

PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ACTION COMMITTEE
COUNTY OF HAWAII

FINAL MINUTES
October 3, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Kanoe Wilson called the Puna Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee (AC) meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. A quorum was established with seven members in attendance. This meeting was held in person at the Pahoa Community Center and via the Zoom online platform.

The YouTube video of this meeting can be found here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icRtRzihOtM>

ROLL CALL

AC Members Present (in person): Martha Morishige and Franny Brewer

AC Members Present (via Zoom): Chair Kanoe Wilson, Vice-Chair Leilani DeMello, Susan Osborne, Jennifer Scheffel (left meeting at 6:00 p.m.), and Gregory Henkel

County Staff: April Surprenant, Natasha Soriano, Maryam Palma, Shannon Arquitola, Janice Hata, Jessica Lahip, and Kawelo Kalili

There were approximately twenty-five members of the public in attendance (twenty in person and five via Zoom).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 4:33*]

Committee Member Osborne motioned to approve the August 8, 2024, minutes as amended. Motion seconded by Committee Member Henkel. Motion carried unanimously with 7 votes aye, 0 votes nay.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 8:43*]

This item was called to order at 5:12 p.m.

Virginia Aste provided testimony on Agenda Item V Proposed New Business regarding Orchidland Neighbors. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIME STAMP 9:37*]

Rebecca Melendez provided testimony on Business Item #1 Final Draft General Plan 2045 Presentation. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIME STAMP 17:10*]

Michael Tivana provided testimony to Business Item #1 Final Draft General Plan 2045 Presentation. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIME STAMP 26:03*]

Stephanie Bath provided testimony via Zoom to Business Item #1 Final Draft General Plan 2045 Presentation, Business Item #2 Drafting a Letter of Support for Conservation Efforts, and Business Item #3 Discussion of AC Implementation Priorities. [*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 29:40*]

Megan Isaac provided testimony to Business Item #1 Final Draft General Plan 2045 Presentation. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 34:15]

Michelle Melendez provided testimony to Business Item #1 Final Draft General Plan 2045 Presentation. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 39:22]

This item concluded at 5:49 p.m.

BUSINESS

- 1. Final Draft General Plan 2045 Presentation** – Presentation and Q&A by Planning Department staff regarding the Final Draft General Plan 2045. Please watch previous workshop recordings and review meeting packet materials as this item is intended to provide Puna specific information related to the CDP.

This item was called to order at 5:49 p.m.

Planning Manager April Surprenant and Planner Natasha Soriano provided a brief presentation regarding the General Plan and opened the floor to questions and answers from the AC and the public. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 45:00]

The meeting raised several important inquiries, including who is responsible for making zoning changes and why the General Plan refers to stakeholders rather than homeowners. Questions about who oversees affordable housing in the County and why Waikoloa is designated as a major city despite Puna's larger population were also raised during this portion of the meeting. Further inquiries focused on the meaning of rezoning in relation to land use designations, the rationale behind selecting the 2045 date for the General Plan, and whether it can be amended to address future needs. Additionally, there was a question about why Hilo does not have a Community Development Plan (CDP).

This item concluded at 6:45 p.m.

- 2. Drafting a Letter of Support for Conservation efforts** – Discussion and potential decision making to draft a letter to support conservation around land acquisition, building permits, surpassed carrying capacity of people and the imminent threat from the lack of infrastructure in Puna.

This item was called to order at 6:45 p.m.

Committee member Brewer motioned to defer this agenda item to the next meeting. Committee member Osborne seconded the motion. Committee member Henkel requested to discuss thoughts regarding sustainability in lower Puna at the next meeting. The motion passed unanimously. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:46]

This item concluded at 6:51 p.m.

- 3. Discussion of AC Implementation Priorities** – Continued discussion and potential decision making of AC Implementation Priorities.

This item was called to order at 6:51 p.m.

Committee member Brewer asked if the committee should consider updating the Puna CDP. Planning will look at updating CDPs after the General Plan is adopted. There are no specific timelines or prioritizations for which CDPs will be looked at first. Planner Maryam Palma stated that a complete comprehensive review of the CDP will require funding and staff capacity. If the AC would rather make amendments to the plan, they can start with looking at policies and land use maps. If the AC decides to implement this as a priority, it could be something to discuss in future meetings. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:48]

Committee member Osborne proposed adding an implementation item aimed at incorporating criteria to prevent the approval of high-risk invasive plants in landscape plans. This item will be discussed at the next meeting. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:55]

Planner Maryam presented the top priority responses from the Action Committee to reestablish connections between AC members and the CDP implementation action items. This list is intended to facilitate ongoing discussions at the next meeting.

Stephanie Bath provided testimony. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:01]

Committee member Osborne and Chair Wilson concurred with Stephanie's testimony and will invite former AC member Patti Pinto to give a presentation on connectivity in Puna.

This item concluded at 7:03 p.m.

PROPOSED AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:07]

1. Patti Pinto present on extensive research transportation projects in Puna
2. Orchidland Neighbors regarding Orchidland Park
3. Drafting a Letter of Support for Conservation Efforts
4. Discussion of AC Implementation Priorities
5. Reach out to DOT regarding widening the Ainaloa roundabout

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chair DeMello adjourned the meeting at 7:19 P.M. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:15]

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