

Costa, Courtney

From: Merry Bern [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 5, 2023 9:03 PM
To: Planning CDP
Subject: May 10 Meeting comment/testimony
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Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Hello,

I would like to offer a brief comment at HAMAKUA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE scheduled for 5 pm on May 10th.

I do see that the agenda has already been set. The agenda topic that is closest to what interests me is #2 the PONC presentation by Blake McNaughton about his experience with applications for Pepe'ekeo.

I've owned a home in the Ookala neighborhood for the past 17 months, and am concerned about the lack of access to natural scenic areas near the 95 existing homes in Ookala. My partner, Bill Kauppinen and I, have recently walked along Moonlight Road, which traverses land which was formerly owned by Hamakua Sugar Co, and which is now owned by the State of Hawaii. Dumping of yard waste and other debris is occurring along the road, and there's even a substantial collection of non-operational vehicles on the road just NE of Nui Village. I attach two photos, one of a lovely view of the Pacific through the ironwood trees, and a second one showing the collection of cars and trucks just a few hundred yards south on Moonlight Rd.

I understand that there have been previous initiatives, some of which have met with community resistance, to try to fulfill Policy # 129 of the Hamakua Community Development Plan: "Develop underutilized private and public properties within existing towns to be used as gathering places, community gardens, open squares and markets, auxiliary parking lots (including park and ride areas), and parks (including pocket and art parks, and outdoor amphitheaters, etc.)." This is exactly what I would love to see happen in this area. Improvements could be incremental, beginning, perhaps, with cleaning up and repairing, where needed, the road. Then perhaps the construction of a pavilion, a picnic area, trails, and rest room facilities could occur. It's a shame to allow what was once a high-quality road to disintegrate and accumulate debris. I think this area is close enough to all 3 neighborhoods of Ookala to be accessible to residents, yet far enough from residences that people may be less likely to oppose development.

Merry Bern
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