

**Mayor's Report**  
**5 February 2023 – 18 February 2023**  
Larry Jacobsen

Greetings, boss. Here are some highlights from the past two weeks.

**Morgan Farm Possibilities**

Justin Maughan, Nibley City Manager, and I met with several individuals and organizations to talk about possibilities for the Morgan Farm on 800 West. This historic farm is owned by Nibley City. The meeting attendees included Roxie and Mike Christensen—citizens who have a passion for the farm—and representatives from USU Extension and 4H. The Morgan Farm is a great asset to Nibley, and we should be using it to its potential. One goal is to save the historic barn. Admittedly, there are associated costs to achieve that. Other goals gaining momentum include allowing a 4H club to raise animals on the property and perhaps organizing a community garden. Although we have tried a community garden in the past, the USU Extension could help make it more successful this time. Please stay tuned as ways to be involved develop and are advertised on the Nibley City website and through social media.

**CDC Walkability Virtual Academy**

Levi Roberts, Nibley City Planner, applied for and received a grant available through the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to learn about making Nibley a walkable community. Four communities from around the US received this grant, called the Walkability Virtual Academy. Levi asked me, along with representatives from Cache County and the Bear River Health Department, to participate, and we had a kick-off meeting last week. The training material looks excellent and includes about twenty hours of instruction over the course of ten weeks. On another front, Nibley City will soon be creating an Active Transportation Master Plan that is currently included in other plans. The Walkability Academy and a new focus on a stand-alone active transportation plan will give Nibley a chance to commit to a walkable community. I believe we like the idea of a walkable community, and there will be great opportunities for citizen input as we write the Active Transportation Plan. Please stay tuned; we will advertise those opportunities on the Nibley City website and through social media.

In addition to helping us write master plans, I encourage you to pay attention to, and get involved with, the Planning Commission and City Council meetings that are noticed on the city website (Nibleycity.com). If you follow the links on specific agendas, you will find advanced Public Information Packets that give a wealth of background information on each of the specific agenda items. Did you know that the Planning Commission held a public hearing last week to seek citizen input on walkability issues? One of the proposed changes to city ordinance would require newly constructed churches to be more involved in making Nibley a walkable community. As an example of how important citizen input is, I was surprised at the differences of opinion expressed at the Planning Commission meeting on this walkability topic. The Commission is still working on this, and then it will go to the City Council. Because I try to avoid lobbying for my own opinions in these reports, I will simply encourage you to get involved in the process that writes the rules that shape our community.

### **Watermark Property**

I have previously mentioned the Watermark property north of the Thomas Edison Charter School (links below). This land is currently in Logan City and has a very intensive zoning allowance in Logan when compared to Nibley. Specifically, current Logan zoning would allow 30 multi-family residential units per acre and require commercial activity on this property. In contrast, currently Nibley's most intensive residential zone allows only ten units per acre and requires a mix of multi- and single-family housing. The Charter School is feeling the potential impact of the intensity allowed in Logan. The property owner has expressed an interest in disconnecting from Logan and annexing to Nibley and would likely expect a housing density in between Logan's and Nibley's current allowances. To discuss the possibility of coming to Nibley, the property owner, Charter School administration, Councilmembers Tom Bernhardt and Erin Mann, city staff, and I met to see if there is an intersection of expectations between the groups. We have a long way to go to make this happen, although I was pleased to see an attitude of cooperation between the parties. Our next step is to learn more specifics about the landowner's expectations and compare those to the expectations of the Charter School. We shall see.

[http://nibleycity.com/images/2022/Mayors\\_Journal/2022\\_12\\_03.pdf](http://nibleycity.com/images/2022/Mayors_Journal/2022_12_03.pdf)

[http://nibleycity.com/images/2022/Mayors\\_Journal/2022\\_12\\_10.pdf](http://nibleycity.com/images/2022/Mayors_Journal/2022_12_10.pdf)

### **Elkhorn Ranch Historical Marker**

Councilmember Kay Sweeten, along with Thayne Sweeten (historical enthusiast and Kay's husband), David Mann (local artist), Justin Maughan (City Manager), and I got together to talk about a possible historical marker in Nibley's Heritage Park that would commemorate the first permanent white settlers in Cache Valley who originally located at Elkhorn Ranch. The historical record indicates that the Elkhorn ranch was in the vicinity of Nibley's Heritage Park. It would be great to start with this historical marker and then expand it to other markers for Nibley parks and trails. I have pitched this same idea to the Cache Valley Historical Society to do similar markers throughout Cache County. The idea is like roadside historical markers, but we would place these markers in parks and on trails rather than roadsides. It would be cool to have a QR code on the marker that would point to additional information about the historic topic. This is admittedly an energetic concept, but I can dream, right?

### **Utah Legislation**

I met with several Cache Valley Mayors to get an update from and provide feedback to Cameron Diehl, Utah League of Cities and Towns (ULCT) Director, regarding SB 174 currently being considered by the Utah Legislature. The ULCT helps lobby for municipalities at the state legislature. The Property Rights Coalition is pressing for SB 174 because they believe municipalities are unnecessarily slowing down the process for developers to build housing in Utah. Local officials and the ULCT aren't keen to have the Utah legislators take away our local authority. The good news is negotiations have removed from the draft bill most of the items that would limit a city's legislative authority (such as annexation and zoning). The Property Rights Coalition is now focusing on administrative processes such as plan reviews and subdivision approvals. I am ok with formalizing the administrative processes if the legislation also puts additional requirements on developers to submit valid, reviewable plans rather than blame the cities when developers aren't doing their own work. As I see it, developers sometimes submit substandard

plans and expect the cities to do the developer's job. Another issue in the proposed legislation is that it would set a 22-foot standard pavement width for neighborhood roads in all cities. Nibley code allows some of these narrower roads in particular cases, but these roads don't work unless on-street parking is eliminated. I don't believe these narrow streets should be the default, as the legislation currently proposes. If you feel the urge, it would be great for Nibley citizens to contact Casey Snider and Scott Sandall, our legislative representatives in Nibley. I have pasted links to these representatives below.

Casey Snider, <https://house.utleg.gov/rep/SNIDEC/>  
Scott Sandall, <https://senate.utah.gov/sen/SANDASD/>

### **Miscellaneous**

The Council of Governments met to consider rule changes while awarding the voter-approved, local-option sales tax for transportation projects in Cache Valley. This is the source of funding that Nibley received last year to develop 1200 West. We hope to get the final phase of that road funded this year. We are taking an active role in deciding on the rules that determine how this money is allocated.

Finally, Justin Maughan, Nibley City Manager, and I met with Mayor Stephanie Miller from Hyrum about coordinating Nibley's Justice Court prosecution with Hyrum's. I will provide updates on these items as we make progress.

Thanks for reading, boss. Please call, text, or write anytime.

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Many thanks to Leslie Maughan for proofreading and giving feedback on this report.

By the way, if you find these status reports worthwhile, then you might give me some feedback by simply texting me, "I read it" to 435-512-7495. Thanks!