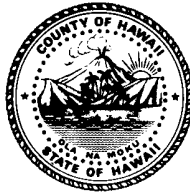


Mitchell D. Roth
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County of Hawai'i PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

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Thursday, March 3, 2022 DRAFT Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Franny Brewer called the Puna Community Development Plan (PCDP) Action Committee (AC) to order at 5:09 P.M. Due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held via the Zoom interactive video platform.

ROLL CALL

AC Members Present: Franny Brewer (Chair), Leilani DeMello, Leila Kealoha, Susan Osborne, Kanoe Wilson

AC Members Absent-Excused: none

County Staff: Planners – Heather Bartlett, Keiko Mercado, Jaslyn Nathaniel

County Officials: Council Member Ashley Kierkiewicz

1 member of the public attended the meeting via Zoom. The meeting was also available for synchronous viewing via the [COH Planning Department YouTube Livestream](#). The livestream is available at [Puna CDP Action Committee Meeting March 3, 2022 - YouTube](#).

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Welcoming Melissa Leilani DeMello and Kanoe Wilson to the Puna CDP Action Committee: Committee Members DeMello and Wilson introduced themselves as this was their first official committee meeting. Each shared their reasons for joining the Puna AC and emphasized their desire of giving back to their home community of Puna.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Committee Member Osborne made a motion to approve the January 19, 2022 minutes. Motion seconded by Committee Member Kealoha. Motion passed with 5 votes aye, 0 votes nay.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: One (1) member of the public provided oral testimony:

Patrice MacDonald, representing herself, testified on Agenda Item 3. She informed that no buyout offer was received for her family's housing in Kapoho and that to her knowledge there are 500 lava evacuees currently living in Mountain View. Ms. MacDonald expressed her concern over the way the lava recovery funding was distributed as all the money went to District 4 and HPP and there is no funding for District 5. She shared that the people are also concerned about how there is no transfer station or village center, and issues with traffic caused by the roundabout. She also noted that the Kea'au Armory is very important to District 5 as it is the only option for an emergency shelter and it was left out of the plan.

Committee Member Osborne informed Ms. MacDonald that there are many opportunities for community engagement in Kīlauea Recovery process including the Resilience Action Team Committees (RAC's) as well as quarterly Revitalize Puna updates and other events that can be found on the County's website. She encouraged Ms. MacDonald to find that information and pass it on to others in her network. She also informed that the Buyout Program is still open for engagement.

BUSINESS:

1. **Information Sharing:** Sharon Hirota, from the County Office of Housing and Community Development, presented an overview of several programs and centers that were launched in partnership with community based organizations. She encouraged AC members to share these programs with their networks:
 - Emergency Rent Assistance – Provides financial assistance to help residents ensure housing stability by helping them to get caught up on rent and utility payments. Based on the Puna zip codes, the program has helped over 500 households and paid out over \$3.1 million in rental assistance to households in the Puna area.
 - Landlord/Tenant Mediation Center – Provides landlord/tenant mediation services. After the lifting of the moratorium there was a temporary modification to the landlord-tenant code that requires landlords and tenants to go through a mediation process before entering into the court system.
 - Coordination Center – Provides a free centralized service that helps residents navigate critical financial, housing, and health-related issues. The Center's objective is to ensure that lack of knowledge about available resources does not stand between residents and the help they need and is designed to help residents with one-on-one coaching and connectivity to community-based and government supported services.
 - Homeowner Assistance – Provides Hawai'i homeowners who are experiencing financial hardship associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and have incomes at or below 150% of the area median income with assistance that will lead to long-term mortgage resolution. The program grants up to \$30,000 to assist homeowners with paying past due mortgages or reduce monthly payments.
 - Financial Empowerment Centers – Provides free, one-on-one financial counseling as a public service to all residents. Centers are staffed with trained counselors to help residents manage money, decrease debt, improve credit, and access all other services offered by the centers to find financial stability.

Chair Brewer questioned how much longer the Emergency Rent Assistance Program would exist. Ms. Hirota informed that the first round of Federal funding needs to be spent by September 2022, but that Hawai'i County was fortunate enough to receive a second round of funding which will go through September 2025.

Committee Member DeMello questioned if there were any income requirements to apply for the services provided by the Financial Empowerment Centers. Ms. Hirota confirmed that there are no income requirements; applicants just need to be 18 years of age or older.

OHCD Presentation Slides available here:

<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/edoc/115262/Communication%20No.%202022-07%20-OHCD%20Financial%20Empowerment%20Presentation.pdf>

Additional information can be found here: <https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/departments/office-of-housing>

2. **Action Committee Support of Hawai'i Ports-of Entry Biosecurity Program:** Chair Brewer introduced a draft letter, addressed to the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council, outlining Action Committee support for the Hawai'i Ports-of Entry Biosecurity Program. She provided a brief description of the program and her hope that the Puna AC would move to transmit the letter so it could be shared with State legislators and potential federal funders to help subsidize the program.

Discussions were had and each Committee Member expressed their gratitude to Chair Brewer for bringing the letter forward. Each member stated that they were in full support as programs such as this are necessary for Hawai'i's infrastructure, especially in the Puna area.

Committee Member Wilson suggested that the letter be brought forward to the other Action Committees as well so that they may be able to solidify and unify their support for the program across Hawai'i Island. Ms. Mercado informed that she would provide the letter to each of the AC Chairs.

Council Member Kierkiewicz suggested that the Puna AC reach out to State Representative Greggor Ilagan and State Senator Joy San Buenaventura as they are in the midst of the legislative session and may be able to introduce concurrent resolutions in both houses. This would be a way to have bills introduced which could call for appropriations of funding to support the program.

Committee Member Osborne made a motion to accept and send the communication. Motion seconded by Committee Member Kealoha. Motion passed with 5 votes aye, 0 votes nay.

Communication No. 2022-06 available here:

<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/doc/115130/Page1.aspx>

3. **Synergies Between Implementaion of the Puna CDP and the Kilauea Recovery and Resilience Plan (KRRP):** Ms. Mercado explained that the priority recovery goals and objectives were based on the goals and objectives of the Puna CDP and centered around village town centers, infrastructure, natural and cultural resource management and health and well-being. She informed that as part of the implementation process, the recovery team launched a network of Resilience Capacity Areas and Action Teams to support community-based actions, noting that all of the Puna CDP AC members are participating in said Action Teams. Ms. Bartlett shared a prioritization spreadsheet of the goals and action items, with notes on

whether an RCA Team had put focus or effort towards the item. Action Committee members used the spreadsheet to explore mutual interests and discuss investigatory subcommittees and community liaison groups, as applicable.

Committee Member Wilson requested clarification on Action Item 1 with regards to the accessibility to areas of scenic and culture interest. Committee Member Kealoha expressed the importance of not taking away the accessibility to those areas and to ensure that the aesthetic, cultural, and natural value of those areas remain. She elaborated further that “how” these areas are being accessed, with regard to behavior and attitude, should reflect the paradigm of the people who are actually from the area.

Further discussions were had when reviewing each action item as the AC identified similarities and overlap between various items. Further strategies were discussed with regard to the protection of biological, historical, and cultural resources. Chair Brewer also noted that some items would better fit into the General Plan (GP) and questioned whether they should be put through a different process as updates to the CDP are pending. Ms. Mercado informed that the comprehensive update to the GP is currently a priority of the Planning Director and is being given the attention it needs. She shared that the conversation around what gets lifted up into the GP and what remains in the CDPs will be part of the planning program conversation that AC members will be a part of.

Council Member Kierkiewicz shared that the Planning Director provided them with an update on the GP and seemed to indicate that by the end of year, there would be a draft to share with the public, ACs, and planning commissions as there will need to be a level of engagement that occurs. She noted that from her understanding, the intention is to pull a lot of what is in the current CDPs into the GP. She hoped that after the adoption and approval of the GP that all the CDPs would be reviewed at the same time allowing ACs to focus on specific areas island wide. She informed that there are line items in the budget that provide financial capital for the ACs to take action. She encouraged engagement with the Cultural Resource Commission and the State Historical Preservation Division (SHPD). She informed that the SHPD has numerous amounts of documentation on different historical sites and resources that have yet to be digitized. She shared that if the AC could get access to that information, it would assist with managing public access to historical and cultural sites and help to ensure people are coming with respect and the right intention.

Committee Member Kealoha noted that many of the priorities in the spreadsheet are items that are currently being worked on through the Natural and Cultural RCAs and through community efforts with non-profit programs. Community Member Osborne also noted that the plan for the roundabouts going from Kea’au to Pahoa is already being executed. She requested a progress update from DOT to confirm her understanding. If this project is already being executed, it can be removed as a priority. Committee Member Kealoha also noted the major issue with the Ainaloa roundabout and hoped there would be a solution soon. Ms. Mercado suggested that the AC continue to edit and provide notes on the action items so that staff could provide a revised version, and come back to identifying priority areas at a later date so the AC could create investigatory subcommittees and community

groups as needed. All AC members agreed and requested that staff provide any updates on the various actions items that are already in motion as well.

Information on the Kīlauea Eruption Recovery Planning Process available here:
<https://recovery.hawaiicounty.gov/planning-56>

Information about the Resilience Capacity Area Teams available here:
<https://recovery.hawaiicounty.gov/revitalize-puna/resilience-capacity-areas>.

Presentation slides available here:
<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/edoc/115524/Communication%20No.%202022-08%20-Puna%20AC.RCA%20Synergies.pdf>

4. **Framework for Action Committee Run Meetings:** Ms. Mercado informed that some Action Committees have expressed interest in hosting their own official meetings. She explained the possibility of the ACs having the option to convene between the already scheduled quarterly meetings and provided high-level framework for running these meetings. Sunshine Law would need to be adhered to and Robert's Rules followed. Ms. Mercado assured that planning staff would provide templates and resource packets and would continue to make connections as the AC needed. Staff would also continue to post the agenda and minutes to ensure compliance with the Sunshine Law.

Community Member Osborne questioned if it would be ok to convene on an "as needed" basis as all of the AC members are involved in the RCA Teams and other groups. Ms. Mercado confirmed that the AC would be free to convene at their discretion.

Chair Brewer questioned the amount of notice that the AC would need to give before hosting a meeting. Ms. Mercado informed that the Sunshine Law requires the agenda be posted at least six (6) days prior to the scheduled meeting.

Committee Member Wilson questioned what would be an appropriate facility for an in-person hybrid meeting. Ms. Mercado informed that that is something staff are still working on as more COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. Choosing meeting venues would depend on availability as well as ensuring the appropriate equipment can be provided such as connectivity and stable bandwidth for Zoom-hybrid meetings. Staff have been exploring different county facilities as well as private facilities in each community so that community members won't have to travel far distances if they wish to appear in-person.

Presentation slides available here:
<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/edoc/115525/Communication%20No.%202022-09%20-AC%20Meeting%20Framework.pdf>

5. **Election of Action Committee Members:**

Committee Member Osborne made a motion to nominate Franny Brewer as the Chair of the Puna CDP AC. Motion seconded by Committee Member Kealoha. Motion passed with 5 votes aye, 0 votes nay.

Chair Brewer made a motion to nominate Susan Osborne as Vice-Chair of the Puna CDP AC. Motion seconded by Committee Member Wilson. Motion passed with 5 votes aye, 0 votes nay.

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

1. Prioritization spreadsheet exercise
2. Update from State DOT Hawai'i District representative, Harry Takeue
3. Kīlauea Recovery Update
4. Update from State Legislature representatives
5. Update on the budget/submit budget input

OTHER: Council Member Kierkiewicz advised Ms. Mercado to provide the AC with the budget hearing schedule. She informed that those hearings will be streamed online and will allow people to provide public testimony on various subjects and priorities related to the budget. She advised AC members to take the opportunity to provide testimony as individuals and as an AC if they were able.

ADJOURNMENT: *Committee Member Kealoha moved to adjourn. Seconded by Committee Member Wilson. The motion passes with 5 votes aye, 0 votes nay.*

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 P.M.

These meeting minutes and all related documents are available in the Planning Department's Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee folder via [the County of Hawai'i Public Documents Repository](#). These documents may also be requested from the Planning Department by calling (808) 961-8288 or emailing cdp@hawaiiicounty.gov.