

Commission appoints Sarah Stock to vacant seat

Choice was out of four candidates all considered qualified for role

The shorthanded Grand County Commission on Tuesday, Jan. 5 appointed to its vacant seventh seat Sarah Stock, a lifelong Moabite and advocate on Colorado River Watershed issues.

Stock was among four candidates from the county commission's third district who applied, and each county commissioner emphasized that they would have been comfortable with appointing any of the four candidates.

Stock won the appointment by a 5-1 vote, with Commissioner Trisha Hedin voting against. Hedin had emphasized her support for Steve Getz to be the appointee but also said that she was not actually opposed to Stock's appointment.



Sarah Stock

For the past three years, Stock has been the program

director of Living Rivers, an advocacy group focused on "re-establishing a free-flowing Colorado River through Glen and Grand canyons," according to its website. Among their primary positions: the removal of the Glen Canyon Dam, which forms Lake Powell.

Grand County Commission Chair Mary McGann had expressed a particular interest in seeing Stock on the commission prior to the meeting, recognizing advocacy work she had done on water and public lands issues.

During the meeting, McGann credited her for being "instrumental in helping Grand County bring an end to the Book Cliffs road." She said that Stock had been working "behind the scenes" in Grand County for the six years she has sat on the commission.

Also applying for the commission job were Getz, who has sat on the board of directors of the Canyonlands Field Institute, a local nonprofit focused on outdoor education and stewardship. Getz is a longtime member of the Moab Rotary Club, and through working with him in various capacities through Moab's nonprofit network, Grand County Commission Vice Chair Gabriel Woytek said Getz had an "impressive record of service," also attributing to him "wisdom and impartiality."

Josie Kovash also applied; she has long worked for local

nonprofits and in community-building efforts, Woytek said. Woytek remarked that he was impressed with Kovash's time serving on the Grand County Planning Commission, as well. McGann read an excerpt of Kovash's letter during the meeting, acknowledging the perceptiveness with which she spoke of the city.

Stephen Stocks, who served as the chair of the Grand County Change in Form of Government Study Committee in 2019 and ran in 2020 for the at-large seat on the commission against now-Commissioner Kevin Walker, also applied to the District Three vacancy. McGann said that Stocks had demonstrated his "willingness to serve by running for county attorney and commissioner at large," which she said added a considerable layer of stress to the job of campaigning.

The commission is now fully constituted, bringing a mix of older and younger locals to the table, men and women, parents of young children and otherwise. The ideological and political mixture on the commission remains to be seen, as the most recent election cycle was the last in the county to be nonpartisan before state-imposed changes to the county's form of government take effect.