PUBLIC ACCESS, OPEN SPACE, AND NATURAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION COMMISSION

# MINUTES

November 10, 2025

Public Meeting
West Hawaiʻi Civic Center
74-5044 Keohokalole Hwy., Building G
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

## I. CALL TO ORDER:

On November 10, 2025, the Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources Preservation Commission (PONC) meeting was called to order at 9:04 a.m. by Chair Rosam, who welcomed all in attendance and introduced the Commissioners and PONC Staff. Those who were present constituted a quorum.

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| Present: | Deborah Chang, Commissioner CD-1<br>Deborah J. Ward, Commissioner CD-5<br>Jodie Rosam, Chair (Chr.) CD-6<br>Janet Britt, Commissioner CD-7<br>La Crivello, Vice Chair (V. Chr.) CD-8<br>Maya Goodoni, Commissioner CD-9 |
| Absent: | Amedeo Markoff, Commissioner CD-4 |
| Vacant: | District 2<br>District 3 |
| Support Staff: | Jean Campbell, Deputy Corporation Counsel Representative (DCC)<br>Malia Kekai, Deputy Director, Department of Finance<br>Benjamin Schapiro, Program Manager, Department of Finance<br>Eva Braman, Commission Secretary |

## II. STATEMENT(S) FROM THE PUBLIC:

Chr. Rosam opened the floor for public testimony and explained that testimony may be made at the beginning of the meeting or immediately preceding the agenda item being opened for deliberation by the Commission.

TAMARA KUʻULEI HALLIWELL VERHAULT, in support of application STU.26-04

TANYA SOUZA, in support of application STU.26-04


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NICOLE KEAKA LUI, in support of application STU.26-04

HEATHER REMO, in support of application STU.26-04

KEONI FOX, commented on application STU.26-01

CHLOE PARSONS, in support of application STU.26-01

## III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Acknowledgement of Commissioners Crivello and Ward for their service on the commission**
The commission acknowledged Cmr's Crivello and Ward for their years of service and expertise during their time on the commission.

2. **Report from the commission's Permitted Interaction Group (PInG) that reviewed the stewardship grant rubric**
Chr. Rosam explained that the worksheet replaced numeric scores with three ratings: exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or needs work. The form included space to note strengths, weaknesses, and questions so commissioners could prepare targeted discussion points.

   Cmr. Chang said the worksheet was a thinking aid for commissioners and invited feedback on any issues or better prompts after commissioners tested it. She noted that some fillable fields might not work as expected because the form was intentionally kept brief.

   Chr. Rosam reported that the worksheet added a section tailored to current stewardship grantees, with questions specific to groups that already received funds.

   Chr. Rosam clarified that the commission could not adopt or modify the worksheet at this meeting due to the Sunshine Law. Commissioners were asked to compare it to Finance's 2025 rubric, keep it alongside the current tool during the day's rankings, and bring comments to the January meeting. She added that printed copies could help commissioners capture notes and questions.

3. **2026 Stewardship Grant Applications – Interview applicants and discussion regarding grant applications**
The commission began by asking the Department of Finance questions regarding the pre-review report it received regarding the applications.

   Ms. Kekai stated that this was the second year of the pre-review and that staff intended to make it a regular practice. She noted the process was still developing and that this year's effort was a first attempt to flag recurring issues and bring them to the commission for discussion. She added that staff looked forward to the commissioners' interpretations and comments on each application.

   Cmr. Chang asked whether the stewardship grants were reimbursable, meaning applicants would front costs and seek repayment later.

Ms. Kekai stated that awardees received 50 percent at contract execution. If an awardee spent more than that initial advance, and the costs were eligible and supported by receipts, the next draw of 40 percent after an approved progress report functioned as reimbursement. The final 10 percent would be released after the final report.

Cmr. Chang requested clarification regarding applicant's not receiving their initial payment for eight or nine months into the year and whether the applicant could submit receipts during that eight or nine month time.

Ms. Kekai clarified that if the expense was incurred during the term of the agreement, it could be reimbursable.

Cmr. Chang asked whether bylaws permitting compensation for directors and officers posed a problem.

DCC Campbell stated that the County Code required board members of any nonprofit receiving County grants to serve without compensation in their role as board members. She noted that in other instances throughout other County grants, non-profits had previously submitted affidavits confirming that, even if bylaws allowed compensation, their board members were not paid for board service.

DCC Campbell explained that per the Charter, the maintenance fund allowed payment to any individual, including a board member, for specific project tasks listed in the approved budget. Payment for those tasks was distinct from compensation for board service.

In response to follow up questions, DCC Campbell stated that the funding source does not change the rule. Board members could not be paid for board service regardless of where funds originated (PONC or otherwise). She added that the requirement appeared in the grant agreement, with a code citation, and staff continued to work on making guidance clearer.

Cmr. Britt asked whether the County had a scale for contractor pay or if nonprofits set rates. She noted that some prices appeared high. Ms. Kekai said staff were developing benchmarks. She added that a new Program Manager, Ben Schapiro, had been tasked with reviewing price points and procurement practices to ensure appropriate use of funds.

Ms. Kekai stated that pay for nonprofit staff should align with typical nonprofit rates. She gave an example that a $200,000 salary would raise concerns when comparable roles at nonprofits earn about $50,000. She said the department planned to increase oversight and education each year.

Cmr. Britt suggested that applicants specify contractor pay rates, such as hourly amounts, in their budgets. Ms. Kekai agreed and said the goal was to reach a point where applicants could provide clear rate details upfront once the funding cycle became more regular.

Ms. Kekai reported that she had informed the Mayor of plans to host annual Countywide trainings for all grant programs. She said the sessions would cover eligibility and budgeting expectations and would include checklists to help applicants meet requirements.

Cmr. Chang suggested creating a running list of expenses that were clearly allowed and not allowed for PONC grants, noting that repeat disallowed items appeared in budgets each year and created avoidable review time. Ms. Kekai stated that staff were working on such a list.

Ms. Kekai added that staff were defining which costs were the County's kuleana and which were the steward's, using security as an example of a cost the County should carry rather than the steward. She stated that staff planned to maintain and update these lists annually.

Ms. Kekai reported that the department planned to implement a new grants software system by next fiscal year which will include an applicant portal for document uploads, checklists, and guidance. She stated that the system would also centralize reporting to improve consistency and access.

The commission proceeded to interview applicants.

**a. STU.26-01, Aumakua Acres – Native plant restoration at Kāwā**

Applicant, Chloe Parsons, came forward to engage in the discussion with the commission.

Ms. Parsons began by correcting the reference to "inoculants" in their application and confirmed that the intent was to remove "invasive" species.

V. Chr. Crivello asked whether Kealakekua Forest Nursery had consented to participate. Ms. Parsons stated that it had not. She added that she had initiated discussion with the nursery.

V. Chr. Crivello asked whether any nonprofits or Native Hawaiian organizations with ties to Kāwā or descendant groups were involved. Ms. Parsons stated that none were currently engaged. She said she was new to the process and had not yet connected with lineal descendants or close relatives from Kāwā or Kaʻū.

V. Chr. Crivello noted that the long-range plan included educational signage, place-based education, and tours, and asked if the organization has anyone with experience or knowledge of the area who will be leading that education and supporting those tours. Ms. Parsons stated that she did not have the expertise to lead that work. She said the management plan would include outreach to individuals knowledgeable about Kāwā and Kaʻū, preferably descendants or residents of the area.

V. Chr. Crivello asked whether Ms. Parsons had identified advisors who could direct her to the appropriate community contacts. Ms. Parsons stated that this would be developed in the management plan.

Cmr. Britt asked for the size of the project area. Ms. Parsons stated that she did not know the acreage. Cmr. Britt also noted multiple misspellings in the materials. She suggested that in the future, Ms. Parsons run spell check and correct the errors.

Cmr. Ward asked whether Ms. Parsons understood that funds would not be available until 2027. She noted that her application listed 2025 activities that did not align with the grant cycle. Ms. Parsons stated that she was not aware of the timing. Ms. Parsons also stated that she had not known that a nonprofit already stewarded the site. She said she had tried to find a property without existing support and found the application confusing.

Cmr. Goodoni asked if Ms. Parsons planned restoration work on the pond. Ms. Parsons said yes. Cmr. Goodoni noted that restoration in a fishpond or other wetland required permits and that approvals could take time. She advised the applicant to plan accordingly.

Commissioners asked whether Ms. Parsons had connected with local groups working at Kāwā. She stated that she had not. Commissioners encouraged her to make those connections and offered to assist her in doing so. Ms. Parsons welcomed that offer.

Cmr. Chang asked staff whether the applicant had submitted bylaws, noting that bylaws were required. Ms. Braman stated that staff had not received them.

Cmr. Chang then said she lacked basic information about the organization, including its mission and purposes, because the bylaws were missing. She questioned why the application was accepted without the required documents and stated that reviewing incomplete applications was not the best use of the commission's time.

V. Chr. Crivello asked whether staff should withhold applications that lacked required documents. She noted that the commission could not approve an application without the minimum documents and questioned why such items were placed on the agenda. The discussion reflected a preference that Finance not forward incomplete or noncompliant applications to the commission.

Ms. Kekai explained that staff had allowed items through based on past practice, where applicants could supply documents after submission. She added that Finance planned to implement a grants system that would require all required documents to be uploaded before submission, which would prevent incomplete applications from reaching the commission. She said staff had given applicants the benefit of the doubt this cycle because the system was not yet in place.

**MOTION**:

V. Chr Crivello moved that application 26-01 be denied for failure to meet the requirements of the Charter and Hawaiʻi County Code. Seconded by Cmr. Britt.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.

Noes: None.

**b. STU.26-02, Kohanaiki ʻOhana – Mālama Oʻoma Stewardship Project**

Applicant, Karen Eoff, came forward to engage in the discussion with the commission.

Ms. Eoff briefly introduced herself and shared some information about her organization.

Cmr. Britt asked about the fencing. Ms. Eoff said fencing had not progressed, and goats continued to browse. She described an ineffective electric fence and said they used noise to deter herds but remained concerned about losses.

Chr. Rosam cautioned against planting before fencing because goats could remove sensitive species quickly. Ms. Eoff said the group delayed planting while expecting the fence within about 45 days, but plants risked dying in the nursery, so they out planted many.

Ms. Eoff said her husband served as director and project manager. She said the team included paid workers, volunteers, and limited community service placements for low level offenses. She described recent weeding work by one participant.

Ms. Kekai reported that an RFQ for the fence came in at over $50,000, which triggered a formal bid process with detailed specifications and a Public Works review. She said that procurement timelines, not the applicant, were the main cause of the delay, and staff were pressing Public Works to release the bid.

Ms. Kekai said the design followed NRCS ungulate fencing guidelines at roughly 75 inches in height with a smooth top strand, with vehicle and pedestrian gates. Ms. Eoff said that pedestrian gates feel welcoming.

Ms. Braman stated that the bid included about 2,000 linear feet of fencing. Ms. Eoff estimated an enclosure of about five to six acres.

V. Chr. Crivello asked for confirmation that survey and archaeological documentation would protect cultural features during installation. Ms. Kekai confirmed.

**MOTION**:
Cmr. Britt moved to approve application 26-02 as submitted. Seconded by Cmr. Ward.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.

Noes: None.

**c. STU.26-03, Keauhou Canoe Club – Keauhou Bay Open Space**

Applicant, Peter Lasich, came forward to engage in the discussion with the commission.

V. Chr. Crivello asked about partnerships with Native Hawaiian preservation groups and lineal descendants tied to Keauhou. Mr. Lasich stated that he was new to the process and had not engaged descendant groups. He said he had some initial conversations but was unsure how far to proceed before any approval.

Cmr. Ward asked about shared security with Kamehameha Schools. Mr. Lasich said he had not reached out and had not observed regular security in recent years. He described past gate closures, a recent tsunami access coordination, and ongoing issues like a long-parked vehicle. When asked if County-provided security and gate operations would be acceptable, he agreed and reiterated a day-use intent for the site. He noted access runs through a Kamehameha Schools easement.

Cmr. Britt asked why the proposal focused on lei plants. Mr. Lasich said the area was small and may have limited soil for planting. He said irrigation would likely be needed and that he might request temporary water access from Kamehameha Schools if the project moved forward. He estimated the site as two small lots under 30,000 square feet with large trees that may require pruning. He said the canoe club's lei making committee would lead instruction.

Chr. Rosam asked about the planned land clearing. Mr. Lasich said the work would use chainsaws, a chipper, and weed eaters. He said no heavy machinery would be used and no bulldozing was planned.

Cmr. Britt asked about the security plan that mentioned gates, locks, and professional security. Mr. Lasich said the goal was day use only and that closing a drive gate at night, with pedestrian access remaining, would address most concerns. He did not want to install a gate across an ancient stone wall. He added that contracted security could be costly and would likely be limited to closing the gate.

Chr. Rosam asked about trash and recycling. Mr. Lasich said the club would place and maintain trash and recycle bins as it does at its canoe site. He said recycling proceeds support the club's youth program and that current bins near the beachfront were limited.

**MOTION**:
V. Chr. Crivello moved that decision-making on Stewardship Application 26-03 be deferred until after Stewardship Application 26-04 to provide permission and opportunity to interview applicants requesting funds for the same TMK parcel and assess funding overlaps or otherwise significant crossovers of the applications. Seconded by Cmr. Britt.

Cmr. Chang asked whether the commission would take up a subsequent motion on 26-03 after hearing the other applicant.

V. Chr. Crivello stated there were overlaps and two different prospective stewards for the same property. She said the commission needed to hear both applicants to understand the full scope before acting on 26-03.

**VOTE:**
Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.
Noes: None.

**MEETING RECESSED: 10:45 a.m.**
**MEETING RECONVENED: 11:05 a.m.**

**d. STU.26-04, Kupa 'Aina O Keauhou – Keauhou Community-Based Stewardship Initiative**

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:
ALEXIA AKBAY, representing Huli Pac, in support of application STU.26-04

MARISSA HARMAN, representing Kamehamahea Schools, in support of application STU.26-04

MAKANAHELE EMMSLEY, in support of application STU.26-04

KALEIOLANI PASCUITA, in support of application STU.26-04

The commission began discussions with the applicant, Kalei Pascuita.

Cmr. Chang requested clarification regarding the requested grant amount. The sum on page 2 of the application doesn't match the totals listed on the budget details pages.

Ms. Pascuita clarified that the amounts listed on the budget details pages were the amounts requested. They are requesting $32,000 for Maintenance Activities and $47,000 for Management Planning.

A discussion ensued regarding the application that was submitted to the Department of Finance. The applicant appeared to realize that the submitted application form was different from the one they intended to submit.

Cmr. Chang asked about the $10,000 budgeted for native species management. Mr. Remo said it covered a biologist to develop erosion control, sediment prevention, and fire protection. Ms. Pascuita added they had worked with community members familiar with local plants and sought professional guidance, but they did not have quotes.

Cmr. Ward asked about water for a nursery. Ms. Pascuita said water service existed on site but they had not activated it. Mr. Remo said they found multiple irrigation lines while clearing cane grass. Ms. Pascuita said they would assess what worked before using any lines.

Chr. Rosam confirmed the parcel size was about one third of an acre. Ms. Pascuita agreed and noted it was the smallest property.

Cmr. Goodoni asked about wetlands. Ms. Pascuita said there were none. She said they planned to survey native species and that descendants had reported species missing from the area.

Cmr. Ward contrasted day use in the prior application (26-03) with their approach. An applicant said they had hosted public workshops. Ms. Pascuita said nighttime cultural use, including fishing, was important and that the seawall enabled access. She said keeping the area open for cultural practice remained a priority.

V. Chr. Crivello summarized that public access required groundwork first, including archaeological and ecological understanding and building relationships with descendants, schools, cultural practitioners, and existing stewards. She noted heavy tour activity in Keauhou and said foundational access should reconnect community members who had been displaced. Ms. Pascuita agreed and described workshops that shared maps and place names to build respect and correct usage. She said broader outreach used Facebook, Instagram, their website, posters, and radio.

Chr. Rosam asked if the scope was feasible in one year. Ms. Pascuita said outside support was ready and many tasks were needed. Another applicant representative said some items like tables were one-time purchases and that workshops, propagation, and coastal monitoring could proceed.

V. Chr. Crivello asked about AIS timing and ground disturbance. Ms. Pascuita said



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nursery space would be simple and non-permanent. She said initial work would include hand clearing, education, and coastal monitoring until AIS progressed.

Cmr. Chang asked how the new request built on a current stewardship grant. Ms. Pascuita said funds had not been executed and they were discussing term and funding with the County. She said the first steps would be to purchase a small trailer for tools to support hand clearing and workshops, not a container on site. She said tools would be stored on the trailer and removed daily, so no permit was needed.

The applicant stated first steps would include a perimeter walk to map visible features, identify suitable planting areas, avoid sensitive sites, and inform AIS planning. They said the team would observe the seawall and other coastal conditions before deciding on specific actions.

V. Chr. Crivello stated that setting up a nursery space that was not ground disturbing and not permanent was acceptable. She said any planting counted as ground disturbance and should wait until the AIS was completed. She added that seed scattering should also wait and that planting in the first year was not necessary. She thanked the applicants for submitting.

At the request of Deputy Director Kekai, it was clarified by the commission and applicant that limu planting is not part of the scope of work the applicant intends to do.

Cmr. Chang stated that she needed more information before she could approve. She said the timing of a coastal water quality baseline study and aquatic species work was unclear and did not appear in the budget. She said the planned use of funds beyond a trailer and tools was unclear. She also said the applicants did not know when current funds would be released. She recommended requesting written answers to these questions and revisiting the application in January, with the option to approve as submitted or with conditions.

**MOTION**:
V. Chr. Crivello moved that the decision-making on stewardship application 26-04 be deferred to the January 2026 meeting in order to allow the commission to seek additional information and documents from the applicant. Seconded by Cmr. Britt.

**VOTE TO DEFER UNTIL JANUARY MEETING:**

Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.

Noes: None.

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c. **STU.26-03, Keauhou Canoe Club – Keauhou Bay Open Space**

**MOTION**:
V. Chr. Crivello moved that stewardship application 26-03 be denied for failure to demonstrate a capacity to support the intended purpose of the PONC property at this time.

**VOTE:**
Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.
Noes: None.

The commission decided to change the order of the agenda in order to discuss STU.26-08. Cmr. Britt recused herself as she is a member of board for the organization.

h. **STU.26-08, Friends of Amy B.H. Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden – Hoʻihoʻi hou ʻana I nā Māla o Kona**

PUBLIC TESTIMONY:
MARYANN MAIGRET, representing Amy B.H. Greenwell Ethnobotanical Garden, in support of application STU.26-08

Applicant, Maryann Maigret, and former executive director of the organization, Lou Putzel, came forward to engage in discussion with the commission.

Cmr. Chang asked if the small hale would be a traditional Hawaiian structure. Ms. Maigret said yes and described a learning space using traditional techniques and, if feasible, traditional woods with biosecurity controls. Cmr. Chang advised checking with the Building Division about requirements for traditional hale, including thatched roofs. Mr. Putzel said they would verify what permits applied to traditional versus non-traditional hale.

V. Chr. Crivello asked where the hale would sit relative to the nursery. Ms. Maigret said it would be in the coastal zone area of the garden, between the mauka road and the Amy Greenwell house.

Cmr. Ward asked whether tables, seating, and tents were reimbursable. Mr. Putzel said they viewed those as basic public access infrastructure and could seek other funds if the commission deemed them ineligible. Cmr. Chang asked staff why these items might not be reimbursable. Ms. Kekai said it was difficult to ensure exclusive use for PONC, and the County was still clarifying rules about equipment ownership and transfer if/when stewardship ended. Mr. Putzel noted they had previously been told they may be able to borrow equipment from the County but later found no such equipment available, so the garden relied on mixed funding for shared infrastructure. Cmr. Ward suggested, if there are no table police, the organization should just label items "PONC" if purchased with

PONC funds.

Cmr. Ward asked whether bylaws allowing director's compensation were disqualifying. DCC Campbell stated the County's practice was to request an affidavit confirming board members were not compensated for board service and imagined this program would be handled consistently.

**MOTION:**

V. Chr. Crivello moved that stewardship application 26-08 be recommended for approval pending finance review of the application funding request as it pertains to charter 10-15 allowable expenses. Seconded by Cmr. Chang.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 5.
Noes: None.
Excused: Britt – 1.

**MEETING RECESSED: 12:03 p.m.**
**MEETING RECONVENED: 12:30 p.m.**

e. **STU.26-05, Ala Kahakai Trail Association – Kahua ʻOlohu**

Chr. Rosam opened STU.26-05 for Kahua ʻOlohu and invited questions.

Cmr. Chang asked about community use of the grounds. Mr. Fox said use had been limited but interest was growing, including requests for events and athletic instruction. He said there was no signage and agreed to consider it.

V. Chr. Crivello asked about attendance at the recent makahiki. Mr. Fox said participation had grown from about 20 students in the first year to 500 to 600 students last year, with a similar turnout expected for the next event.

Chr. Rosam noted a budget line for transport and equipment. Ms. Kekai said transportation and mileage were not reimbursable, but fuel used on site for mowers and tools was allowable. She said student transportation and driver costs were likely not allowable and would require further review. Mr. Fox said he would adjust and could document on site fuel use.

V. Chr. Crivello noted bylaws that allowed director compensation. Ms. Kekai said the County would require an affidavit confirming no board compensation for board service if the application was approved. Mr. Fox agreed.

**MOTION:**

V. Chr. Crivello moved to recommend approval of STU.26-05, pending County review of allowable expenses under Charter 10-15. Cmr. Britt seconded.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.

Noes: None.

**f. STU.26-06, Ala Kahakai Trail Association – Kaʻū Heritage Preserve Ranger Program**

Chr. Rosam introduced STU.26-06 for the Kaʻū Heritage Preserve Ranger Program. Cmr. Britt asked about acreage, and Mr. Fox said the four properties totaled 5,533 acres. He said the separate Makahiki application covered mowing and limited ranger help for two to three days.

Cmr. Chang asked about reporting and enforcement. Mr. Fox said rangers filed daily monitoring reports, logged public interactions, and focused on education first. He said repeat violations led to police trespass reports.

Cmr. Chang asked about the $31,000 increase in personnel. Mr. Fox said added monitoring needs and prior funding delays drove the change. He said ATA received 2024 to 2025 funds in March, spent about $40,000, and expected to return about $25,000. He estimated about $142,000 remained unpaid across cycles.

Cmr. Britt stated that a line item equated to about $43,000 for a part time position and commented that it seemed high. V. Chr. Crivello said the figure included medical. Mr. Fox said ATA used a staffing company that added a premium to handle HR and taxes.

The commission discussed staffing markups and allowable costs. DCC Campbell said maintenance funds could pay for work on the property but not fringe or administrative costs, including third party staffing markups. Ms. Kekai said applicants should describe services and exclude fringe. Mr. Fox said ATA would reformat budgets next year and work with the County.

**MOTION:**

Cmr. Britt moved to approve STU.26-06 pending review of the application. V. Chr. Crivello seconded.

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**VOTE:**

Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.

Noes: None.

**g. STU.26-07, Ala Kahakai Trail Association – Kiolakaʻa CRMP**

Chr. Rosam opened STU.26-07 for Kiolakaʻa Management Planning and invited questions. Cmr. Chang said the request was confusing and asked if planning had begun.

Mr. Fox said ATA received 2024–2025 funds in March and scheduled the first community meeting for Saturday. He said the planning window was 18 to 24 months but the shift to a July 1 start date created a six-month overlap, leaving about 18 months. He asked for another year as a safety net because costs could not be reimbursed after grant expiry.

V. Chr. Crivello said meaningful consultation followed community timing, not the County's. Mr. Fox agreed.

Mr. Fox described County roles on prior plans. He said Townscape reported to the County for Waikapuna. He said ATA hired Noho Papa for Kaunamano and that County comments were limited. He asked for stronger County participation going forward.

Cmr. Ward asked about the Nāʻālehu sewage projects. Mr. Fox outlined impacts at Waikapuna. Chr. Rosam redirected the discussion to the grant.

**MOTION:**

V. Chr. Crivello moved to recommend approval of STU.26-07 as submitted. Cmr. Ward seconded.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.

Noes: None.

4. **County Council PONC ad hoc committee discussion**
Council Member Michelle Galimba came forward to engage in a discussion with the commissioners regarding the PONC acquisition process

Council Member Galimba opened the item. She said the ad hoc committee is focused on acquisitions, not stewardship. She asked for ideas to improve the acquisition process through code or charter changes. She said last year's bulk resolution prompted the committee. She questioned an ever-growing priority list with few removals and asked whether that was sound policy. She also asked what makes a good property for acquisition. She noted the Council changes code and charter, not internal rules.

Chr. Rosam asked how the Council viewed a long running list. She asked if the growing list frustrated members.

Council Member Galimba said the ad hoc group discussed the list with DCC Campbell. She said the list could become unwieldy. She floated a time limit idea, for example removing properties after ten years with an option to re-nominate. She acknowledged downsides because some acquisitions take a decade or more.

Cmr. Chang agreed the list had become unwieldy and sometimes outdated. She proposed an annual ownership status update covering the last ten years. She said staff could flag properties to remove when ownership changed, land was covered by lava, or the State acquired the parcel. She suggested adding an annual column to note changes that support removal.

Council Member Galimba said the Council lacked a process to remove items. She suggested possibly creating one by resolution.

Cmr. Ward opposed bulk resolutions. She said a bulk vote could advance properties that narrowly passed commission scoring and that some site visits had revealed poor land management. She said bulk approval risked endorsing properties several commissioners would not support on a stand-alone vote. She gave examples where long timelines paid off, citing Honolulu Landing and Mahukona. She opposed automatic removal based on age alone and supported regular checks on owner willingness and nonprofit readiness. She asked why the mayor held the deciding vote.

V. Chr. Crivello said bulk resolutions ignored the commission's scoring and field work. She said equalizing low and high scorers erased the guidance the scores provide to Council. She urged individual resolutions and use of the commission's reports. She said the current report pipeline delayed the mayor's report by months and risked losing properties to development. She supported changes that allow sharing reports electronically between meetings to cut time.

Chr. Rosam supported exploring code or charter changes to allow report sharing outside of meetings, with voting kept in meetings, to remove about two months of delay.

DCC Campbell said Sunshine Law and state law limit off-meeting actions. Ms. Kekai said legislative changes would be needed.

Cmr. Ward noted the commission receives suggestions in January and often sends the mayor's report in December. She called the 11-month lag excessive. Cmr. Chang said the year-end packaging had been tied to including a final fund accounting, which is not required by code. She outlined a faster path: final scoring in July, transmit reports in August, and allow the mayor 60 days, landing in October.

V. Chr. Crivello opposed removing properties from the list unless already protected. She supported status updates and clearer communication inviting re-nominations. She said scores vary year to year, but priority can remain comparable. She cautioned against Council removing items because the commission performs the deep review.

Cmr. Britt proposed a list format that shows preserved properties, separates willing and unwilling owners, and whether a named nonprofit still exists or remains willing to steward.

V. Chr. Crivello asked for broader community education and Council support to make PONC approachable. She said visible Council engagement helps nominees and the commission. She cited a recent nomination with active Council support as a positive model.

Chr. Rosam noted code allows updating the prioritized list at least annually by December 31. She suggested pushing for earlier updates.

Cmr. Ward suggested twice-yearly submissions. Ms. Kekai said the commission could submit in July if desired. Cmr. Ward said accepting suggestions twice a year could improve timing, acknowledging the workload tradeoff. V. Chr. Crivello said the commission must balance mandates with flexibility. Cmr. Ward believed current rules limit the intake to once a year. V. Chr. Crivello said the rule sets a minimum, not a cap.

Cmr. Chang addressed "what makes a good property." She said flood zone protection should not drive PONC buys and that permit controls should address flood risk. She said using PONC to buy a parking lot for an existing County park misallocates limited funds and could displace higher value cultural or archaeological sites.

Council Member Galimba agreed and asked who should fund park support. Cmr. Ward added an example where a County park relies on access over a private road. She questioned policy alignment.

Cmr. Ward thanked staff for work amid turnover. She reiterated the commission's long-standing request for dedicated PONC staff. She said she was only recently made aware that Mr. Hamana Ventura retired. Ms. Kekai said the County created a dedicated PONC program manager role and it has been filled by Mr. Ben Schapiro. She said the property manager position was posted.

Cmr. Ward asked for PONC property use policies to guide post-acquisition management. She said clear policies would inform acquisitions.

Chr. Rosam asked whether Council members read the commission's reports and scores. She said bulk resolutions made the work feel overlooked.

DCC Campbell said past annual reports are a valuable record and that she had read them all. She said they inform later administrative and Council work.

Council Member Galimba said reading depth varies by member and district interest. She encouraged the commission to continue producing detailed reports and to suggest ways to present rankings so Council can digest them quickly.

V. Chr. Crivello asked if bulk resolutions would continue. She said the commission strongly preferred individual resolutions.

Council Member Galimba said the discussion was helpful. She said the Council viewed individual resolutions as an added filter and welcomed that feedback. Ms. Kekai added that one by one consideration allows authentic community testimony to be heard and prevents voices from being lost in a bulk vote.

Chr. Rosam raised the threshold for advancing properties. DCC Campbell said the past threshold had been as high as 80 percent in earlier years and is currently 50 percent.

Cmr. Ward said some highly supported properties have been declined by the mayor. She asked if code or charter could limit unilateral rejection. Chr. Rosam supported a check on that power. V. Chr. Crivello echoed the opinion.

Council Member Galimba said the Council would look into options, noting separation of powers. She invited ongoing input and named other ad hoc members. She said the committee intends to report back with recommendations.

Cmr. Chang urged the ad hoc group to review stewardship grant provisions as well, noting the volume of issues. Council Member Galimba said guidance is tightening across County grants and that clarity will continue to improve.

5. **Update from Finance regarding acquisitions**

Ms. Kekai gave an acquisitions and finance update. She reported a fully executed purchase agreement for Kāwāinui Makai and targeted closing by December 31. She confirmed ʻAnaehoʻomalu had closed. She said Keakealaniwahine, from the 2020 list on Aliʻi Drive, was expected to close by month end. She said Honolulu Landing was close to an executed purchase agreement, with a target to close by February pending seller documents.

Cmr. Ward asked whether both TMKs at Honolulu Landing were included. Ms. Kekai confirmed both.

Ms. Kekai noted early conversations on Waimea Trails and Honalo. She said those discussions were exploratory, involved multiple parties, and were at a very early stage.

Ms. Kekai said the program would develop uniform PONC signage for public access and a process to support educational signage for stewards. She said Program Manager Ben Schapiro had a full workload ahead of him.

Cmr. Ward asked about policies. Ms. Kekai said Finance would write and publish policies, since many practices had been informal in the past.

Cmr. Chang raised commercial use on PONC properties and cited inconsistent practices. Ms. Kekai agreed the area had been gray. She said future policy would draw clear lines, that County property should not be commercialized, and that cost recovery was distinct from commercial activity. She said policy work on allowable expenses and other issues was ongoing.

6. **Election of the 2026 Chair and Vice Chair of the Commission**

**MOTION**:

Chr. Rosam moved to nominate Ms. Deborah Chang as the 2026 Commission Chair. Seconded by Cmr. Janet Britt.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.
Noes: None.

**MOTION**:

V. Chr. Crivello moved to nominate Ms. Janet Britt as the 2026 Commission Vice Chair. Seconded by Chr. Rosam.

**VOTE:**

Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.
Noes: None.

7. **Review of the 2026 commission meeting calendar**

Secretary Braman called attention to communication 25-035 which provided the meeting schedule for 2026.

## IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. **The next public meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2026 at the Hawaiʻi County Building, 25 Aupuni Street, Hilo Council Chambers, Hilo, HI 96720.**
2. **Suggestion of agenda items for the Monday, January 12, 2026 regular meeting:**
   a. Discuss Permitted Interaction Group (PInG) Report regarding Grant Application Scoring
   b. Vote on Kupa Aina O Keauhou 2026 grant application recommendation and status on the non-profit's funding status for the 2025 grant year.
   c. Discuss the potential of creating a PInG to review the acquisition percentage threshold for properties to be recommended to the Mayor

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## V. **ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION**:
Cmr. Britt moved to adjourn the meeting.  Seconded by V. Chr. Crivello.

**VOTE:**
Ayes: Commissioners Chang, Ward, Britt, Goodoni, V. Chr. Crivello, and Chair Rosam – 6.
Noes: None.

Meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

PUBLIC ACCESS, OPEN SPACE, AND NATURAL
RESOURCES PRESERVATION COMMISSION
COMMISSIONER JODIE ROSAM, Chairperson

Draft posted: December 19, 2025
Approved:
Approved posted:

DRAFT