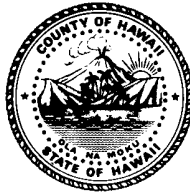


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County of Hawai'i PLANNING DEPARTMENT

PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

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Thursday, May 5, 2022 DRAFT Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brewer called the Puna Community Development Plan (PCDP) Action Committee (AC) to order at 5:06 P.M. Due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held via the Zoom interactive video platform with one on-site location for community members at the Pāhoa County Council Office.

ROLL CALL

AC Members Present: Franny Brewer (*Chair*), Susie Osborne (*Vice-Chair*), Leilani DeMello, Leila Kealoha, Kanoe Wilson

AC Members Absent-Excused: none

County Staff: Planners –Keiko Mercado, Heather Bartlett, Elyse Stevens; Kīlauea Recovery and Redevelopment Manager Garrett Smith

County Officials: Councilmember Matt Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder

State Official: Representative Greggor Ilagan

Four (4) members of the public attended the meeting via Zoom and one (1) member of the public attended in person. The meeting was also available for synchronous viewing via the [COH Planning Department YouTube Livestream](#). The livestream is available at [Puna CDP AC Meeting - May 5 - YouTube](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Update from State Representative Greggor Ilagan

May 5th marked the close of the 2022 Legislative Session and State Representative Ilagan provided the Action Committee with session updates relative to the Puna community.

- An alternate route for Puna: a district-wide project that included 1.5 million for a site selection study for the best location for an alternate route. This will include a monetary match from the County of Hawai'i, resulting in a joint effort between the County and State.

- Widening a section of Highway 130: a State-wide initiative, with a 35 million budget. He stated he would follow up with the State Department of Transportation (DOT) with a focus on which portion of Highway 130 will be widened.
- Funding for albizia abatement along the Highway.
- Four (4) Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) were also discussed for Pāhoa High School girl's gym locker room, Pāhoa Elementary and High-School covered walkway, upgrades to Science Facility, and Keonepoko playground upgrades.
- 1.2 million for Emergency Medical Services islandwide, with a focus on facilitating an ambulance for Puna.
- Grants-in-Aid funding was earmarked for:
 - the Pāhoa Museum - \$400,000,
 - Project Vision - \$600,000,
 - Maku'u Community Center - \$220,000,
 - the Aloha 'Ilio Rescue - \$50,000,
- Collaboration with the County of Hawai'i Prosecutor's Office to pass a bill related to the high volume of auto theft by increasing the penalty from a Class C Felony to a Class B Felony.

Action Committee Member Kealoha asked about funding for the Pohoiki Boat Ramp. Representative Ilagan stated that the bill requesting 1.5 million in additional funds for the Boat Ramp did not pass the House reading but would be addressed at the next legislative session.

Garrett Smith shared that the Recovery Team had an internal meeting with the Department of Parks and Recreation and DLNR that week which discussed the Pohoki Boat Ramp. Discussion centered around the EA process and the dredging to get the Boat Ramp functional. He stated that public sentiment centered around a safe swimming area and a boat washing area.

Vice-Chair Osborne asked whether the albizia mitigation funding received by the State Department of Transportation (DOT) could provide training and education for eradication. Chair Brewer asked how DOT prioritizes funding for albizia treatment and whether educational training for eradication was a possibility, as the ramification of poor eradication allows for continuous re-growth. Representative Ilagan agreed to follow up and get back to the Action Committee. Vice-Chair Osborne reiterated the need for albizia treatment and education asking for continued County and State support. She mentioned a free virtual albizia mitigation education session on June 30th and a hands-on training on August 20th. Staff will send additional information to the Puna CDP AC mailing list.

Vice-Chair Osborne shared that Kua O Ka Lā PCS Pre-k school in Nanāwale had applied for Grant-in-Aid funding though their NPO Ho'oulu Lāhui and asked if it had been granted. Representative Ilagan agreed to follow up on this.

Community Member Stephanie Bath discussed the need for roadway redundancy for emergency preparedness from upper to lower Puna. She asked for this connectivity issue to be highlighted at the State level. Representative Ilagan shared that a resolution requesting the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency to develop a preliminary draft evacuation plan for lava zones 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 passed in both the House and Senate. He also shared there is an upcoming

Legislative session to discuss utilizing State money to assist subdivisions with private roads that are open to the public. He reiterated that an alternate route in Puna would assist with road redundancy, decrease traffic flow, and provide more access.

Representative Ilagan expressed interest in collaborating more intentionally with the Puna CDP Action Committee and requested priority projects from the Puna Action Committee, specifically within Puna's town centers, before the start of the next legislation session.

Action Committee Member Wilson asked if the Puna Action Committee could meet with Representative Ilagan prior to the next Legislative session to galvanize and strategize for more community support when Legislative measures are moving forward. Representative Ilagan agreed, noting the value and benefit of collaboration with the Puna Action Committee and suggested the AC prioritize three projects for him to advocate for.

Ms. Mercado suggested the Puna Action Committee Chair and Vice-Chair could establish an investigatory subcommittee with up to four members that could work directly with Representative Ilagan. They discussed the idea of having the Puna AC Chair and Vice-Chair meet with him in the meantime.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Committee Member Kealoha made a motion to approve the March 3, 2022 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Vice-Chair Osborne. Motion passed with 5 votes aye, 0 votes nay.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: Three (3) members of the public and one (1) County Councilmember provided testimony:

Community Member Stephanie Bath, representing herself, testified on Agenda Item 1. She expressed her concerns about emergency preparedness sharing that infrastructure redundancy should continue to be a top priority. She stated that there continue to be concerns within the community about the implementation of proposed connectivity locations, noting that securing funding to acquire the connectivity locations identified by the community is the first step. She encouraged the AC to continue to push and stay on top of this issue. She reiterated the need for health and safety redundancy from upper to lower Puna with the need for State and County support.

Community Member Jon Olson, representing himself, testified on Agenda Item 1. He discussed the need for action regarding infrastructure to the Pohoiki Boat Ramp and described the significant amount of debris that is consistently washing out into the bay. He also emphasized the immediate need for an alternative route for Puna with hurricane season quickly approaching. He expressed that these issues were urgent over 10 years ago and that, with a quickly growing population in Puna, we need to address the problem as if "our hair was on fire."

Councilmember Matt Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder testified on Agenda Item 1. He said that with an increase in population and heavy road use in Puna, implementing an alternative route in Puna is imperative. He expressed that we are not prepared for continued growth or potential emergencies and that there needs to be a solution in which the County, State, and Federal government work together. He also discussed directing growth in Puna to the primary areas such as Kea'au, followed by secondary areas. He continued to express how connectivity to

108 Stainback Highway is a long-term goal that could be achieved by connecting North Kulani Road
109 and Stainback to Saddle Road. This would alleviate traffic and create space for workforce and
110 affordable housing in those areas.

111 Garrett Smith, representing himself, testified on Agenda Item 1. Mr. Smith commented on the
112 road connectivity in Puna, specifically that the County and State do not spend funds on private
113 roads. He commented that community members would benefit if the County or State could
114 allocate funds for private infrastructure. He also discussed how FEMA funds were allocated for
115 water, roads, and park improvements from the lava eruption. He stated that community
116 members have been pushing for water improvements, and suggested we identify problems
117 through the use of infrastructure standards.

118 **BUSINESS:**

119 **1. Infrastructure Priority Discussion:**

120 Ms. Mercado explained how Planning Director Kern has requested that Action Committee
121 members and the community provide a list of needed infrastructure projects in their area.
122 She stated that a lot has changed since the establishment of the Puna CDP making it
123 necessary to look at needs beyond what is written in the plan. Ms. Mercado explained that
124 Director Kern wants to be prepared for the federal infrastructure bill conversation. She
125 explained that Planning Staff will summarize and provide the summary to the Director. She
126 hoped that by being open to suggestions for State projects we could encourage cohesion
127 between the State and the County. Planning Staff provided an infrastructure handout with
128 information from the Puna CDP implementation table.

129 Chair Brewer voiced improvements for Stainback Highway and Kulani Road. She expressed
130 that there needs to be more connectivity between subdivisions and furthered that existing
131 subdivisions with no access should be prioritized.

132 Ms. Mercado mentioned the report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Puna Connectivity
133 (Communication number 2016-25), sharing that much of the work is there and that funding
134 was the major barrier.

135 *You may find the Ad Hoc Committee on Puna Connectivity report (Communication Number 2016-25) in our*
136 *public folders here: <https://records.hawaiiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/doc/82167/Page1.aspx>*

137 Action Committee Member DeMello agreed that the Action Committee could help to
138 facilitate conversations to access funding for these projects. She stated that there is a need
139 to assist communities with connectivity access for both upper and lower Puna.

140 Action Committee Member Kealoha stated that more than 20,000 people have moved into
141 Puna since the pandemic started. She discussed the need to review or amend the CDP,
142 control traffic congestion, and direct development toward town centers

143 Councilmember Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder discussed the direct health and safety issues along the
144 Panaewa stretch. He mentioned the need to implement acceleration and deceleration lanes
145 on the sides of Highway 11. He hoped that the State could expand Stainback Highway by also
146 adding an acceleration lane as well. He shared that future projects could include a new fire
147 station and police station in Kea'au that could tie into the town center with mass transit. He

reiterated that there is a 1.6 billion budget surplus at the State level. General expenditures revenue is high and the fuel tax and highway fund amassed a surplus of more than 20 million.

Ms. Mercado gave the Puna Action Committee and community members two weeks from the meeting date to send any additional infrastructure priorities so staff could compile the feedback to relay to the Planning Director.

2. Building in Puna Brochure:

Due to the increase in residency over the years and the Kīlauea eruption in 2019, the Action Committee proposed revisiting the 2018 Building in Puna Brochure.

Chair Brewer shared feedback she had heard suggesting the Building in Puna Brochure be made digital, easily accessible and mobile-friendly for broader public use. She suggested an additional need to include information about safe catchment tank use, County mulch sources, native plant landscaping, rat-lung worm, and little fire ant management in the brochure as well. She also expressed how different building needs are in Volcano due to the different climate and landscape.

Vice-Chair Osborne and Action Committee Member Kealoha agreed with the need for a Permitted Interaction Group (investigatory sub-committee) to revise the Building in Puna Brochure before bringing it back to the Action Committee for further discussion.

Committee Member DeMello shared mana'o from Volcano community members who were concerned about pin-to-pin clearing and maintaining pono practices to protect Hawai'i's delicate ecosystems. She stated that the Action Committee needed to be assertive with language; maintain kūpa'a and protect our land and natural resources. She reiterated the need to share this information to those moving to the State.

Councilmember Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder stated that pin-to-pin clearing is a huge issue. He shared about the Real Property Tax Conservation Allowance that provides a property tax break for those with two acres or more who preserve native forest on their property. He also shared about the Puna flood study that was completed, but not implemented and how that information would provide the public with surface water inundation risk for their properties.

Committee Member Wilson agreed with creating an Permitted Interaction Group. She stressed including the ideas and language of aloha 'āina and mālama 'āina.

Chair Brewer moved to establish a Permitted Interaction Group that would re-evaluate and update the Building in Puna Brochure for the full Action Committee to review and approve. Vice-Chair Osborne seconded the motion. It was decided that Chair Brewer; Action Committee Members Kealoha, DeMello and Wilson would serve on the Permitted Interaction Group. On this motion a roll-call vote was taken, the motion passed unanimously. Councilmember Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder also expressed interest in participating in the group.

3. Synergies Between Implementation of the Puna CDP and the Kīlauea Recovery and Resilience Plan (KRRP):

With consensus from the committee, Chair Brewer took agenda items 3 and 4 out of order.

Staff shared a spreadsheet with the goals and action items that were identified at the previous meeting. Action Committee members used the spreadsheet to explore mutual interests and discuss possible implementation actions. The goal was to provide updates and identify projects the Resilience Capacity Area (RCA) groups are currently working on and how that work is connected to their roles as AC members.

Chair Brewer praised the idea of bringing Puna AC items into the Puna RCA work. Committee Member Kealoha suggested converting the implementation table into a working document for AC members to work on. Ms. Mercado agreed that Planning Staff would include the Implementation Table working document in a follow-up email.

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. **Update on the budget:** Staff shared the FY2022-23 CIP (Capital Improvement Project) Budget spreadsheet that outlined capital project appropriations submitted to the County Council relating to the Puna District. Ms. Mercado offered to provide Financial Impact Statement (FIS) sheets with more information on specific projects as requested.

Vice-Chair Osborne asked about the status of the Pāhoā Master Plan and if a vendor had been selected. Mr. Smith confirmed that the panel was currently reviewing applications. He stated that the target was to have a firm identified, get the contract signed, and have the work initiated within the next couple of months.

Ms. Mercado stated that County Council would be having their budget meetings on May 17-19 and that Planning Staff would send the information and links to the budget meetings to AC members. She also reminded Puna AC members that they could provide testimony as individual community members, but not on behalf of the AC.

Committee Member Kealoha questioned the appropriation for mass transit in relation to the estimated cost. Ms. Mercado discussed the free mass transit system and offered to connect the AC Members with the Planning Department's Transportation Planner and with Mass Transit Administrator, John Andoh.

Chair Brewer reshared Councilmember Kaneali'i-Kleinfelder's comments in the Zoom chat, stating that there was time until the last Council reading of the budget to add or amend CIP projects. Ms. Mercado added that Action Committee members interested in adding or amending CIP projects should work directly with their councilmembers.

The handout listing Capital Improvement Projects related to the Puna area (Communication Number 2022-10) may be viewed in our public meeting folder here:

<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/Weblink/1/edoc/115834/Communication%20No.%202022-10%20March%20CIP%20FY2022-23.pdf>

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING:

1. Puna Brochure - relay information from investigatory subcommittee
2. Representative Ilagan to provide budget follow up and priority discussion
3. FEMA update on submitted proposals for Kilauea Recovery
4. HDOT roundabouts/albizia update

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 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@hawaiicounty.gov.