. No hardly anyone does business with them. The easier route is to have the hotel book it for you.

Evan Vickers: A couple of interesting things we've seen, we kind of pivoted with our product mix, obviously for a while our gifts and clothing and sales went down, but we were able to get suppliers for masks, sanitizers, etc. and our sales went up. We tried to do an online sales system and we spent a fair amount of money and put a lot of effort into it, but it just never really got anywhere. The nice thing is this forced situation online is actually working now.

Maria Twitchell: There are now free tools out there who want to have an online presence, to help businesses. I mean Facebook is giving you the free tools.

Evan Vickers: They did an online deal on Instagram over Memorial Day and they sold \$5000 worth of stuff on a day we were closed.

Business Item #2: Next steps to help our downtown businesses

Chris McCormick: So, what are the steps we need to take as a committee to help our downtown businesses to move forward?

Jennie: I'd like to get a meeting with Chris, Maria, Scott, and Craig and get together a strategy that we can take out to the businesses or we could post that on the page.

Evan Vickers: Let's open up the communication because, I think a lot of businesses just simply have no clue on where to go.

Jennie Hendricks: Do we have a budget as a committee?

Scott Phillips: No, but if there's something that we need, I can ask the City Manager. He assured me that if we needed something that he would make it happen.

Jennie Hendricks: I don't know that we'll need any kind of funding for that.

Maria Twitchell: There might be some CARES act money in the County and the City. It might be very specific, but it is in response for COVID.

Jennie Hendricks: Let's get together first part of next week to discuss this. Get a plan together to make sure the businesses know what's available.

Evan Vickers: You know the discussion of the CARES act money for communities for the cities and Counties was interesting. We were in Executive Appropriations and there was Mayor Wilson and a County Commissioner from Utah County, and most of you guys know that their money came to them directly because of their size and then the state got the rest of the money for the rest of the Counties. And they were in that meeting strategizing how they were going to get a portion of this extra money. And they were talking about it and the Senate President and I were texting back and forth and I finally said, timeout here, you've got to understand that those of us who live in rural Utah are afraid of this exact thing that you're trying to do right here. Because you're trying to take money that does not belong to you. They were not even going to evenly distribute their money across their Cities evenly. The state looked at it and just decided we're just going to do it on population. It's the easiest, cleanest.

Scott Phillips: And it's the most justifiable. You can justify it that way.

Evan Vickers: Exactly. And I said, you need to follow the example of the state and keep your nose out of our money.

Scott Phillips: Salt Lake got \$203 million or something, and Utah County got \$142 million.

Evan Vickers: And they wanted more. I talked with Romney's chief of staff, and she said that she doesn't think that Congress is going to float any more money, but the next round what they may do is create more flexibility in the money that is going out. Because there are a lot of stipulations on how you can use the money. It doesn't help us unless we can use the funds without stipulations.

Maria Twitchell: There are some communities saying they may have to turn their money back to the government because of the stipulations.

Chris McCormick: The difference that would make for the economy to be able to put that money to use would make a significant difference. I was looking at that same report and wasn't it 5.7 million for this area? That's a pretty good chunk of money.

Maria Twitchell: But that's different for money given and you can't use it. There's no stipulation on the stimulus money that was handed to every single citizen in the United States. Just go out and spend. Isn't this the same thing? We basically want communities to spend dollars and keep the economy going? Right now, we can build a testing tent. A COVID center. That's pretty much all you can do with that money.

Business Item #3 & #4: Ideas for creating more activity Downtown/Downtown Festival

Jennie Hendricks: Maria do you want to pivot? Because I've got another line item coming of the downtown festival discussion. And I think the meeting that we were just at is really relevant to that. And I know you guys were talking afterwards.

Maria Twitchell: We too are concerned that there is not a lot of activity going on because of Shakespeare not happening. Our hope is that we can create a downtown event that happens once a week at least and so we brought some of the businesses together to see whether or not we could do that or even if there was an interest. And I think that there is. We're spending a lot of time going after a new market of visitors to come which is more outdoor recreation oriented, then culturally oriented. We've always focused on it of course, but now we're really focused on it. They're busy doing the day, but there's not a lot for them to do at night. And it's going to be a younger audience than our typical Shakespeare patron. So, we need to have some vitality and some activity. So, we just invited a couple of the downtown businesses and Scott was there and Jennie and just to see if we could put something together. There are some roadblocks in the way, but I think they're things we can overcome. Basically, shutting down a portion of Center Street and having a street festival every Friday night.

Chris McCormick: That would be huge. That would be a plus. I think that is one of the things in the last video that we had over at the Marriott. The Roger Brooks one, he talked about doing that on a weekly basis and having activities there that people could do anytime.

Maria Twitchell: I'm surprised the food truck people aren't here because you know they made that presentation about having a food truck event. Well here's an opportunity for you to bring your food trucks every Friday night through the summer. A portion of Center St would be shut down for you benefit.

Chris McCormick: Yeah, that would be ideal.

Scott Phillips: Just the fact that something is happening on Center St. is going to get more people downtown.

Maria Twitchell: So, we just need to have some more discussion. We have a person who may be interested in heading that. He will be compensated from money out of my budget, but he sounds like he's excited.

Mark Baruffi: Yeah, I talked another half an hour with him after you left talking with him and his last words to me were, "So I think I'll do the thing for Maria". I just told him, you know I believe in that kid, I said "Don't focus on what you're getting paid or anything. We just need you to guide it and don't overthink it. And we'll guide you through you know get these vendors and these vendors and we'll try to make it super simple and just chalk it up to experience." It's a good challenge for him, I think. You're going to get a lot of experience and network with a lot of people. And you're networking with the right people. So, I think he sees the value in that for sure.

Scott Phillips: So, if this starting in July, then runs every Friday through the summer.

Chris McCormick: So, with this Downtown Festival, when will it start?

Maria Twitchell: July 3rd. will start. We need to make sure we overcome some hurdles. We just need to check with property owners and just need to make sure that we're not making issues for them. Mindy has been amazing. I want this to be a downtown event. I want this to be led by the downtown people. Because it's for their benefit. It's not going to benefit anyone else. It's benefiting the downtown businesses. if we want to sponsor or help.

Scott Phillips: We definitely want the help of the University, but not expecting anything from them. Not expecting them to put it on. And it will involve culture, it will involve vendors, it'll involve food, it'll involve music. So, I think it has the potential and we're just working out all the details, but we've got a pretty good sense of where we want to go with it, I think.

Maria Twitchell: And if you would like to sponsor or help. We're going to need more volunteers more than anything.

Chris McCormick: So, when you have something put together on that you can send out that we can send to our ambassadors and to our members.

Scott Phillips: Yeah, maybe like to see the Ambassadors to take the like the first Friday of every month. Then the Volunteer Corps for one. Then the Lions or however it works out.

Chris McCormick: Yeah, they're looking for options. I think that's great. Anything else on the downtown festival we need to discuss?

Jennie Hendricks: I think it's in its infancy right now. But we are going to meet again next week so I'm sure we'll have a lot more information.

Scott Phillips: We won't be meeting again until after the first one has happened. Oh no July 2nd will be our meeting won't it? First Thursday?

Evan Vickers: Yeah it is the second.

Scott Phillips: Yeah it is the second, so it will be the day before our first event.

Chris McCormick: That's a real hustle but I like it. Okay Scott.

Business item #5: Next steps for Historic Downtown Sign

Scott Phillips: Okay, Brad I hope you're prepared to talk about this a little bit. This is the downtown sign.

Brad Abrams: Danny has not sent me information as of yet.

Scott Phillips: Oh, Danny said you'd be presenting. Great. Well then, I can explain it and hopefully, because we need to decide what we're doing and move on it. Because Deven Crist who did the historic downtown signs that we had the banners created from. He's created the template for the round sign in the middle of main street. We need to decide on if we are moving ahead with it or not. Because he's waiting to finalize it and get it to us and him get paid.

Sign was shown in minutes

Evan Vickers: This is to replace the one that is there?

Scott Phillips: Yeah

Jennie Hendricks: Just to update it.

Scott Phillips: Yeah and it has green in it, it's got the mountain in it. It has blue skies in it. It has got a lot more color in it.

Chris McCormick: So, is it round? Or oval?

Scott Phillips: It'll be round. We're not changing the framework, just the image inside.

Jennie Hendricks: I have money to put the remaining "entering downtown signs".

Scott Phillips: Oh, you do?

Jennie Hendricks: I do. Now we have a new downtown area, district. Defined district.

Scott Phillips: Historic District yeah. Approved by the city council two weeks ago.

Jennie Hendricks: But I have to work with the city planner.

Chris McCormick: So, this is the one like right over here by Shakespeare?

Jennie Hendricks: Yeah

Chris McCormick: That's great. That's a good sign.

Jennie Hendricks: So, I would like to put the other three in before the end of the year, and I run out of money.

Scott Phillips: Here is an image. I have it on my phone and I will pass it around. What the previous sign looked like and the new sign will look like.

Jennie Hendricks: Alan asked where we are going to put them.

Scott Phillips: Well the new boundaries are 200 S to Coal Creek. And 100 W to 100 E. That's the new boundaries, but whether that's where we put them or not. So, if we're okay with it, do we need to vote on it?

Chris McCormick: Yeah, we will have to vote on it. Wouldn't we?

Scott Phillips: I think so.

Chris McCormick: So, is there a motion to accept the sign for the replacement for the center of Main Street.

***MOTION:** Mindy Benson motioned to approve the replacement sign. Evan Vickers Seconded the motion. All approved unanimously.*

Scott Phillips: Brad, tell Danny I will get with him Monday and we'll talk about moving forward on it. When we're ready get that sign put up, I don't know how long it will take, but I think we should take a look at what's happening, and get the banners put back up to have a unified look on Main St.

Jennie Hendricks: But the banners are taken.

Scott Phillips: What do you mean they're taken?

Jennie Hendricks: So, Shakespeare has them taken for two months.

Scott Phillips: Why can't Shakespeare go on the inside of the bracket? And put the Historic Downtown banners on the outside?

Brad Abrams: You can talk to Donn Jersey over at Shakespeare and work that out.

Scott Phillips: I will.

Brad Abrams: Then contact our new assistant and they will help coordinate that.

Scott Phillips: Do you have a new assistant?

Brad Abrams: No, we do not. We are hiring that person.

Scott Phillips: I don't know how long it will take to get the sign produced. It may take a month. I don't know.

Jennie Hendricks: But the Shakespeare banners are contracted for two months correct?

Brad Abrams: Correct. Unless they switch then we could get with Wade to see if he would do that.

Chris McCormick: Any other business that needs to be brought up?

NEW BUSINESS:

Scott Phillips: I have one other thing to bring up, because Jennie asked me to. This is by way of information, but I think we are one meeting away from approving our Fiscal 20/21 budget. There's the RDA money and the city has some extra money we are going to put into retrofitting and redoing 100 East to 100 West, similar to Main Street. There will be the trees will be put in. The green antique light posts, with the banners and the brackets. The power poles will come up. So that come Christmas time, there's also power and we're purchasing lights to go that direction as well as the downtown we had last year. I don't know exactly when it will start, because it has to be done by Christmas. So, I'm guessing probably August/September-ish. But just to let you know there will probably be some inconvenience. But I think it will be a good thing for downtown in the long run to continue on that motif throughout.

Maria Twitchell: How will it affect the downtown center street events?

Scott Phillips: I'm not sure. We'll have to create pathways for the businesses. That's the Engineering departments problem not mine. I'm just trying to make it happen. So that's just to let you know it's happening. And I think it will be a good thing in the long run. And then obviously when money is there, we will continue to extend directions. But that's what we are going to be doing in this next fiscal year.

Mark Baruffi: Can we reach out to who is it at UDOT?

Scott Phillips: Rick Torgerson. And we need to do that. Just to say that this was not in the budget, this is what we're doing. Where are we at on the designs. I'll do it next week. I'll send a text message and I'll copy you on it, and we'll see where we go from there.

Chris McCormick: That will be a good idea, just get it over with.

Maria: because if we're going to do this, let's not undo what we do.

Chris: Right, one big push.

Scott: There was some discussion if you remember on maybe redesigning that road in terms of creating a bike lane, maybe we put diagonal parking, or we put parking in the middle of the street. Anyway, there was a couple different options, and nothing has been decided upon. But of course, we have to work through the state because it's a state street. Mr. Torgerson was very open to the idea. But they hadn't landed on anything.

Maria: They had some designs.

Scott: We said we like this but change this and could you come back with a modification of this. But then COVID hit and it just stopped right there. So, we just have to bring it back so we can all look at it.

Chris McCormick: Let's try to push that through as quickly as possible. Because I think if we can get it done at the same time it would make a big difference.

Maria: Or at least planned so we're not undoing.

Scott: Once you dig holes and put in fiber and power, we only want to do that once.

Mark: Plus, the inconvenience factor. Let's just inconvenience people once.

Chris: I like that idea myself.

Alan Jones: What happens to traffic in town and the Center Street neighborhood in particular if it's narrowed to one lane in each direction? Is that crazy or, I think Center St needs to be more walkable to really funnel traffic from the University and from Shakespeare downtown.

Scott: I agree with you Alan.

Mark: I think it will just slow them down which is what you would want anyway in a walkable area.

Evan Vickers: Only a few times will it create any type of traffic situation.

Scott: I mean I think that's what we've been pushing with UDOT. Because, quite frankly it only goes three blocks and then it stops and goes back to one lane.

Chris: UDOT themselves will say slower traffic is better.

Scott: You'll probably have to have some type of turn lane coming off of Main, but then it could go back into one lane. We're just used to it but I'm not sure it has to have it and I do think it will slow people down and make it more walkable. Which is what we want.

Chris: Thanks a lot. Any other business?

Evan Vickers: Let me just brief you on State budget. We are in the process of going through that. The appropriation committees have met. We won't even know until the 15th, because that is when we get those budget projections in for the current year. So the budget committees were; and this is always a demoralizing process because we ask all the appropriation committees to look at what would you do if there was a 2%, 5%, or 10% cut? Now we've gone back, and the positive news is we had close to 4 or 500 million dollars in ongoing money that was in one-time projects that were essentially working rainy day funds. We're pulling those projects back unfortunately one of those is SUU's building. And going back the other downside is we were expecting 800 – 900 million dollars of new money next year. And we appropriated that money, but it was kind of like April Fools. You know just kidding. Three hundred thousand of that was for Shakespeare to work on equipment. We've had to go back to the base budget. Which is the budget we started the year with, before any new money went into it. Having gone through this process now in the last couple of weeks and then we had meetings yesterday as joint leadership and then we had another meeting today and we're getting closer. The cuts from the base budget won't go as deep. At least right now that we thought they would be because of the working rainy-day funds. We had for example \$110 million that was going to be used to pay cash for the prison. And our bonding capacity, we're only at 35% of our bonding capacity. So, we'll bond for the prison and highway projects. So, we can pull that back and put it into the budget. We may use a small portion of the rainy-day fund, but then we'll just replenish it. It's just more for optics than anything. People don't understand the rainy-day funds. The rainy-day funds are like spending your IRA, its one-time money. You can't use it for ongoing projects. If you do, that's just really stupid, and it affects your bonding rate. We have a AAA bonding rate and we don't want to jeopardize that. So even though it's painful we're getting closer, but it looks like it might not be nearly as bad as originally expected but that could change.

Scott Phillips: That's the interesting thing, because none of us know for sure. We may be fine, but it's that uncertainty. We know that in the City, because we're about two months behind in sales tax and stuff that we get back, but in the month of March, sales tax, our portion was up 18 percent, year over year. And RAP tax was up 17% year over year. However, transient room tax was down 43 percent. But in terms of the City's budget the Transient room tax is such a

small portion of our overall revenue budget. It has an impact, but not a huge impact. So, we'll see what April and May bring.

Maria: It's all that toilet paper.

Scott: All the toilet paper. People going to Home Depot. It's everybody doing home projects and stocking up at Wal-Mart and Lin's.

Chris: Grocery stores and Wal-Mart have killed it.

Maria: Well and delivery, if everybody was going to Amazon and the delivery wasn't there. Then they were going to the local businesses and making their purchases.

Evan: The good news is we did implement some online sales tax which significantly made a difference there. It would have been nice if we could have kept the tax reform. On one side it would have been nice because we could have sales tax on groceries but on the other side cutting the income tax, because there was significant income tax cuts on that so it would have been painful on that side.

Scott: Never easy is it?

Mindy Benson: Yes, I have a quick update on SUU. As you all know we're opening face-to-face this fall. And we are figuring out plans if we go yellow or orange how we stay in the classroom and alternate students coming in on which days, so we don't have to shut down again. So, we're looking at plans for that. Utah State has canceled commencement that they moved to August. We've had long discussions today about it and we're not canceling ours until we have to cancel ours. They were concerned that they would be bringing that many people into Logan, in the middle of when all their students would be coming back to school and there would be an overlap and a major influx in the disease. There's a month between our commencement and when our school starts. So, I think we'll be okay. And Summer Games is planning on as soon as we turn green will start bringing tournaments in that have a big ROI. So, basketball and tournaments that will bring rooms in.

Scott: And they will be able to use the Universities facilities?

Mindy Benson: Right, as soon as we are able to go green and the Miller family has given full support to that. We'll start doing some tournaments, it won't look like the Summer Games, but it will be something that can happen in July and August. Then they'll have their CrossFit Festival in September and we'll do our commencement in August and then students will be back in September.

Evan Vickers: Chris let me give you some updates on COVID. So that you guys understand the dynamics of what's going on. So, what do you see if you guys watch the local state or national news? What's the first thing you see? Total new cases, or new cases, total cases and deaths. That's all you see. So, I've been working with those involved with the commission we set up to make recommendations to the Governor's Task Force and also I've had a long talk with Dr. Blodgett today and he and I are on the same page. The dynamics are how you manage the disease. It has nothing to do really with total cases or even deaths, because the deaths in Utah are so proportioned to vulnerable people. So, you look at the general population and even nursing homes. The commission is tracking three things. One of them is hospital beds. So, if you look at the number of hospital beds that are being used by COVID patients and then overall hospital bed use, we've got ample capacity across the state in hospitals. We have never reached the capacity concern that we thought we were going to. So, the distancing and the precautions we've been taking probably kept that down. The second thing is the Transmission rate and what they look at here is for ideally each patient that goes into a hospital there's one coming out. So, if you heard the one to one transmission rate. That's what they're talking about. Utah is hovering at 1 percent and has for weeks. There was one week where it spiked to 1.2. The third item is tracing. So, determining how successful are we on tracing where the person got the disease. The goal is 85 percent. We have been between 85 and 87 for some time. If you hear community spread, that's the speak for saying we don't know where they got it. But we look at that. How many people do you think are in the hospital right now with COVID?

Scott: You mean in Cedar? Zero

Evan: Yeah. There is zero.

Alan Jones: 17 in Southwest Utah.

Evan: They're all in St. George. There is nobody in the Cedar. Yes, we are going to have an increase in cases. Everybody's freaking out because those kids went and did something stupid, and they've got 25 cases. Is anybody in the hospital? No. Do any of them have severe symptoms? No. They're all mild cases. And so, the whole concept is, we've got to change the dialogue away from total deaths and total cases and seeing those graphs go up. The graph's we need to look at are like this. You know hospital beds are this.

Scott: Are we still at 99 percent recovery?

Evan: Yeah.

Alan Jones: Do you know what the rate is, when it comes to a person that contracts the disease and the spread rate? Is the ratio less than one?

Evan Vickers: It's 1/1. So normal flu is one to one. COVID is actually one to two and if you look at the geometrically, so if you have a flu patient that infect 10 people you know technically you get 100 people infected. With COVID you potentially can get a couple thousand. But the bottom line is we're maintaining that one to one. Here's the other thing too. Think about the message we've sent to the public. Number one is the government is going to tell you what you can do. The government is going to and they're responsible to keep you safe. And oh, by the way if everything fails, we'll give you money. So, what have we done? We've perpetuated the socialistic view to the public based on COVID. Dr. Blodgett and I were talking about it and we've really taken away some of those things, like the personal things we hold dear to through the constitution and other things. We're trying really hard in the state to change that dialog. And what you can do to help with that is focus on the positive things and how we manage the disease. Because we are going to have an uptick in cases. I don't care what you do. As we approach the fall when we normally have flu season hit. You're going to see an increase in flu and you're going to see an increase in COVID. But if we are managing that than there's no reason to fear. Now if you fall under the vulnerable population, based on age and vulnerable disease whether it be lung, heart, diabetes. You know those kinds of things. You've got to take care of yourself. I can't legislate behavior. You need to be safe. You can't expect me to make you be safe. You've got to be safe. You've got to take care of yourself. And that means you've got to be careful where you go and when you do go wear a mask and sanitize. We're really trying hard to get that message out. We had a meeting the other day and people are freaking out over us going green. Number one the green we are talking about going to is a smart green. So, it means that the only difference in a business is that the business now instead of being ordered to have employees wear mask and sanitization and those kinds of things. It's a suggestion. So basically, a directive. Now we made a decision a long time ago, until they say we're good to go. We're going to require our employees to do that. And I'm sure Mark's going to do the same thing and people like us are going to do the same thing. Because we know that if somebody comes in our business and doesn't feel safe, they're not going to come back. If individual that fall into that vulnerable categories still need to stay in the red. You need to take care of yourself. I can't tell you that you have to take care of yourself and I can't be offended if you don't take care of yourself. But I can do my part. That's the message we're really trying to get out. These data things are making a lot more sense than these total phases and things.

Scott: We'll do our very best to share that information.

Evan: The going green concept. The commission made a recommendation to go green to the Governor. Now it's become politicized. Because the Governor's office is thinking okay if we go green than we're kowtowing to Greg Hughes who is beating the crap out of Spencer Cox and so it's like holy cow. Even the concert coming out here is meant to poke an eye at the Governor. We're trying very hard to make these decisions based on data and science. Not politics. So, anything you guys can do to spread the dialogue would be helpful.

Jennie Hendricks: I saw Stuart Adams tested positive for COVID.

Evan: It's interesting Stuart said that at the first of the session he was feeling kind of sick. Then toward the end and after the session he was really tired. But of course, as senate president you expect to be rundown. He decided to go get an antibody test and it came back and he had antibodies. Apparently, he did have the virus. So, I've been around all sorts of people that have had it with no symptoms. I think I'm going to get an antibody test myself to see. Because there's two people that I know that have been diagnosed with it and I was close to both the last week of the session but none of us have had symptoms. There have been a couple of people on staff that have gone and gotten tested, but they were negative. Stuart says he feels like he's free now. He's going to go travel to Europe. The only problem is his wife didn't test positive with antibodies, so he has to go alone. I just want you guys to be aware that this is going on and a lot of you don't know that. A lot of you don't know the dynamics of what's out there. But that dialogue has got to change.

Scott Phillips: How do we change that? Can the hospital help us out? With a press release or something? I read this stuff every single day but never any detail about the one to one. Or the fact that there is zero hospitalization in Iron County.

Alan Jones: They don't break the hospitalization down by county they just by southwest region. They break new cases down by county.

Evan Vickers: Southwest has been a lot better than any other region because they talk about recovered cases. For example, Kane County is still listed at 3 cases. Essentially, they have zero because it's been over a month.

Maria: And all those people that travel through those two counties and they only have three?

Alan Jones: The problem is with a rural county like Kane or Garfield it wouldn't take all that many cases and that hospital/healthcare system overrun.

Evan Vickers: We could transfer people that wouldn't be a problem.

Alan: I think as long as the hospital and healthcare system is functioning has adequate ventilators and beds, we're fine. But as soon as we hit New York City and you're having a billion.

Chris McCormick: There are so many people in those areas. They're just right on top of each other and we're not.

Scott: Yeah, but you look at that ship and all the tents they were putting up. There were 100 people on a ship that will hold a thousand.

Evan: A couple of other things. This time of year. Typically, we have about 50 people in Utah die of health-related issues. About that. Last month we were at 164. Non COVID health related issues. What does that tell you? That if we shut down the healthcare system and we quit taking care of people and now those people are dying. So, another side story. I don't know if you guys heard this or not, but Dave Bleazard told me this. Back during the Spanish Flu 1917 or something. So, Parowan made the decision to lockdown. They locked the city down. Nobody in and nobody out. Then when they gave everybody the all clear they came back out. Parowan had the highest infection rate and the highest death rate of anyone in the country.

Scott: They all came out celebrated and then they all got sick.

Chris McCormick: Well you've seen what's happening in Florida. They didn't shut down at all.

Scott: That's what Sweden is doing. They didn't shut down at all.

Evan: That's really where we need to be now. Now that we've gotten over the hump and got a handle on this. That's where we need to be is protecting those vulnerable populations and managing the health care system. You can't fear it. Some people really it is a mental anguish for them.

Scott: I got so many emails about this concert and I had to say I have nothing to do with it.

Maria: But we're okay with all the tournaments that are coming in. They're bringing the same amount of people.

Evan: In principle I don't mind the concert. It just always bugs me when it's done for political reasons.

Chris: I agree.

Mark: Are we learning stuff Evan up North about this and is that discussion going to happen at some point of hey if this happens again, we need to handle this differently. I mean is that something?

Evan: That's interesting because we had a really nice pandemic response plan put into place and we kind of threw it out the window with COVID. So hopefully we are learning now. This commission that we put together, it was a little bit controversial when we did that, but it turned out to be a really good thing. I was talking to Dan Henry who is the senate chair of that this morning, and you can tell he's very passionate about it and working hard. We're trying to strategize how we can use that dialogue. Like I say, as you go back out into the public if you can help change that dialogue do it.

Maria Twitchell: It's so different between other states and Utah. It's truly leading on how to deal with the pandemic. You look at Nevada, there is no plan. And they are still, I mean it's horrible in Las Vegas what's happening.

Chris McCormick: Well and California.

Maria: And California. Because there is no plan.

Chris: They're going to keep that place closed until September or something.

Evans: If anybody flying into Hawaii whether you're local or not, you quarantine for 14 days. That quarantine means you can't leave your place. Food has to be delivered to you. You can't go out to get food. You can't do anything, and they'll arrest you if you do. The beaches are all closed. Pools are shut down. Activities are shut down. The restaurants are shut down. You know, there's nothing open.

Maria: So, book a condo in BrianHead.

Evan: If I'm going to do that. I'm just going to drive another 10 miles and go to my cabin.

MOTION: *Scott Phillips made a motion to adjourn this meeting. This was seconded by Maria Twitchell. And unanimously approved.*