



County of Hawai'i PLANNING DEPARTMENT

HĀMĀKUA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

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Tuesday, January 10, 2023
DRAFT Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tawn Keeney called the Hāmākua Community Development Plan (HCDP) Action Committee (AC) to order at 5:03 P.M. This meeting was held at the Honoka'a Peoples Theatre and online via Zoom. Quorum was established at this meeting.

ROLL CALL

AC Members Present: Tawn Keeney, Niki Hubbard, Bob Nishimoto, Brad Kurokawa, Desiree Moana Cruz (left early), Rhonda Pollard.

AC Members Absent-Excused: Carol Ignacio

County Officials: Deputy Corporation Counsel, Suzanna Tiapula (via Zoom).

Over 20 members of the community attended in person and between 22-26 attendees via Zoom.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Heather Kimball reported to the Action Committee regarding several items:

1. Members of the long-term Waipi'o Valley Steering Committee attended the meeting via Zoom. They requested that Action Committee members attend the next meeting. Action Committee Member Kurokawa will attend.
2. Pepe'ekeo access is currently being worked on.
3. Discussion around the parking situation for the Hāmākua Health Center in Honoka'a. If property from Honoka'a Park were to be transferred over to the Hāmākua Health Center, they would be able to build out their facility.
4. Councilmember Kimball shared the draft bill for Vacation Rentals that is currently in the works. They are trying to create rules for hosted vacation rentals that are currently not regulated. The previous Bill only addressed unhosted rentals. A major point in this draft is that all structures need to be permitted. Though challenging for some, it is a safety issue. She also mentioned that the fines are heavier in this draft. She discussed that Council will have 6 public hearings regarding this issue; though it is not ready to be introduced at this time. There is a video available online on YouTube. There is an upcoming meeting on Friday, January 20 at 5:00pm via Zoom.

For more information on the Hawai'i County TAR Draft Proposal, please go here:
<https://www.hawaiicountytar.com/>

Other announcements:

- Vice-Chair Hubbard updated the Action Committee on the Laupāhoehoe Point. She shared that the Beach Park was closed throughout December 2022 due to maintenance. She commented that maintenance is complete and the Park is reopened.
- Vice-Chair Hubbard also shared on the Hakalau Bridge. She requested the community's input regarding repairs, as stated in the CDP relating to Infrastructure. She also mentioned the Hakalau Neighborhood Watch as related to CDP Community Action 36.
- The County of Hawai'i Zoning & Subdivision Code Update: The Action Committee will not hold its scheduled meeting on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 due to Code Update Meetings scheduled for January 17, 2023 in Hilo and Waimea and January 18, 2023 in Kona and Pahala.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Vice-Chair Hubbard motioned to approve the October 18, 2022, minutes. Seconded by Action Committee Member Bob Nishimoto. Motion passed with 6 votes aye, 0 votes nay.

Vice-Chair Hubbard motioned to approve the November 15, 2022, minutes. Seconded by Action Committee Member Bob Nishimoto. Motion passed with 6 votes aye, 0 votes nay.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

Four (4) members of the public provided oral testimony.

1. Community member Francine Roby, representing herself, testified on the urgent need to discuss the recent storm's impact on our communities. She expressed the need to strengthen infrastructure, as stated in the CDP. She reiterated the need for preparation with Neighborhood Watch and CERT ahead of time.
2. Community member, Dana Moss, representing Barbara Starth, owner of the Laulima Store, testified on the Lehua subdivision development. She commented on her concern over drainage and traffic impacts.
3. Community member, Chuck Flaherty, representing the Sierra Club, discussed his participation during the Kona Action Committee meeting on January 10, 2023. He summarized how the Action Committees struggle with their roles and responsibilities in the context of the General Plan.
4. Community member, Cory Harden, representing herself, testified on Agenda Item #2. She expressed her concern over the Planning Department's reduced staff and the current updates to the Zoning & Subdivision Code. She summarized her experience at the Code Update Focus Group and her overall feeling that the community is not the central focus.

BUSINESS:

1. Subcommittee Report Back to Action Committee

Housing Subcommittee:

The Action Committee reviewed Vice-Chair Hubbard's written report and then heard from Guest Speaker, Patrick Hurney, the Executive Director at Habitat for Humanity. Mr. Hurney

71 explained how Habitat for Humanity has not done many builds in Hāmākua but is always
72 looking for opportunities to build there. They built a home for a family that had a house fire,
73 and they do critical home repairs too; they operate across the world. They are a Christian
74 Housing ministry and have 5 organizations across the state. Their goal is to build Simple
75 Decent Homes for families with the qualification being between 30-80% of median income,
76 about 72k/year and below. They look at applicants' levels of need, willingness to partner and
77 their ability to repay. Mr. Hurney discussed the process, including how Habitat Humanity
78 raises the money, selects a family, which leads to volunteers and the family themselves
79 building the home. Habitat for Humanity sells the home to a family with no or low interest
80 mortgage, for no profit. Mortgage payments are then put back to the organization to build
81 more homes. He explained how there are 7 homes under construction across the island,
82 Puna (3), Kawaihae (3) and Ocean View (1). They are always in need of volunteers on
83 Saturdays; community may register online. He elaborated how they obtain funding from
84 various sources and are always looking for property.

85 Vice-Chair Hubbard asked how they identify good properties? Mr. Hurney shared that if the
86 family already owns a property, they should apply. Lot donations also help, and they do buy
87 some parcels with HUD funding.

88 For more information on Habitat for Humanity, please go here: <https://www.habitathawaiiisland.org/>

89 **Waipi'o Wahi Pana Subcommittee**

90 Action Committee Member Kurokawa will attend the upcoming Waipi'o Steering Committee
91 meeting and will report back to the Action Committee.

92 Community member Lei Brown restated that the CDP Action Committee subcommittee was
93 formed to see how work could be done, and to preserve and protect traditions there. She
94 discussed the December 2022 storm and how it impacted Waipi'o Valley and as a result,
95 there were current enforcement issues – the community members are left to deal with
96 enforcement when emergency closures are in place. She also discussed the issue of how to
97 define "*community*". She explained the concept of concentric rings – hale, kau hale, ili,
98 ahupua'a in relation to community and the long-term management of Waipi'o.

99 Community member Jim Cain, a farmer from Waipi'o has resided there for over 35 years
100 mentioned how some take for granted the opportunity to sit with Kupuna who taught them
101 old ways. The values that guide their everyday actions. He described Wahi Pana and how
102 the dictionary states – a well-remembered, respected place.

103 There was a discussion on the necessary protocols and a hierarchy in Waipi'o, as well as a
104 referenced chant that talks about its history that goes back centuries. The discussion echoed
105 that the Waipi'o voice has to be front and center when decisions are being made but it was
106 noted that no one from Waipi'o is on Hāmākua Action Committee.

107 Community member Ursula Chong, a resident of Waimea discussed how 'ohana have leased
108 land to farm Kalo in Waipi'o; they go down weekly. She shared 3 things: 1. She defined
109 *community* as a body of people that reside in an area with things in common, this definition
110 does not include tourists. When we live and gather as a community need to include them. 2.
111 She discussed the immediate concern of the Waipi'o Road. The entrance already tells us

there is only a limited amount of people that can access that space. Only so many can go. The land just speaks for itself. Once there, the caretakers are reminded that in Waipi'o things will happen because of the natural course of nature. As people who are the caretakers, we need to take care. There should be Waipi'o community representation on the Action Committee so we can hear from them. 3. Action Committee – Steering committee- Action Committee investigatory subcommittee. What are the roles and functions of each committee? She asked for an update on what each is doing and questioned if everyone collaborating? She concluded that the immediate concern is the Waipi'o road followed by future plans.

Action Committee member Nishimoto mentioned how he and Community member Cain were in aqua culture class together, and Community member Cain taught him about being a new member to Waipi'o. He would be happy to allow a member of Waipi'o to be on committee. He expressed his gratitude to Hawaiian Culture that allows us to use this place. He expressed his feelings around roots/culture. He explained "local style," which he believes is the true essence of Waipi'o. It is respect and connectivity. We can all adopt this way of life. Hawaiians don't make it a point to imprint their culture on others. He offered to resign from the Action Committee to allow someone from Waipi'o take his place. Chair Keeney reassured that there is still a vacant seat on the Action Committee.

Community member Lanakila Manguil from Honoka'a, is an educator in the community, grew up in Waipi'o and has land responsibility there. He affirmed that Waipi'o is a Wahi Pana. Everyone loves this place passionately. If we are not willing to sit down and truly listen, then what we have is division. He believes that Waipi'o deserves better. We shouldn't see people vying to get voice in front. It is special for many. It took many to take care of it. What we see of today is not the Waipi'o of the past. Many more hands have worked together and have allowed others to help. Let us all kākou together. We have to get together collectively, rise to the occasion and also humble ourselves to have those conversations.

Community member Tisha Mahealani thanked everyone who spoke on behalf of Waipi'o and agreed with the previous statements. She expressed the need for leadership, but that internal community should have the last say as to what happens to Waipi'o. She encouraged the Action Committee, the County and Administration to listen to the Waipi'o community members. We live there, we know Waipi'o the best. She's asking the Action Committee to support their sentiments. She expressed that this community wouldn't tell people in other neighborhoods what to do, that's their land they know what is best.

Community member Richard Bidleman, a resident of Honoka'a has attended previous meetings regarding Waipi'o valley. He believes its a treasure and reiterated having someone from the Waipi'o community on the Action Committee.

Community member Jason Mockchew discussed the difficulty having others speak for the Waipi'o community. He brought up the division regarding Waipi'o. He believes in following their ancestors regarding the lookout. He believes in starting at the top and the rest will flow down into the valley. He mentioned the need for more attention and the dangers of the road.

2. Action Committee Project Prioritization Discussion

Chair Keeney discussed creating more subcommittees within the Action Committee. He believes that's where most of the work takes place. Vice-Chair Hubbard offered that more Action Committee members would allow for the creation of more subcommittees enabling the Action Committee to do more work. She suggested that the mayor's office could relay how many new member applications are in process.

Lehua Street Infrastructure Subcommittee

Community member Bidleman asked for this to be explored. He believes that with upcoming development, sidewalk infrastructure is needed.

Chair Keeney motioned to create a Lehua Street Infrastructure Subcommittee. Seconded by Vice-Chair Hubbard. Motioned passed with 5 ayes, 0 nays. Action Committee member Cruz had left early at this point.

Chair Keeney encouraged community members to bring forward any issues or needs with the intention to create new subcommittees.

3. Action Committee Community Outreach Strategy

Chair Keeney asked the Action Committee how to increase community attendance. Communication No. 2022-31 – Public Invitation for CDP Action Committee Access is the initial introduction of the Action Committee to other entities. He explained the need to interact with other Action Committee member community organizations to learn about their needs and see how we can help. He believes that this communication will help and can also be published in Hāmākua Times.

Please go here for Communication No. 2022-31 – Public Invitation for CDP Action Committee Access: <https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/WebLink/1/edoc/120338/Communication%20No.%202022-31%20Public%20Invitation%20for%20CDP%20Action%20Committee%20Access.pdf>

4. Action Committee Support Letter for Hakalau School

Action Committee member Kurokawa shared the current stalemate between the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DNLR) and the Department of Education (DOE) due to the mitigation of lead; therefore, the DOE won't do it. Due to this, a local community group has been maintaining the grounds. There was a question about nominating it for the County's Public Access, Open Space, and Natural Resources program (PONC), which would require more research.

Action Committee member Kurokawa motioned to approve the letter and to submit to respected agencies. Seconded by Action Committee member Nishimoto.

Vice-Chair Hubbard questioned if it would be ok to submit the letter and then explore the PONC initiative? Action Committee member Kurokawa agreed and mentioned that the school could be used for community classes and a home base for disaster mitigation.

Motion passed with 5 ayes, 0 nays.

Please go here for Communication No. 2022-30 AC Letter of Support for Hakalau School: <https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/WebLink/1/edoc/120337/Communication%20No.%202022-30%20AC%20Letter%20of%20Support%20for%20Hakalau%20Bridge.v03.pdf>

5. Status On All Action Committees Discussion

Chair Keeney is interested in the common issues shared by the Action Committees. Community member Chuck Flaherty, representing himself, testified on Agenda Item #5. He summarized the differences between the Hāmākua and Kona Community Development Plans; each district is different. He mentioned the need for the current General Plan revision to reference the CDPs and also suggested that the CDPs should be revised along with the General Plan in a uniform structure.

Chair Keeney would like to send *Communication No. 2022-29 Tawn Keeney Letter to all Action Committees Regarding a Future Joint Action Committee Meeting* to all Action Committee members and is requesting that the Action Committees themselves organize and facilitate a Joint Action Committee meeting.

Community member Flaherty discussed previous Joint Action Committee meetings. He also mentioned that the Kona Action Committee approved a letter asking the Planning Department for support and the legal clarification between the Action Committee and the Planning Department; they need to move forward knowing what their kuleana is.

Action Committee member Kurokawa would like to see all the Action Committees together and reiterated that the CDPs need an update. He mentioned that the Joint Action Committee meetings are too prescribed by the Planning Department. That if we want to address systemic issues we have to do so from the community and take on leadership, rather than have the Planning Department orchestrate it.

Chair Keeney suggested he could reach out to the other Action Committees and see if they want to get together.

Chair Keeney motioned to send the letter to all the Action Committees. Seconded by Action Committee member Kurokawa. Motion did not pass with 4 ayes, 1 nay (Vice-Chair Hubbard). Please note, 5 votes majority are required for a motion to pass.

Please go here for Communication No. 2022-29 – Tawn Keeney Letter to all ACs regarding Joint AC Meetings
<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/WebLink/1/edoc/120334/Communication%20No.%202022-29%20Tawn%20Keeney%20Letter%20to%20all%20ACs%20regarding%20Joining%20AC%20Meetings.pdf>

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING: The January 17, 2023 Hāmākua Action Committee Meeting will be cancelled due to the Zoning & Subdivision Code Update Open Houses. The next Hāmākua Action Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at the Honokaʻa People’s Theatre.

1. Hawaiʻi Electric Light Company (HELCO) Presentation

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32pm.

This agenda and all related documents are available in the Planning Department’s Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee folder via [the County of Hawaiʻi Public Documents Repository](#). These documents may also be requested from the Planning Department by calling (808) 961-8288 or emailing cdp@hawaiicounty.gov.