

LEEWARD PLANNING COMMISSION  
COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

MINUTES  
DECEMBER 18, 2025

*A video recording is made part of these minutes, which can be viewed on the YouTube County of Hawai'i Planning Department channel at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndv\\_Do7AG\\_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndv_Do7AG_8).*

*Timestamps are provided for reference in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 92, Hawai'i Revised Statutes. In the event the video recording becomes unavailable at the above-mentioned URL address, the public can contact the Planning Department for assistance.*

The Leeward Planning Commission met in regular session on December 18, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. in the West Hawai'i Civic Center, Council Chambers, Building A, 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Highway, Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i, with Chair Dean Au presiding. This meeting was streamed live on YouTube.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Dean Au (Chair), Donna "Kinuko" Noborikawa (Vice Chair), Rebecca "Kawehi" Inaba, Clement "CJ" Kanuha III, and Armando Rodriguez.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Alexandria "Lexie" Ayers and Michael Dela Cruz.

ALSO PRESENT: William "Bill" Jarrett, Esq. (Deputy Corporation Counsel to the Commission), Jean Campbell, Esq. (Deputy Corporation Counsel to the Planning Department), Michelle Ahn (Deputy Planning Director), and Planning Department staff.

Approximately sixteen members of the public were present in the audience.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chair Dean Au with a quorum present. Commissioners and staff were introduced. Attendees were reminded to silence cell phones, and directions to restrooms and the sign-up process for public testimony were provided. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 0:20]

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

At 9:34 a.m., Chair Au asked the Commissioners to confirm that they had reviewed the minutes from November 20, 2025. Each Commissioner verbally confirmed. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 3:25]

Vice Chair Noborikawa moved to approve the minutes with one correction; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Kanuha. Vice Chair Noborikawa noted that in the second-to-last paragraph at the bottom of page 3, “receded over 900 feet” should be corrected to read “receded over 19 feet”. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried with five ayes (Noborikawa, Kanuha, Inaba, Rodriguez, Au), no noes, and two absent and excused (Ayers, Dela Cruz). *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 3:39]*

## **STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS**

At 9:36 a.m. the Commission took up this item with approximately sixteen members of the public present in the Council Chambers. Chair Au asked if there were any in-person testifiers. There were no in-person testifiers. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 5:32]*

Chair Au asked if there were any testifiers on Zoom. No Zoom testifiers were present. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 5:43]*

Statements from the public concluded at 9:36 a.m.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. APPLICANT: GARRETT WATTS (PL-SPP-2025-000087)**

Application for a Special Permit to establish an orthopedic office as a home occupation within an approximately 411-square foot portion of an approximately 1,000 sq ft proposed detached garage on a .70-acre portion of a 21.272-acre property within the State Land Use Agricultural District. The subject property is located at 73-1775 Hao Street, approximately 1.8 miles east of its intersection with Highway 180, Kaloko Mauka, North Kona, Hawai‘i, TMK: (3) 7-3-025:003.

The Commission took up this item at 9:36 a.m., with nineteen members of the public in attendance. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 6:10]*

Staff presentation was given by Alukahe Kalā. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 7:03]*

Chair Au opened the floor to allow the Commission to ask questions to staff. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 15:03]*

Mr. John Pipan, the applicant’s representative, and Dr. Garrett Watts, the applicant, provided a brief presentation and were present to answer questions. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 19:32]*

Chair Au opened the floor to allow the Commission to ask questions to the applicant. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 28:37]*

Chair Au opened the floor for public testimony. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 42:33]*

Three individuals provided in-person testimony:

1. Daniel Medeiros *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 43:43]*
2. Roger Wuestefeld *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 45:56]*
3. Mark Blanchard *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 51:06]*

Chair Au asked if there were any testifiers on Zoom. No Zoom testifiers were present. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 53:41]*

**Action:** Vice Chair Noborikawa moved that the application to establish an orthopedic office as a home occupation within a 411-square foot portion of an approximately 1,000 square foot proposed detached garage (PL-SPP-2025-000087) be approved based on the Planning Director's findings, recommendation, and conditions, which shall be adopted with amendments to some of the conditions. Commissioner Inaba seconded the motion. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:14:27]*

Vice Chair Noborikawa proposed an amendment to Condition No. 9 to add, prior to the existing condition, that no construction or other disturbance shall occur within 330 feet of any 'Io nest during the period from March 1 through September 30, or until all chicks have fledged, whichever is later. If adult individuals are detected outside the above period during construction, all activities within 100 feet of the bird shall cease; work may resume once the bird has left the area on its own. This language was taken from a letter from Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) dated May 22, 2025, and the 330-foot buffer reflects the state requirement for this endangered species. Commissioner Inaba agreed to the amendment. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:15:08]*

Chair Au opened the floor for discussion. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:16:58]*

Vice Chair Noborikawa stated that the information was taken directly from a DOFAW letter dated May 22, 2025, and that in her past experience working with endangered species restrictions, it did not matter whether the nest site was on the property. What mattered was whether the activity was within the required 330-foot buffer to minimize disturbance to the species. Mr. Pipan agreed. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:17:02]*

Commissioner Rodriguez expressed concern about the neighbors, noting that they purchased the land for agricultural use. Commissioner Kanuha stated that Dr. Watts had downsized the project and addressed the neighbors' concerns; however, concerns regarding traffic remained. He recommended operating hours from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to help alleviate morning traffic. Dr. Watts agreed to those hours. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:18:01]*

Vice Chair Noborikawa discussed traffic in terms of average daily trips (ADT). She noted that the ecotours were cited at 30,000 trips per year, which equated to approximately 82 ADT. For this project, she stated that operating three days per week would result in approximately 4 ADT, and operating four days per week would result in approximately 5 ADT. She stated that she did not believe traffic would be an issue. She also referenced a driveway study included in the documents, which identified a location that would result in the least amount of disturbance to the forest area; however, the access point had a grade of approximately 23–27 percent, which she noted was extremely steep. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:20:37]*

Chair Au stated that under Condition No. 3, the applicant was not required to provide a timeline for the services to be offered to the community. He proposed allowing parking only on the property to lessen the impact of vehicular and foot traffic. Commissioner Kanuha proposed amending Condition No. 6 to change the hours of operation from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Vice Chair Noborikawa and Commissioner Inaba agreed to the amendment. Chair Au also proposed adding an additional condition requiring patients to park only on the property, with no street parking permitted. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:23:57]*

Commissioner Inaba raised concerns expressed by the neighbors and asked what could be done to help alleviate those concerns. Dr. Watts responded that he would direct patients to enter and exit directly from Kaloko to Hao Street, passing only one common driveway. He stated that changing the clinic hours to 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. would lessen morning traffic during rush hours, and that he remained open to suggestions from his neighbors. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:28:20]*

Vice Chair Noborikawa noted that testimony raised concerns regarding the agricultural nature of the property. She stated that the property was subject to a forest preservation plan that was established in perpetuity, meaning that no further forest removal would be allowed, including any expansion of the clinic or house or the removal of trees. She emphasized that the forest area was protected under the preservation plan and would not change over the life of the project. Commissioner Kanuha added that this was the first application he had seen that included an expiration date, which would not transfer to a subsequent homeowner for the purpose of initiating a new commercial activity. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:30:20]*

**Action:** Vice Chair Noborikawa withdrew her previous motion and then moved that the application to establish an orthopedic office as a home occupation within a 411-square foot portion of an approximately 1,000 square foot proposed detached garage (PL-SPP-2025-000087) be approved based on the Planning Director's findings, recommendations, and conditions, which shall be adopted with the following amendments: Condition No. 6 shall read, "The hours of operation for the business shall be limited from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. Parking for patients will be limited to spaces adjacent to the clinic." Condition No. 9 shall read, "No construction or other disturbance shall occur within 330 feet of any 'Io nesting during the period from March 1 through September 30, or after chicks have fledged, whichever is later. If adult individuals are detected outside the above period during construction, all activities within 100 feet of the bird shall cease. Work

may continue when the bird has left the area on its own. Should any other state or federally listed or endangered species be found on the subject property, the applicant shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, and/or the United States Fish and Wildlife Service." Commissioner Inaba seconded the motion. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:34:19]*

Chair Au opened the floor for discussion. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:37:53]*

Chair Au expressed concern about the impact of the project on the community, noting that traffic is already present in the area. Commissioner Rodriguez also expressed concern for the community. Commissioner Kanuha commented on the overall project, highlighting concerns regarding the watershed, the dedicated forest reserve, and traffic. Vice Chair Noborikawa stated that, after reviewing all of the information provided, most of her concerns had been addressed, and any remaining concerns were satisfactorily answered. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:37:56]*

Ms. Jackson requested that Condition No. 6 be revised to state that parking for patients will be limited to spaces near the clinic and recommended changing the term "clinic" to "orthopedic office." Vice Chair Noborikawa agreed to the revision. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried with four ayes (Noborikawa, Inaba, Kanuha, Au), one no (Rodriguez), and two absent and excused (Ayers, Dela Cruz). *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:44:41]*

The hearing on this item concluded at 11:17 a.m.

***At 11:17 p.m. the Chairman called for a recess [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:46:50], and the hearing reconvened at 11:30 a.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:59:22]***

**2. APPLICANT: JOHN C. CROSS, SENIOR LAND MANAGER FOR EDMUND C. OLSON TRUST NO. 2 (PL-SMA-2025-000082)**

Application for a Special Management Area Use Permit to demolish and renovate the Kona Seaside Shops, including the demolition of three (3) structures, addition and renovation to two (2) existing structures, construction of two (2) new kiosks, new outdoor seating and renovating an ADA compliant courtyard and parking area on a 33,411-square foot parcel situated in the Special Management Area. The subject parcel is located at 75-5663 Palani Road, approximately 100 feet northeast of its intersection with Ali'i Drive, Kailua-Kona, North Kona, Hawai'i, TMK: (3) 7-5-006:017.

The Commission took up this item at 11:30 a.m., with four members of the public in attendance. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 1:59:44]*

Staff presentation was given by Derek Harbaugh. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:00:38]*

Chair Au opened the floor to allow the Commission to ask questions to staff. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:08:01]*

Mr. John Cross, the applicant's representative; Mr. Jeff Clark, Chief Operating Officer for the Edmund C. Olson Trust; and Ms. Almodina Lopez, project architect with Tinguely Development, provided a brief presentation and were present to answer questions. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:08:21]*

Chair Au opened the floor to allow the Commission to ask questions to the applicant. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:18:51]*

Chair Au opened the floor for public testimony. There were no in-person or Zoom testifiers for this agenda item. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:28:34]*

**Action:** Commissioner Kanuha moved that the application for a Special Management Area Use Permit to demolish and renovate the Kona Seaside Shops, including demolition of three structures, addition and renovation of two existing structures, construction of two new kiosks, new outdoor seating and renovating an ADA compliant courtyard and parking area on a 33,411-square foot parcel located in the Special Management Area (PL-SMA-2025-000082) be approved based on the Planning Director's findings, recommendation, and conditions, which shall be adopted. Commissioner Rodriguez seconded the motion. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:29:07]*

Chair Au opened the floor for discussion. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:30:20]*

Chair Au stated that the property needs improvements, including the demolition of dilapidated buildings, to enhance its appearance for both visitors and local residents. He emphasized the importance of reviving Ali'i Drive, noting that parking will always be a concern. He described the area as the heart and soul of Kailua-Kona and noted that visitors need safe places to eat and recreate. Chair Au expressed concern regarding Condition No. 4 and asked whether the development could be completed within five years. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:30:22]*

Commissioner Kanuha supported Chair Au's comments regarding revitalizing the property and adding "aloha" back to the area, including the addition of a parking lot in the rear. Regarding Condition No. 5, he noted the importance of addressing the parking situation and recommended working with the King Kamehameha Hotel to establish a parking agreement, as well as exploring options for a loading and unloading area across the street or north of the project site. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:33:13]*

Commissioner Rodriguez noted the project supports local farmers. Vice Chair Noborikawa expressed concern about the loading zone and pedestrian safety, and Commissioner Inaba expressed concern about parking. Deputy Director Ahn explained that the applicant could seek a shared parking agreement to meet code requirements. She noted that the Planning Department would not grant a variance for the additional 4,000 square feet, which would

require 20 more parking spaces and another loading zone, and that the recommendation and conditions were based on the project prior to the recent addendum. She added that the applicant could request a deferral to allow time to review the proposed changes with the Planning Department and possibly revise the conditions. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:34:46]*

Vice Chair Noborikawa asked Deputy Director Ahn whether a variance could be obtained to allow a loading zone on the property. Deputy Director Ahn responded that, although a variance could be requested, the Planning Department does not grant that type of variance. Commissioner Kanuha asked the applicants if, since they had submitted a last-minute transmittal, they would work with the Planning Department and return when ready with all materials. The applicants agreed. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:38:53]*

**Action:** Commissioner Kanuha withdrew his previous motion and then moved to defer the matter to a future date to allow the applicants to meet with the Planning Director. Commissioner Inaba seconded the motion. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:41:06]*

Chair Au opened the floor for discussion. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:42:11]*

Chair Au asked what options would be available if the project moved forward and the applicant consulted with the Planning Department, but the recommendations still stood. Mr. Harbaugh responded that the project would then proceed through the plan approval process, noting that the zoning code is very strict. He added that meetings with the applicants would be beneficial in reaching a solution. Commissioner Rodriguez noted that the application could be approved while the applicants still complete the other required steps, allowing them to avoid returning to the Commission. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:42:12]*

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion carried with four ayes (Kanuha, Inaba, Noborikawa, Au), one no (Rodriguez), and two absent and excused (Ayers, Dela Cruz). *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:45:56]*

The hearing on this item concluded at 12:17 p.m.

## **PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Report on Special Management Area (SMA) determinations and minor permits issued by the Planning Director for November 2025. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:47:13]*

Ms. Jackson reported that there were no SMA assessments or determinations to report for the month. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:47:28]*

## **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Election of Officers for 2026. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:47:34]*

Vice Chair Noborikawa moved to open nominations for Chairperson for 2026. Commissioner Kanuha seconded the motion. Chair Au opened the floor for discussion and stated that he was willing to continue as Chair unless someone else wished to serve. Commissioner Inaba moved to nominate Dean Au for Chairperson of the Leeward Planning Commission. Commissioner Kanuha seconded the motion. With no further discussion, Dean Au was elected Chairperson for 2026. A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried with five ayes (Inaba, Kanuha, Rodriguez, Noborikawa, Au), no noes, and two absent and excused (Ayers, Dela Cruz). *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:48:16]*

Commissioner Inaba moved to open nominations for Vice Chair for 2026. Commissioner Rodriguez seconded the motion. Chair Au opened the floor for discussion. Commissioner Inaba moved to nominate Kinuko Noborikawa for Vice Chair of the Leeward Planning Commission. Commissioner Kanuha seconded the motion. Vice Chair Noborikawa accepted the nomination. With no further discussion, Kinuko Noborikawa was elected Vice Chair for 2026. A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried with five ayes (Inaba, Kanuha, Rodriguez, Noborikawa, Au), no noes, and two absent and excused (Ayers, Dela Cruz). *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:50:07]*

## **AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Ms. Jackson reported that there were no regular items scheduled for the upcoming meeting. She noted that at the last joint meeting, there had been discussion regarding attendance standards and general rules, which could be addressed at meetings between now and June. She added that the Commission could either schedule a January meeting or cancel it. Chair Au stated that he was in favor of canceling the January meeting, and Vice Chair Noborikawa agreed, noting that neither would be in attendance. Ms. Jackson reported that there might be a few applications for the February meeting. Chair Au noted that he would not be present for the February meeting and that Vice Chair Noborikawa would serve as Chair for that meeting. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:51:47]*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Jackson announced that she had consulted with the University of Hawai'i at Hilo, the Hawaiian Language Program, which provided the names of the Leeward Planning Commission and Windward Planning Commission in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i. She stated that these names would be added to the Commission's letterheads and website. *[SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:55:14]*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Kanuha moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Noborikawa seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion carried with five ayes (Kanuha, Noborikawa, Inaba, Rodriguez, Au), no noes, and two absent and excused (Ayers, Dela Cruz). Chair Au adjourned the meeting at 12:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Melissa Dacayanan-Salvador for*  
Melissa Dacayanan-Salvador for (Apr 29, 2026 14:28:37 HST)

Ashley DeVera  
Secretary

ATTEST:

*Dean Au*  
Dean Au (May 5, 2026 06:21:55 HST)

Dean Au, Chairperson  
Leeward Planning Commission