

1 KONA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2 ACTION COMMITTEE
3 COUNTY OF HAWAII

4 DRAFT MINUTES
5 January 14, 2025

6 **CALL TO ORDER**

7 Chair Young called the Kona Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee (AC)
8 meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. A quorum was established with six members in attendance. This
9 meeting was held in person at the West Hawai'i Civic Center, B2 Conference Room and online via
10 the Zoom platform.

11 The full YouTube video of this meeting can be found here:
12 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mpQ22XZN08>

13 **ROLL CALL**

14 Members Present (in person): Vice-Chair Nancy Pисicchio, John Pelletier, and Chair Charles Young

15 Members Present (via Zoom): David Huerta, Charla Thompson, and Heather Korotie

16 Members Absent: Roselyn Molina

17 County Staff Present: Kawelo Kalili (in person), Maryam Palma, Janice Hata, and Jessica Lahip
18 (via Zoom)

19 There were approximately 25 members of the public in attendance (10 in person and 15 via Zoom).

20 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

21 Committee member Pelletier moved to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2024, meeting
22 as drafted. Vice-Chair Pисicchio seconded. The motion passed unanimously. [*SEE YOUTUBE*
23 *TIMESTAMP 2:10*]

24 **BUSINESS**

- 25 **1. Mayor's Boards and Commissions Collaboration** – Discussion and potential action on
26 opportunities for collaboration with other boards and commissions. [*SEE YOUTUBE*
27 *TIMESTAMP 4:45*]

28 Chair Young emphasized the importance of collaboration with other boards and commissions,
29 highlighting that it would be beneficial for the committee. He committed to focusing on water-
30 related issues by attending the State Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM)
31 meetings and County Department of Water Supply (DWS) meetings.

32 Committee member Pelletier suggested working with the Cultural Resources Commission
33 (CRC) and the Leeward Planning Commission as other potential partners.

34 Vice-Chair Pисicchio mentioned that they are interested in collaborating with other Action
35 Committees regarding the Sunshine Law legislation.

Committee member Thompson expressed interest in water-related issues and shared that she has been reviewing recommended water commission videos. She is particularly focused on the Kealahou Regional Park project and exploring involvement with relevant boards and commissions, such as those related to open spaces and water. Additionally, she is working on engaging with the Tree City USA initiative and has been in contact with Planning Department staff and the Arbor Day Foundation for guidance.

Committee member Korotie expressed interest in exploring the cesspool-to-septic conversion process, specifically whether better solutions are being considered. She plans to look into the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and identify which boards or groups might be addressing this issue to engage further.

Chair Young emphasized the need for committee members to adhere to Sunshine Law requirements, ensuring that no more than two members are present at the same meeting, including Zoom sessions. He encouraged members to independently pursue their areas of interest and raise any significant concerns or topics for discussion as agenda items during future meetings. Chair Young expressed appreciation for their commitment and encouraged members to exercise discretion in their efforts while reserving the agenda for their recommendations.

2. Neighborhood Boards Bill – Discussion and potential action on whether the Action Committee should submit testimony to Senate committees. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 12:36*]

The Action Committee discussed the next steps for a bill they had voted to support, focusing on how to proceed if it is posted before their next meeting. Members suggested drafting a letter of support based on finalized bill language, circulating it for approval, and ensuring Sunshine Law compliance. Planning Department staff, Maryam, proposed agreeing on key bullet points during the meeting to expedite the process, with Vice-Chair drafting the letter accordingly. Vice-Chair Pisciocchio shared updates from Senator Kanuha, noting the finalized draft might be available Friday evening. Committee member Pelletier moved for Vice-Chair Pisciocchio to update the previous testimony the AC submitted on February 21, 2024, with necessary edits to the bill number and date and resubmitting it to both the Senate and House. Vice-Chair, Pisciocchio, seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. General Plan Discussion – Discussion and potential action regarding submitting comment to the Leeward Planning Commission. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 23:46*]

Chair Young approved for Committee Member Pelletier to share his update on the December 19th Leeward Planning Commission meeting. Committee member Pelletier shared that the testimony submitted at the last meeting went well, though there wasn't much discussion from the Commission. He noted that the upcoming meeting on Thursday, January 16th may involve more decision-making. He also outlined two key topics from the testimony: concerns about transit-related aspects in the general plan and the issue of designating property outside of the urban growth area for development, which was voted on due to concerns over urban sprawl. The committee plans to follow up on these points in future discussions.

Public Testimony:

- Josephine Keli‘ipio provided testimony expressing concern about the shift towards transit-oriented development and "smart cities," which they fear could lead to surveillance-based systems like those in China. They opposed these developments, emphasizing that they are not suitable for the local community [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 27:31*]
- Burke Matsuyama provided testimony inquiring about the status of zoning changes related to the General Plan and how it might impact his five-acre grocery store development. He sought an update on the land use process and timeline for when the plan will be accepted. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 31:04*]
- Rebecca Melendez provided testimony criticizing the General Plan for being vague and lacking clarity on the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program and its impact on landowner rights, particularly regarding environmental restrictions and private property development. They also expressed concerns about the plan’s push for smart grid infrastructure, 5G technology, and the lack of research on health risks, while emphasizing the need for local jobs and innovative solutions to resource issues like power outages and waste management. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 38:56*]
- Robert Gay provided testimony arguing that climate change is primarily driven by the amount of sunlight reaching the Earth, not CO2 levels, citing the minimal human contribution to CO2 emissions. They pointed to the 2021 eruption of the Hunga Tonga volcano, which released massive amounts of water and sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere, causing temporary cooling effects, and emphasized the importance of considering these factors in climate discussions. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 52:34*]
- Will Pode provided testimony expressing concern that people are unaware of the changes in the general plan, citing a recent experience where farmers were affected by shifts in the plan without prior knowledge. They requested more time for public awareness before the bill is passed. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 1:01:06*]
- Shellie Davis provided testimony expressing concern that homeowners and landowners, particularly Native Hawaiians, were not properly notified about the general plan, and questioned whether the county had plans to protect their property rights. They argued that the plan could lead to the forced removal of property owners, urging the county to prioritize residents' rights and ensure transparency in the planning process. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 1:05:54*]

Chair Young reminded the audience that updating the general plan is mandated by law and is essential for good planning, as conditions change over time. Chair acknowledged that communication could have been better and emphasized that the current plan is an update based on previous versions and current conditions. Vice-Chair Pisicchio clarified that the Action Committee's role is to discuss concerns and consider potential amendments, but the actual decision-making responsibility lies with those in charge of reviewing the general plan. They emphasized that recommendations for more public meetings or amendments would be forwarded to the Planning Commission for further action. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 1:17:28*]

- Elizabeth Cook provided testimony rejecting the current plan and called for a new one created by the people, emphasizing the importance of community involvement in decision-

making. They expressed concern that government often fails to act in the best interest of local communities and urged elected officials to listen to the people. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:17:28]

- Randy Rugar provided testimony emphasizing the need for a new approach, criticizing the vague concept of "stakeholders" in the current plan and expressing frustration that the government's actions often fail to meet local needs. They advocated for more community-driven solutions and better use of available technology to address pressing issues like water and climate change, while urging transparency and accountability from elected officials. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:25:40]
- Michael Sofranko provided testimony sharing their experience of fighting against environmental changes, particularly related to the sugar cane industry and timber projects, stressing the importance of informing the public about such changes beforehand. They also criticized the lack of transparency about stakeholders' interests and suggested a more voluntary, trial-based approach to implementing new policies to better understand their potential impact. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:32:28]
- Juhl Rayne provided testimony via Zoom expressing strong opposition to the ongoing planning processes, comparing them to a UN agenda and raising concerns about the impact of policies like those in Kona and other regions. They emphasized the lack of public input, calling for more transparency and citizen engagement to protect future generations' freedom. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:39:20]
- Chuck Flaherty provided testimony via Zoom emphasizing protecting cultural preserve areas to uphold native Hawaiian rights. They urged the committee to review their testimony, address wastewater issues, and advocate for restoring public access and cultural protections in the General Plan during future Planning Commission meetings. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:41:58]
- Joyal Yasuda provided testimony via Zoom emphasizing the importance of protecting Hawai'i's land and cultural heritage, drawing on ancestral wisdom and the sacred connection between people and the land. They urged the committee to make decisions that honor their kupuna and ensure a legacy of stewardship for future generations, grounded in aloha and responsibility. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:46:24]
- Kalei Ka'ilikini provided testimony via Zoom opposing the 2045 General Plan, citing flaws in land use designations and concerns over the inclusion of "stakeholders" that could empower billionaires and corporations over local residents. She also emphasized addressing homelessness, referencing its health impacts, and urged research into weather modification technologies, linking them to disasters like the Lahaina fires. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:54:47]
- Adrienne Hew provided testimony via Zoom raising concerns about California's water diversion by a billionaire couple for private farming, tying it to issues like stakeholder influence, smart meters, and infrastructure failures linked to wildfires. They also recommended the book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* to highlight parallels with systemic land grabs and urged specificity in the general plan to avoid similar outcomes. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:02:06]
- April Lee provided testimony via Zoom regarding the need for transparency and accountability in the county's general plan, calling for annual audited reports on financial inflows, expenditures, and contractor activities. They highlighted concerns about water access, neglected infrastructure, and the misuse of funds, urging the county to prioritize

166 community needs and ensure responsible resource management. [SEE YOUTUBE
167 *TIMESTAMP 2:06:23*]

168 Vice-Chair Pisicchio and Committee member Pelletier agreed to attend the Leeward Planning
169 Commission meeting on January 16th to participate in further discussions regarding the AC's
170 testimony from the previous meeting. They plan to provide a report to the AC at the February
171 meeting.

172 **4. Kealahou Regional Park Update** – Update from Action Committee members and
173 discussion regarding any actions the Committee may pursue. [SEE YOUTUBE
174 *TIMESTAMP 2:14:00*]

175 The AC discussed the lack of response from the Department of Parks and Recreation regarding
176 the project and proposed inviting the new Department of Parks and Recreation administrator
177 for an update. Vice-Chair Pisicchio moved to send a letter, signed by the chair, requesting
178 updates on the regional park's master plan and status of impact studies, as progress appears to
179 be in early stages despite the plan being in development since the 1990s. Committee member
180 Pelletier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

181 Chair Young deferred the announcements to the next meeting and mentioned finalizing the
182 agenda beforehand. The meeting adjourned with unanimous approval, ending 20 minutes over
183 the scheduled time.

184 **ADJOURNMENT**

185 The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 2:17:51*]

186 These minutes and all related documents are available in the Planning Department's Kona
187 Community Development Plan Action Committee folder via the County of Hawai'i [Public](#)
188 [Documents Repository](#). These documents may also be requested from the Planning Department by
189 calling (808) 961-8288 or emailing cdp@hawaiiicounty.gov.