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County of Hawaiʻi
PLANNING DEPARTMENT
PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

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Tuesday, April 10, 2012
Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dan Taylor called the Puna Community Development Plan (PCDP) Action Committee (AC) meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Keaʻau Community Center with the following persons present:

Action Committee: Barbara Bell, Frank Commendador, Madie Greene, Keikialoha Kekipi, René Siracusa, Patti Pinto, Dan Taylor and Oshi Simsarian.

Staff: Larry Brown (Planning Department, Project Manager), Elizabeth “Liz” Hultman-Salfen (Planning Department, Community Planning Assistant).

Members of the public: 11

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Dan Taylor welcomed members of the public in attendance today and announced that René will conduct the Action Committee today.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dan Taylor moved to approve the minutes of March 13, 2012. Second by Barbara Bell. Seven in Favor and Barbara abstained.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Pāhoa Regional Town Center Plan (PRTCP):**
    a. Rob Tucker of the PRTCP Steering Committee updated the AC on the first community meeting. 130 people attended the community meeting announcing the planning effort and launching a public input survey. The survey is available on-line and hard copy until April 30, 2012. They will be forming working groups to address the plan elements after the survey period has been completed. The Steering Committee members have donated a lot of volunteer hours. They will be asking Fred Blas to use funds from the Puna Geothermal Public Benefit Funds (PGPBF) to pay for staff to complete the PRTCP. Rob Tucker asked the AC for support of the funding request and he provided a draft letter and draft budget.

i. René asked who would fill the Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator positions called for in the draft budget and who would issue payroll. Rob said they would seek applicants for the positions and that how payroll and other fund expenditures are handled is yet to be determined. He suggested that most of these details could be worked out in consultation with Fred Blas' office.

ii. Dan pointed out that AC Members and other citizens engaged in other local community planning efforts are all volunteers receiving no compensation. Rob responded the heavy burden of moving the Pāhoa Plan forward is being carried by two or three core people and is not sustainable.

iii. Barbara suggested that the Planning Department would have to issue and administer contract.

iv. Larry pointed out that there is a question as to whether or not the PGPBF could be used to fund this type of project and that a discussion with the Planning Director and Department of Finance would be necessary to clarify certain questions. However, the Planning Department has and is able to initiate and administer contracts to conduct community-based projects and planning activities. He suggested that members of the Steering Committee, AC members, meet with the Planning Director to discuss the idea of funding.

v. Oshi mentioned that some in the community will probably have an issue with using the PGPBF to pay for this type of project and that she has some discomfort with supporting funding for one planning effort and not others.

vi. Dan moved to support the request being made for roughly $69,000 and that the specific source of funding to be determined by Councilman Blas and the Planning Director. Second by Frank.

1. Discussion on motion followed:

    a. Barbara expressed her concerns that the request being made doesn't seem to be sufficiently developed with too many details yet to be determined. She also suggested that the mileage reimbursement portion of the draft budget ought to be left out.

    b. Larry suggested that Dan's motion fails to clearly state what the AC would do in order to support the PRTCPSC funding request.

    c. Dan asked to amend his motion to:

The AC supports the request for funding and to prepare its own letter of support. Second by Frank.

    d. Keiki stated that geothermal monies were not set-up for this purpose.

    e. Oshi stated that other community plans have been generated by volunteer groups and a paid position changes the dynamics of the Steering Committee. It changes it to not be a grassroots effort.

    f. Patti asked how much time have the volunteers been donating. Robin said she has been working up to 60 hours per week on the plan. The plan has been accelerated to be completed by the end of the year. She said more time will be required coordinating the working groups maintaining public involvement.

The motion failed with 4 votes in favor (Dan, Madie, Frank, Patti), 3 against (Oshi, René, Barbara), and 1 abstained (Keiki).

vii. **Motion by Frank to support the planning steering committee process and sit down with Fred Blas and the Planning Director and iron out the details and come back to the AC. Second by Barbara. All in Favor.**

2. **Volcano Trails Connector Collaborative (VTCC):**
   a. Paul Lackner pointed out that the VTCC has hosted two meetings but they were not well attended. He displayed a map of a proposed route to provide connection between the subdivisions. He is seeking a volunteer draftsman to sketch out design options. He is also seeking maps that show easements and private property. Input from local residents and subdivision associations is still lacking and more effort in this area is needed. Paul stated that his proposed route would not be an emergency access road but a road that has a speed of 20 mph more of a linear parkway. René suggested going to the association board meetings and updating them on the plan and Frank said that Fern Forest is interested and may own some land in the corridor area.

3. **Public Testimony**
   a. Patrick Kahawaiolaa informed the AC that it does not have authority on Hawaiian Home Lands. He is seeking changing the PCDP to state that it does not have authority over DHHL land. There is a MOA between DHHL and the County stating this. Larry concurred that the CDP has no authority over DHHL lands and the 160+ lot project makai of the Hwy. 130 received a variance from the Department of Health allowing cesspools.
   b. He also stated that the he does not want the PMAR to go through Hawaiian Home Lands.
   c. However, Hawaiian's want to be part of the process but will be watching for encroachment into Hawaiian Home Lands.

4. **Land Acquisition at Waiʽōpae:**
   a. Oshi Simsarian reported that she has visited several sites for possible acquisition via the Public Access, Open Space and Natural Resources Preservation Commission (PONC) which includes the Hara property adjacent to Vacationland. Several of the parcels have willing sellers. These properties are close to the Waiʽōpae Marine Life Conservation District.
   b. Richard Shea, Vacationland Owner's Association past president, informed the AC that in the past they have received Hawaiʽi Tourism Authority money to fund the placement of portable toilets on private property in the subdivision during the major summer holiday weekends for a traffic control regulator. Finding suitable locations for full time locating of portable toilets still needs to be done. The community will be proceeding with repaving Waiʽōpae Rd in hopes to control traffic and parking.

c. Barbara will draft a letter and present at next AC meeting in support of the land acquisition.

5. **Facility Improvements at Ahalanui Beach Park.**
   a. Larry reported on his meeting with James Komata the Park Planner from County of Hawaiʻi Parks and Recreation regarding Ahalanui.
   b. James informed him that the previous Public Works Director would not grant a variance that would be necessary for Parks and Recreation to construct restroom facilities in the flood zone at Ahalanui.
   c. The monies listed in the CIP budget are for improvements to the Pohoiki Beach Park but James is willing to include monies for Ahalanui.
   d. Keiki pointed out that the planned improvements for Ahalanui should be completed before we encourage acquisition of additional lands for public parks facilities. Ahalanui could and should serve as a model for other park development projects, but somehow the process got short-circuited.
   e. Jon Olson briefed the AC on some of the history of the Ahalanui project and stated that the bathrooms were planned for a separate piece of land across the street from the park. Unfortunately, the County found out that parcel mauka of the road was not included in the original acquisition.
   f. Keiki stressed that we should concentrate on completing the project at Ahalanui as proposed on the makai side of the road as it was proposed before looking to acquire additional lands for Ahalanui.
   g. Dan and Keiki will submit a draft letter to the Council at the next AC meeting.
6. **Communication No. 2012-4 (Broadband Internet Service in Puna):** Patti presented a report in the status of securing broadband service in Puna. The Fern Forest community has mobilized and convinced Oceanic Time Warner to begin installing cable to several streets in their subdivision. Governor Abercrombie has set up a link to test the speed of your service and is trying to find areas that are underserved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. **Action Committee Implementation Priority List:**
   a. Public Testimony
      i. Jon Olson testified that the project turning Railroad Ave. corridor into a bike and pedestrian facility has had community support in the past. He said the Rail to Trails pamphlet is available which states if a rail line was used to haul passengers then it should remain public.
      ii. Written testimony Communication 2012-5 received from Stephanie Bath relating to mass transit
         1. Dan suggested forming a citizen's committee to develop a specific proposal for a Puna MTA hub and spoke system and bring to the Action Committee.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING:

1. Waiʻōpae Marine Life Conservation District Comprehensive Management Plan- John Kahiapo or René
2. Barbara's draft letter in support of the land acquisition in the Waiʻopae area
3. Dan and Keiki's draft letter for support of Ahalanui Beach Park
4. Barbara's status report on the Kapoho Wastewater Project.
5. Status report on the Pāhoa Regional Town Center Plan (PRTCP)
6. Invite a group forming in the Red Road area from Ophikau to Kalapana seeking AC recognition as a voice for their community

ADJOURNMENT:

Madie moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Keiki. All voted in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 5:59 p.m.