

I have recently become chair of the Hamakua Community Development Plan Action Committee. I have several thoughts which I would like to address to your groups. In light of many recent changes to the CDP process it has been left to the CDP committees themselves to take initiative and pick up where the county left off, from organizing our own district meetings to connecting our CDP groups islandwide.

First, legal reference for our Hamakua Action Committee, Suzanna Tiapula from Corporation Counsel, has expressed concurrence with my understanding of Sunshine Law, that there are no restrictions in my addressing members of other Action Committees besides my own. This concurrence was expressed in our most recent Action Committee meeting. I am therefore addressing this letter to all Action Committee members except my own Hamakua Committee. I am registering it as written communication or submission in those meetings. Suzanna emphasized that the recipients of such a letter may not 'Reply All' or respond to it's contents by continuing discussions that would include multiple members of their own Action Committee. This is only in so far as the content of that discussion might include potential agenda items of that Committee.

As you are all aware, the several Action Committees are in a period of transition. I take note of the wonderful emergence of the new Committee in Kau. We all wish them well in the important tasks ahead. South Kohala remains strong, as always, tackling many issues of vital importance to that district. Puna's function has been largely subsumed by the disaster response group, though I have recently inquired whether they might soon reconvene as an Action Committee, meeting as such. Kona is about to reemerge as a vigorous committee, with its first meeting since May scheduled for Monday, December 19. Hamakua, in its brief lifespan of 3 years, is feeling invigorated, having emerged from the constraints of meeting on a 3 month schedule to now having productive monthly meetings. North Kohala has had change of status. They are now no longer an administratively official Action Committee but have transitioned to North Kohala Advisory Group. They continue to have close relationship with the Planning Department and function in many ways similar to the Action Committees. They select their own membership and apparently do not have the same constraints of Sunshine Law.

Several months ago I had seen comments, in media and addressed personally, that the disengagement of the Planning Department from certain administrative relationships with the Action Committees would be a potentially crippling blow to the committees' functioning. My view certainly differed. Heather Kimball, our councilperson, reassured our group, and I concurred, that Planning was stretched beyond their limit and while untethering the Action Committees, would present some challenges, ultimately it would be an empowering transition. Our liaison with Heather Bartlett and Elyse Stevens at Planning has remained steadfast and their access and support has been marvelous. Thus, I am only encouraged by all the above developments.

I believe that it is axiomatic that, in the face of transition, it is necessary that there would be more robust communication. I understand the limitations of Sunshine Law and the opportunities and limitations provided by technological magic of Zoom. Within those limitations, I would propose that organizing a Zoom combined meeting of the five Action Committees plus the North Kohala Advisory Group would be empowering to our

functioning as individual district boards. Planning has emphasized that this transition should be seen as an empowerment.

There are some topics for discussion which are common to us all. Planning had earlier emphasized the commonality of challenges throughout the several districts. Challenges in housing, infrastructure, natural systems degradation, these are problems we all share. An understanding of the deficiencies in the zoning, subdivision and building Code that have necessitated its revision, might allow the Action Committees to participate more meaningfully in the process of its re-envisioning. Undoubtedly, there are many challenges which are common to us all which could be considered as agenda by a preliminary meeting among the Committee chairs.

With the opportunity for renewed invigoration which has been bestowed upon us by Planning, the mere activity of accomplishing a Combined meeting would encourage our potential as Action Committees.

I propose that each Action Committee consider how to best organize, perhaps through their chair, a combined Action Committee meeting.

I have sent this as communication to your Action Committee, but also as a letter to each member and to the Planning Department. We need to recognize Planning as a most important partner in exploring how we can guide each of our districts and the island as a whole into a mutual and desired future.

Mahalo for your consideration,
Tawn Keeney MD