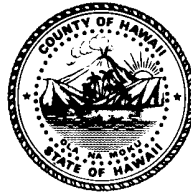


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County of Hawai'i PLANNING DEPARTMENT

HAMAKUA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

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Tuesday, March 21, 2023 DRAFT Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tawn Keeney called the Hamakua Community Development Plan (HCDP) Action Committee (AC) to order at 5:00 P.M. Quorum was not established at this time. At 6:17 P.M., quorum was established with the arrival of a fifth member. This meeting was held online via Zoom, and in-person at the Honoka'a People's Theatre.

ROLL CALL

AC Members Present: Tawn Keeney, Nicolette (Niki) Hubbard, Brad Kurokawa, Robert Nishimoto, Desiree Cruz (arrived at 6:17 p.m.)

AC Members Absent-Excused: Carol Ignacio and Crystal Kua

County Staff: April Surprenant, Planning Program Manager

County Officials: Deputy Corporation Counsel, Suzanna Tiapula

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Hāmākua Action Committee Recruitment:

Chair Keeney made an announcement about the 2 open seats for the Hāmākua CDP AC, and the applications the Mayor is reviewing.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

This item was taken out of order, immediately following Agenda Item #1, after quorum was established.

Chair Keeney motioned to approve the January 10, 2023, minutes. Seconded by Vice-Chair Hubbard. Motion passed unanimously with a voice vote (5-0).

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

1. One member of the public provided oral testimony:

Community member Phaeton Keeney, representing herself, testified on Agenda Item #1. She noted that she was glad to move to a renewable future and hoped that we would move away from biomass and towards clean zero emission sources.

2. One member of the public provided written testimony:

Community member Tina Stiteler, provided written testimony on Agenda Item #1.

See Communication No. 2023-06 – Tina Stiteler Comments Regarding Hawaiian Electric here: <https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/WebLink/1/edoc/122699/Communication%20No.%202023-06%20Tina%20Stiteler%20Comments%20RE%20Hawaiian%20Electric.pdf>

BUSINESS:

1. Presentation by Hawaiian Electric Company (HECO) and Hawai'i Energy:

This item was taken out of order, immediately following Announcements on the agenda. Quorum was not established at the start of the presentation but was established before the presentation concluded.

Representatives David Kurohara and Marc Asano from HECO, and Gracen Ghen from Hawai'i Energy shared information about Hawai'i Powered, Integrated Grid Planning and Hawai'i Energy rebates and resources.

See presentation slides on renewable energy sources here:

<https://records.hawaiicounty.gov/WebLink/1/edoc/122700/Communication%20No.%202023-07%20HECO%20and%20Hawaii%20Energy%20Presentation.pdf>

Community member Richard Robert Bidleman questioned if Puna Geothermal was generating hydrogen to be used for buses, if hydrogen powered vehicles were being used on the island, and where the hydrogen was coming from?

Representatives from HECO informed that Puna Geothermal was not using their energy to create hydrogen; their contract with HECO is to supply power to the grid. They also informed that there was a hydrogen bus on island used by the County but did not know the current status of it being used at this time. They clarified that electric buses were being used. Mr. Kurohara also informed that the Hawai'i Natural Energy Institute (HNEI) does have a hydrogen station, in Kona, where they produce and that is where the hydrogen bus mentioned was filled.

Community Member Troy Pearson questioned if HECO was looking into investments that have long-term impact on toxins in our environment as the current photovoltaic solar cells use a lot of plastic and when they are not in use anymore, they produce a lot of toxins.

For large scale solar projects, HECO doesn't develop solar project, but they do partner with developers or third parties to buy power from them. In their contracts, they make sure there's proper end-of-life treatment of the facility when it is retired. He believed even at the state level, recycling programs were being looked at for those types of materials.

65 Community member Richard Robert Bidleman questioned what efforts HECO were taking
66 to encourage clients to install solar and put electricity back into the grid.

67 Mr. Asano informed that there are different programs for customers and customers are
68 always able to self-consume any electricity that they generate. He noted that they work
69 with the Public Utilities Commission developing some of those programs, but ultimately
70 the commission approves them and any compensation. Mr. Asano informed that they
71 expect to release newer programs with additional customer incentives to provide services
72 to the grid in the near future.

73 Further discussion was had on the concern of affordability of electricity for residents as
74 the question of how HECO planned to address that was raised. Mr. Kurohara
75 acknowledged the increase in oil costs that impacted everyone's bill in the past few years.
76 He informed that, in the past, the law required their company to purchase power from
77 independent power producers at the cost of oil. Some of those contracts have been
78 amended and others are to be reviewed and renewed to a fixed rate to eliminate that tie
79 to the cost of oil. Mr. Kurohara stated that as they add more renewables to the grid scale
80 projects, the cost of electricity will stabilize and start lowering over time.

81 **2. Hāmākua Action Committee Meeting Schedule Discussion:**

82 Members of the AC discussed creating a meeting schedule for the remainder of 2023.

83 It was noted that Council Member Kimball was not able to make meetings on the third
84 Tuesday of each month and one committee member was not able to make it on the
85 second Tuesday of each month, so the committee considered moving dates. Chair Keeney
86 also considered meeting to coincide with the Hāmākua Times submission due date before
87 the 20th of each month.

88 *Chair Keeney proposed a cadence of hybrid meetings on the second Wednesday of each*
89 *month. Seconded by Committee Member Cruz.*

90 *Passed with 4 votes aye (Hubbard, Keeney, Cruz, Nishimoto), 1 abstain (Kurokawa), 0 votes*
91 *nay.*

92 **3. Subcommittee Report Back to Action Committee:**

93 Designated subcommittees provided updates to the Action Committee regarding their
94 progress.

- 95 • Waipi'o Wahi Pana (section 4.9.6, action items 16-20):
96 Committee Member Kurokawa had nothing to report at this time
- 97 • Housing (CDP Section 5.2 – Community Action #25):
98 Vice-Chair Hubbard informed that she would provide a report at the next meeting
- 99 • Lehua St. Subdivision (Honoka'a) Infrastructure Subcommittee (section 5.5):

100 Community Member Robert Bidleman commented that many who utilize Lehua Street
101 are driving too fast and jeopardizing the neighborhood safety. He informed that a
102 petition to the County to install speed bumps has been started as he felt that would be
103 the first step to ensure the street is safe for pedestrians.

104 **4. Action Committee Project Discussion:**

105 Members of the AC discussed forming more subcommittees.

106 Chair Keeney noted that they should clearly define what County policies they are
107 advocating for and whether the subcommittee is for a specific action or subject. He asked
108 what the scope was of the subcommittee on Waipi'o Wahi Pana as the sections that
109 mention Waipi'o also include Mauna Kea, so clearer definition is needed. Committee
110 member Kurokawa will report back at the next meeting.

111 Chair Keeney stated that there are 130 Policies that the AC could advocate towards. He
112 expressed that orienting their actions to support those would lead to more proactive and
113 more fulfilling AC work.

114 Chair Keeney proposed forming the following ten subcommittees:

- 115 • Land Use and Development
- 116 • Agriculture
- 117 • Infrastructure and Transportation
- 118 • Access Open Space Roads Trails and Coastline
- 119 • Natural Environment
- 120 • Health Safety and Education
- 121 • Commerce and Econ Development
- 122 • Wahi Pana (Waipi'o and Mauna Kea)
- 123 • Preservation and Revitalization
- 124 • Community and Government Relations (Communication)

125 He acknowledged that taking issues as they come may be desired, but subcommittees
126 could form focus groups for specific problems that arise.

127 *Chair Keeney motioned to create the 10 subcommittees, but not take discussion at this*
128 *time. No second was heard. Motion did not move forward.*

129 Vice-Chair Hubbard asked the Chair to clarify on the other two items on the agenda
130 regarding the Open Space Subcommittee and Public Restroom subcommittee ideas. Chair
131 Keeney did not make motions.

132 Community member Robert Bidleman commented that the committee he was on started
133 out and then dwindled. They cannot tackle all issues, so they may not be very big but if
134 you have interest, create the committee.

135 Community member Indy Rishi Singh stated that he supports subcommittees and wants to
136 have volunteers. He hoped to find ways to make community feel involved and provided
137 ideas of offering food at meetings from local vendors. He also mentioned Regenerative
138 Civics.

139 Community member Pam Elders commented that she likes committee structures
140 coordinated with the CDP. She advised that they need to be proactive not reactive.

141 Community member Diana Cantu-Reyna informed that she was a registered nurse and
142 would like to proactively address issues, not run to catch up. She would like to discover

143 how to engage community members to stay involved. She also suggested that the AC
144 source community members who have experience in meeting facilitation, to help move
145 the meetings along

146 Community member Whitney Valez, a Hāmākua Ag Coop board member, questioned how
147 they can engage with the process. She provided an idea to send a survey to members, 54
148 farmers, to gather feedback from farmers on what is important to them.

149 **5. Action Committee Community Outreach Strategy:**

150 Members of the AC discussed strategies to increase meeting attendance and ways to
151 better engage with the Hāmākua community.

152 Chair Keeney briefly shared that he would try to get into the Hāmākua Times and would
153 try to explore social media.

154 Community member Robert Bidleman commented that maybe the AC needs an example
155 of an item that they could work on in order to spark interest to form a subcommittee.

156
157 **COMMUNICATIONS:**

158 Chair Keeney shared that AC members could review the communications at their leisure.

- 159 1. Communication No. 2023-03 Public Access & Coastline Preservation Flyer – Toni
160 Withington
161 2. Communication No. 2023-04 Hāmākua Agricultural Plan (2006)

162 **PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING ON APRIL 12, 2023:**

163 Community member Indy Rishi Singh shared that he hosted a Civic Action rally at Hakalau,
164 which centered around farming, education and health care. He noted that they came together
165 and shared they all agreed they needed to focus on community gardens and tie that into
166 health.

167 Committee Member Hubbard noted that this ties into section 6.2, strengthening local
168 agriculture and suggested discussing at the next meeting.

169
170 **ADJOURNMENT:**

171 *Committee member Nishimoto motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Chair Keeney.*
172 *Motion passed unanimously (5-0).*

173 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:15 p.m.

174 These meeting minutes and all related documents are available in the Planning Department's
175 Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee folder via [the County of Hawai'i](https://www.hawaii.gov/publicdocuments/)
176 [Public Documents Repository](https://www.hawaii.gov/publicdocuments/). These documents may also be requested from the Planning
177 Department by calling (808) 961-8288 or emailing cdp@hawaiicounty.gov.