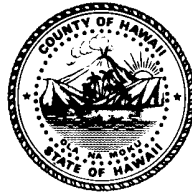


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County of Hawai'i PLANNING DEPARTMENT

HĀMĀKUA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

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Wednesday, September 13, 2023 DRAFT Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tawn Keeney called the Hāmākua Community Development Plan (HCDP) Action Committee (AC) to order at 5:36 P.M. Quorum was at this time. This meeting was held online via Zoom, and in-person at the Laupāhoehoe Public Library.

ROLL CALL

AC Members Present: Tawn Keeney, Nicolette (Niki) Hubbard, Brad Kurokawa, Robert Nishimoto, Tisha Mahealani, Richard Bidleman

AC Members Absent: Desiree Cruz and Crystal Kua

AC Members Absent and Excused: Robert Nishimoto

County Staff: April Surprenant, Maryam Palma, Kim Tanaka

County Officials: Deputy Corporation Counsel, Sinclair Salas-Ferguson

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Hāmākua CDP Action Committee New Member Update: Chair Keeney introduced the new AC Members Tisha Mahealani and Richard Bidleman

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Two member of the public provided oral testimony:

Cory Harden of West Sierra club talking about Agenda Item #3, they noted that email addresses not on the website are indicative of a bigger problem: no transparency. In addition, planning presentations that have been done by the County eat up time with no chance for ppl to ask questions. County has development proposals that the Action Committee does not get to review. County can find staff to review and update the zoning codes including the Subdivision Code and General Plan. Action Committee should be providing ongoing guidance and oversight.

Koohan Paik-Mander also talked about Agenda Item #3, and seconded Cory Harden. They indicated there is more time needed to input. Especially since community development is moving so fast going 4x the rate of Maui. CDP interface with the public that took 10 years. Email addresses not on the website is a negative thing as things (larger plans) are pushed through at a rapid pace.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

This item was taken out of order, immediately following Agenda Item #2.

Chair Keeney motioned to approve the March 21, 2023, April 12, 2023, and May 10, 2023 minutes. Seconded by Brad. Motion passed unanimously with a voice vote (6-0).

BUSINESS:

1. Hāmākua Wildfire Preparedness:

Nani Barretto of Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization did a Wildfire Management Plan Presentation. Included in the information was a brief history of the organization which is a nonprofit and not a government entity that has been around for 20 years in Waimea. Where they are trying to understand risks, resources, and plans for the last 20 years. Many have not considered wildfire as something to think about. But they are focused on fire mitigation in close partnership with Civil Defense partners and Firefighters. They know that they can change the path of a wildfire by managing lands and yards. Can also build and retrofit residences to reduce the risk of fire losses. Consider firefighting to be the last line of defense with the first line being to be prepared and mitigate risk. A large team of partners that work alongside. Presentation CWPP is the County Wildfire Preparedness Plan. Put together by team to protect life, property, and infrastructure. Prioritize the projects and establish a pathway for funding and collaboration and communication. Hawaii Wildfire was tasked one year ago to develop the plan. Had a meeting to establish areas of interest and actions needed (Summary Sheet [HERE](#)). Included in the presentation was information on the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) Program passed in 2022 funding for at-risk low if the program has been identified in the document as eligible if there is an entity that wants to develop a program. Round 2 application ends on October 31 but 3 more rounds in the future. She wants to share some resources. Wildfire & Drought LOOKOUT! campaign (Webpage [HERE](#)) gets launched every year to educate people about what they can do to prepare. Another thing is a resident handbook called Hawai'i's Ready, Set, Go! Wildland Fire Action Guide which is a one stop resource for residents and visitors to know to be prepared for a Fire. (Download [HERE](#)) Another resource is a Nationally recognized Firewise USA program that recognizes neighborhoods that are working towards raising awareness and readying their homes and yards in their neighborhoods (Download [HERE](#)). Please go to the website to see if your community has an established Firewise program. If you don't live in a Firewise neighborhood, then find some neighbors and see how you can use the resources to establish your Firewise Program. There was one in the Hāmākua area previously, but it never got traction. Primary information ambassadors are trained in the area, and they can share the available resources including a free home assessment. If you are interested in the program, please reach out and you can get more detail. (Webpage [HERE](#)) for free assessment. Pacific fire exchange is a

research program for large landowners, landscapers, educators, and exchanges. (Website [HERE](#)). Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization has been invited to various areas and are always - survey ([LINK](#)) if you have comments or to share your wildfire concerns, priorities, or shovel-ready project ideas go [HERE](#). Also subscribe to our newsletters to keep up to date with upcoming workshops, new resources, etc. [HERE](#). I am a co-director, and we can be reached collectively at directors@hawaiiwildfire.org

Q: Is your org a 501 (c) 3. A: Yes

Q: How do you get most of your funding A: Most is from federal grants, also chili cookoff and t-shirt sales.

Q: How many ppl? A: We have a staff of 8 but are working to staff up as our team is stretched thin

Q: Tawn: What is the next step with the current great interest? We have discussed a meeting with Honoka`a where much will be done. As there will be 5-6 other communities that may be interested. What is the best next step for AC members to intersect? A: The Firewise program has a good framework as this connects the communities with the officials and firefighters. As residents we need to know how to start with our home. This is a group of people talking about it regularly and keeps people action oriented. Next step we could have a meeting that is just about the Firewise program so neighborhoods could become more active.

Q: In your group of organizations of interest you did not mention Kamehameha Schools. Are we wrong that the Eucalyptus trees are a risk? How is KS involved? A: Unmanaged lands and unmanaged fuels during a dry period (even on the wet side are at risk). Also, firefighting resources are stretched thin.

Q: Tawn: have you been in contact with KS. A: Not a lot. Some residents were nervous and allowed us access to the area to use FEMA funds to cut some back.

Q: Tawn: Are you hopeful for conversations? A: Yes, I am always hopeful as relationships are the most important. No real answer when it comes to the human connection and personalities, but we have seen it before.

Q: Michelle: I was wondering if you are cool with me networking and sending out the links. Especially because we do a lot of events in Honoka`a. A: Of course, because people are scared and if you have ideas we would love to connect.

Q: Nikki: Is the right document to share the first document? A: Within the month we will have a final draft.

Q: How will we get the final A: Nani will send the final to Tawn.

Q: What do the grants fund? A: Education and outreach. Mitigation. Health system restoration. Field reduction and field management. Converting fire prone invasive landscapes to more drought tolerant.

Q: In Honokaa the vegetation on the West side, Eucalyptus, is a huge fire issue since it is about the size of Oahu. Is this an entry with KS to get grants to mitigate fire hazard and trees. A:

105 Field management entities are eligible, but I heard that KS would not be interested in Federal
106 funds.

107 Comment: County needs to interface with KS and maybe can be invited to a meeting.

108 Comment: Richard came across a Big Island News Now article, it is incumbent on the County
109 to develop the rules. It should be the County to go after grants and take care of our
110 landscape. Doesn't want to rely on a non-profit to take care of this problem.

111 **2. Governor's Housing Proclamation Discussion**

112 *Chair Tawn Keeney made a motion that the personal letter that he wrote to Nani Medeiros be*
113 *endorsed by the Hāmākua CDP as a statement representing their views, on developments be*
114 *brought to the CDP. Brad seconded the Motion. Letter was read aloud ([LINK](#)) Discussion:*
115 *Richard Bidleman. New to Honoka'a in a brand-new subdivision and many places are*
116 *becoming urban. Many may not like that but it's reality. Preserving the historical nature is*
117 *important but things are going to become more urban. Brad Kurokawa asked if we are*
118 *assuming that the Emergency Proclamation may supersede the current lines of*
119 *communication so believes an official request should be there. Currently the developer is*
120 *under no obligation to talk with the community and/or the CDP. Would like the Action*
121 *Committee to be included in this communication stream. Heather Kimball: Housing Officer*
122 *Nani Medeiros will resign, and the Emergency Order is temporary and may not be re-issued.*

123 *Tawn would like to call for a vote on the motion. Brad-Aye Robert-Aye Nikki-Aye Tisha-Aye*
124 *Richard-Aye Tawn-Aye. Motion passed unanimously with a voice vote (6-0).*

125 Q: Jack Vicory, can we add in the letter a return receipt? A: Yes.

126 **3. Action Committee Email Addresses on the Hāmākua CDP Website**

127 Chair Tawn Keeney made a motion that the email address that has been removed from the
128 Hāmākua CDP website be restored and in addition, that there is a restoration of the Chair and
129 Agenda, Date and Time or the upcoming meeting of the Action Committees. Tisha seconded
130 for the discussion. Discussion centered around concerns about the accessibility of the email.
131 Sinclair - Planning Department Rep stated that the agenda is posted on the website and there
132 is a fact sheet for Chair, personal privacy information including email address is not usually
133 posted as it is considered private. However, if the Board agrees individually email addresses
134 can be posted by the Planning Department. April confirmed that the Planning Dept can move
135 forward and send an email to all the AC members to see if they want to include their email or
136 a separate CPD related email address. Michelle suggested that an email be sent through a
137 secretary or as Mahealani mentioned setting up a CDP specific email. Sinclair confirmed that
138 the server will only allow for an individual email for each.

139 Guest speaker mentioned they wanted an accessible interface which is not really what we
140 have now.

141 *Chair Keeney amended a motion to have the email address that has been removed from the*
142 *Hāmākua CDP website be restored with the exception of those members who do not want*
143 *their personal email address exposed. Seconded by Niki Hubbard. Motion passed unanimously*
144 *with a voice vote (6-0).*

145 *Keeney made a motion that we have restoration of the Chair and Agenda, Date and Time or*
146 *the upcoming meeting of the Action Committee on the HCDP website. Motion passed*
147 *unanimously with a voice vote (6-0).*

148 **4. AC Meeting Cadence:**

149 The Chair confirmed with the Corporation council and planning department that the Chair can
150 discuss setting of dates, times, venues and agendas and that no discussion of note can be
151 made regarding topics as it does not violate the Sunshine Laws. No motion needed.

152 **5. Permitted Interaction Group Updates:**

153 ○ **Waipi'o Wahi Pana**

154 Committee Member Kurokawa reports a 2-day session on Aug 19-20 with the Edith Kanakaole
155 Foundation with the Waipio steering committee. Interesting session to discuss the
156 generational resources Papakumakawalu and the Hawaiian culture/chants and using this as a
157 foundation and framework to develop Kapu (religious and important elements) and Kanawai
158 (rule set in place to protect the Kapu). Heather pulled out the process that is communicated
159 through oral chants and other historical learnings. Put a draft in place and pull from
160 additional sources and take it back to the Steering Committee and Corporation Counsel.
161 Creating pool of resources to justify the actions taken.

162 ○ **Housing**

163 Vice-Chair Hubbard does not have a particular task. It is an information sharing session. A
164 mailer with the map was sent out that has a 50-acre residential parcel with a 30-unit
165 affordable housing subdivision proposal. They do not have funding for infrastructure or
166 housing. They have a design laid out but will not know how the development will be built until
167 they have the infrastructure. It is a county development and will have the infrastructure as
168 required by the county. Niki will follow-up and be a liaison. The immediate community was
169 not pleased with the plan and are concerned with run off and confusion with what affordable
170 housing will look like and what it is and what it will do to the surrounding community. AC
171 could provide education to the community. County will not know the affording housing
172 parameters until they get planning.

173
174 Heather Kimball made some additional comments and calls to action. There will be a Wildfire
175 meeting and participation in the Mayor's fire related task force on 10/3/2023. There is a
176 presentation on 9/19/2023 for support tools for ecosystem data management to help with
177 determining how policies affect other areas of land management. There is a bill coming
178 forward on 10/3/2023 to focus eligibility on residence and closeness to work. On October 3rd
179 the Council is also asking the Finance Department to work on negotiations to purchase a 32-
180 acre parcel in Gualt's Gulch, the southern part of Pepe'ekeo and shoreline via PONC. Public
181 support is needed. Hank Correa owns the parcel, and it is for sale. If acquired would provide
182 public access to fishing and agroforestry and support the local community with local
183 stewardship. The hearing is 10/3/2023 in committee and the following Wednesday in Council.

184 **6. Future Agenda Item Recommendations**

185 1. Permitted Interaction Groups Updates to AC

- 186 2. Format of Future AC Meetings
187 3. Honoka'a Business Association presentation
188 4. Presentation from Deborah Chang, Current Chair on Pepe'ekeo PONCs

189 **ADJOURNMENT:**

190 *Committee Chair Keeney motioned to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Committee Member*
191 *Nishimoto. Motion passed unanimously (6-0). The meeting was adjourned at approximately*
192 *7:51 p.m.*

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