

GREGGOR ILAGAN

Council Member for District 4
(808) 965-2712

MARCH PROGRESS REPORT

DISTRICT 4

Hawaiian Paradise Park, Hawaiian Beaches, Makai of Pāhoa Town, Nanawale Estates, Leilani Estates, Pohoiki, Kapoho

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“The only thing new in the world is the history you do not know.”

— Harry S. Truman

Aloha!

It is hard to believe that only three months have passed in 2015. I feel as though a year had passed with all the issues that came to the office. It would have not been possible to take on all those issues without my amazing team. I want to publicly thank Sarah Matthews and Peter Sur, because they did such a great job of managing the office and handling all the tasks that I assigned to them. If you have been helped by this office, then at one point, Sarah or Peter had a hand in making that happen. I urge you to take some time to show them your thanks, because it is well deserved. It would make me happy to see that their hard work is appreciated by the community.

I have come to accept that I cannot do it alone. There have been several volunteers who have been coming to my office on a regular basis and I want to also thank them: Catherine Ford, Bobby St. Ambrogio, Judith Houle and to all those who have helped me better serve the people.

Sincerely,

Greggor Ilagan

Greggor Ilagan
Council Member

PGV Noise Reduction

Council members Greggor Ilagan and Danny Paleka are working with the Planning Department and Puna Geothermal Venture to find ways to reduce noise from operations of the geothermal plant.

Ilagan and Planning Director Duane Kanuha, among other County officials, have separately visited neighborhoods at night in the vicinity of PGV while drilling was occurring. From those visits they have determined that the active drilling, which is temporary, wasn't the major source of noise concerns. Rather, the issue is the regular daily operation of the plant.

Although Ilagan's efforts in recent months have focused on requiring PGV to reduce noise impacts from geothermal drilling at night, the long-term issue arises from the fans and other equipment.

During Kanuha's site visit to the perim-

eter of the plant, the decibel readings were within the low 50s, but the noise from coqui frogs at night was the overriding factor.

In being more proactive, Ilagan will continue to work with the Planning Department and PGV to lower long-term noise levels to a level that will be acceptable to Puna residents.

Under the terms of the operating permit, PGV is required to hire an engineering consultant to study noise emissions and to recommend and evaluate abatement methods.

Representatives agreed at a meeting held March 27, 2015, to ask its sound engineer to take a fresh look at the noise impacts from regular operations and to recommend ways to reduce the noise level at the perimeter, plus the cost of those measures. This proposal and the cost estimate will be discussed at a future meeting.



Puna Geothermal Venture's Director of Hawaiian Affairs Michael Kaleikini, left, and Planning Director Duane Kanuha, right, meet with Council members Greggor Ilagan and Danny Paleka to discuss reducing noise from PGV.

In Progress from February and January

Neighborhood Watch bill - The bill is still under final review. Council Member Ilagan met with Assistant Police Chief Henry Tavares and Major Randy Apele to discuss this bill on March 19. The following day, he attended the Police Commission meeting in Honoka'a and presented the bill to commissioners for their input.



Pāhoā Village Design District - This package of bills is awaiting approval on second and final reading. However, they had to be postponed at the March 18 meeting for technical amendments. The bills should be approved by the Council in April.

SuperPAC disclosure - The County Council on March 18 approved Ilagan's resolution in support of Senate Bill 1344 and House Bill 1491, and in support of "increased transparency and accountability in the electoral process regarding the funding sources for SuperPACs." As of late March both bills were still alive and moving through House and Senate committees.

Kalani Honua market - The Kalani Honua team is currently trying to understand what issues raised by the Planning Department may be caus-

ing delays related to the creation of The Market at Kalani (and a disaster relief center). Council Member Danny Paleka on March 18 had to postpone a contingency resolution granting \$10,000 to Kalani for the purpose of establishing this market. The resolution may need to be postponed until those issues are resolved.

Puna and Makalei ambulances - As of the end of March, House bills (HB 481 and HB 851, respectively) to fund the Puna and Makalei ambulances have crossed over into the Senate and are working their way through committees. Meanwhile, the companion bills SB 298 and SB 1016 have also crossed over into the House. However, only SB 298 survives, but it has been amended to include funding for both ambulances.



Food Safety Modernization Act - Ilagan is continuing to gather information on what FSMA means for wholesalers, produce growers, and farmers markets. He has had meetings with the county's agricultural specialist in the Department of Research and Development and also food safety expert Louisa Castro. The next step is to discuss food safety with farmers markets on the Big Island.

Invasive species - SB 591, an appropriation to cut Albizia trees along highways, is dead for this session. The Big Island Invasive Species Committee continues to assist Ilagan in drafting a proposal to make invasive species prevention and control a priority in the General Plan. An Albizia coordinator has been hired by BIISC and on March 21, he did the first of many workshops to train community members in the proper use of the herbicide Milestone. The next workshop is scheduled for April 18 at the HPP Community Center; visit www.biisc.org for more information.



Highway 130 - Construction is expected to continue through June. Ilagan's office has received numerous complaints about the traffic slowdowns in the area of the Shower Drive intersection. These complaints are being compiled and will be submitted to the Hawai'i Department of Transportation. The State has asked us to refer all comments to HDOT Spokesman Derek Inoshita, who may be reached at derek.r.inoshita@hawaii.gov or (808) 587-2160. Ilagan supports extending use of the shoulder lanes beyond the currently posted hours.

HELCO selects Ormat to provide 25 MW of Geothermal Energy

On February 24, 2015, following a review of bids submitted as part of a competitive bid process, Hawai'i Electric Light selected Ormat to provide 25 MW of additional geother-

mal energy for Hawai'i Island.

The next step in the process is to begin contract negotiations with Ormat. If an agreement is reached, it will be

filed with the Public Utilities Commission for approval. The anticipated filing date is April 30, 2015.

There are many questions about what this power purchase agreement will involve. Until negotiations are concluded and the documents are filed, all terms are subject to negotiation. For the most up-to-date information, visit geothermalrfp.helcohi.com.

From left, Puna Geothermal Venture representative Michael Kaleikini, Hawai'i Electric Light Co. spokeswoman Jennifer Zelko-Schlueter, and HELCO President Jay Ignacio gave Council member Greggor Ilagan an update on HELCO's plans to expand its use of geothermal resources.





Council member Greggor Ilagan shovels mulch from the bed of a pickup truck to help kids from the Boys and Girls Club of Pāhoa build a community garden behind his Puna office.

Community Garden

A new community garden is taking shape behind the Pāhoa Council office.

What was once an underused parcel of land behind the rear of the building will be put into production and will help some hard-working kids and seniors understand what it takes to grow the food that they eat.

Council member Greggor Ilagan has wanted to build a community garden for a long time, but those plans were put on hold for months while lava threatened Puna. With the potential for destruction now months away, the time is ripe to plant something and see what develops.

Four boxes have been set up in the backyard. Kids from the Boys and Girls Club of Pāhoa arrived at the site on March 27 with a full pickup truck bed of mulch, and unloaded it into the first box with help from Ilagan and his staff. When the gardens are ready, both the Boys and Girls Club and seniors from Alu Like will plant fruits and vegetables, and will maintain it.

Puna Road Connectivity

Council Member Greggor Ilagan will be asking three of his fellow Council members to join a connectivity ad hoc committee in early May to get emergency routes for Puna residents.

The four council members whose districts include Puna are Dennis "Fresh" Onishi, Danny Paleka, Maile David and Ilagan. Joining them on the ad hoc committee will be Patti Pinto, the chair of the Puna Community Development Action Committee, and Marlene Hapai, of the CDP's Connectivity and Emergency Response Subcommittee.

One of the objectives of the Puna CDP, when it was approved in 2008, is to "designate new connectivity points for local traffic and emergency and evacuation routes within the existing network." Hapai, who became aware of the need for road connectivity among Puna's subdivisions during her unsuccessful 2012 political campaign, continued to focus on the issue as a personal campaign and formed the CER subcommittee in

January 2013.

The subcommittee needed a way to get public input, and with the help of the Civil Defense Agency held the first annual Puna Regional Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Fair at Kea'au High on Aug. 31, 2013. Community members identified 48 emergency escape routes. In May 2014, the CDP Action Committee approved



Marlene Hapai, left, is seen at the first annual Puna Regional Emergency Preparedness Fair in 2013.

the three highest priority routes for four regions of Puna, and sent those roads to the Department of Public Works for implementation. Additional comments were presented at the second PREP fair, held Aug. 30.

Since that time, the County has completed work on two of the high-priority connections, Government Beach Road and Railroad Avenue, as a result of the lava emergency. The priorities will be reassessed annually.

"We feel that with the major increase in population in the Puna district throughout the last 10-plus years, it has become a health and safety issue," Hapai said. With the start of the current Council term, she feels the time is ripe to act.

Other Ways to Help the Homeless

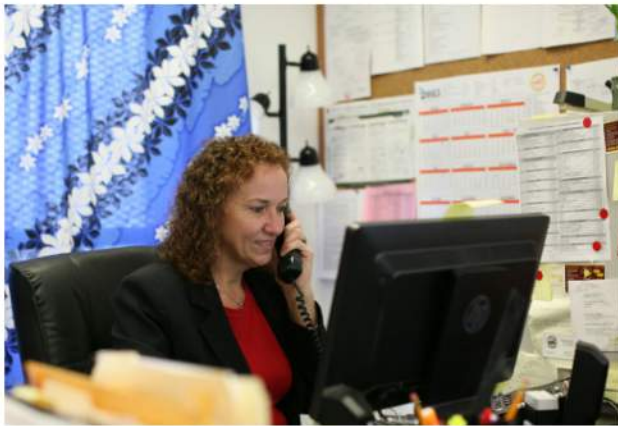
Too often, the “solution” for the homeless population is to banish them from the public’s eye or to confiscate their belongings. But there’s another way to tackle the problem – by working to get them back on their feet.

The catalyst in that effort is Catherine Ford, a constituent who has dedicated her life to public service – first as a Vietnam-era Navy veteran, then as a domestic abuse shelter manager, and now as a tireless helper for the least fortunate. Early in the morning, she would look for the homeless and reach out to them.

.....
 “I get to know them and what their needs are.”
 —Catherine Ford

“Just a villager helping other villagers, and as a volunteer advocate for Main-street Pahoehoe’s homeless,” said Ford.

“I get to know them and what their needs are,” and would try to get them the basic necessities, whether it’s soap or deodorant or toothpaste. Sometimes Ford would take them to a nearby drug store to pick up their prescriptions.



Sarah Matthews will call numerous agencies requesting paperwork for homeless individuals.

Sometimes, it’s a harder challenge. James (not his real name) needs a state identification card to get on Medicaid – for his amputated leg – and a Section 8 housing voucher. To get a state ID card, he needs a birth certificate. But the Ohio birth certificate isn’t accepted because he changed his name when he was adopted in California, and California never sent Ohio a notification of the change.

Ford brought the matter to Sarah Matthews, a member of Council Member Ilagan’s staff, and she has obtained a notice of adoption from Los Angeles Superior Court to send to Ohio, which will then be able to modify James’ birth certificate.

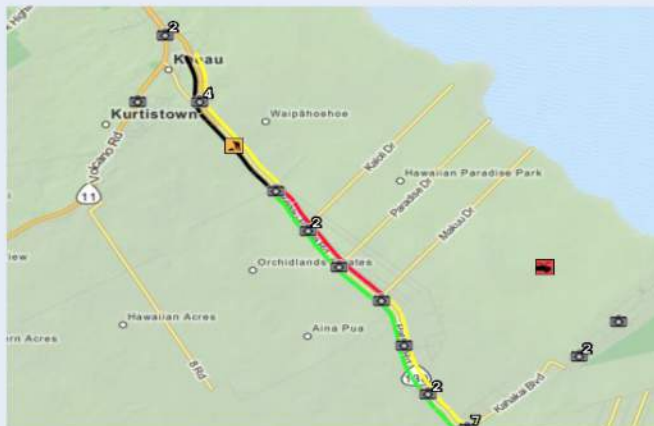
“I appreciate the work that Catherine and Sarah are doing to help the homeless in Puna,” Ilagan said. “Catherine comes in to the office almost every day to update my staff on what she is doing with the homeless here.”

Puna Traffic Cameras

The County of Hawai'i has launched the website Punatraffic.com to monitor traffic in Puna and to inform the public about conditions on the road.

Astute drivers on Highway 130 and various Puna makai roads have been questioning who has been installing the network of 30 cameras, and why. The solar-powered cameras transmit a low-resolution still image every 3 to 5 minutes by cellular signal. The cameras cannot distinguish license plates or faces.

The intent is to improve the flow of traffic by monitoring it in a way that is comprehensive and cost-effective.



Visitors to punatraffic.com will get a real-time view of the amount of traffic on Highway 130.

The cameras have been set up along various high-traffic areas, such as Highway 130, but also in places like, Highway 11 and Kahakai Boulevard. If, sometime in the future, a lava flow crosses the highway and forces traffic patterns to change, the cameras can easily be relocated to any area where a cell phone signal exists.

Information about the speed and con-

gestion of traffic is also being collected by wireless Bluetooth readers along the routes. This allows the website to provide estimated drive times based on current conditions.

The cameras were installed by ICX Transportation Group and went live on March 25.

The Department of Public Works states that the cameras are government property and are specifically programmed to work only with government equipment. The website provides social media links to Civil Defense and the County of Hawai'i and can also be updated to inform the public about road incidents.

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