

HĀMĀKUA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
ACTION COMMITTEE
COUNTY OF HAWAII

Final MINUTES
April 1, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tisha Mahealani Maikui called the meeting of the Hāmākua Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee (AC) to order at 5:05 p.m. This meeting was held in person at the Kula'imano Community Center and online via the Zoom platform.

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

ROLL CALL

Members Present (in person): Maile Lavea-Malloe (Vice Chair), Brad Kurokawa, Tawn Keeney, Robert Nishimoto, and Ben Dalauideo

Members Present (via Zoom): Tisha Mahealani Maikui (Chair)

County Staff (in person): Bethany Morrison (Long Range Division Manager), Jeffrey Darrow (Planning Director), Maryam Palma, Janice Hata, and Jessica Lahip

County Staff (via Zoom): Kawelo Kalili

There were approximately thirteen (13) members of the public in attendance – five (5) in person and eight (8) via Zoom.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice Chair Lavea-Malloe moved to approve the February 4, 2026 draft meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by committee member Kurokawa and passed unanimously. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 5:08]

PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON AGENDA ITEMS

Jim McMahon provided testimony on Business Items 1 and 2. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 8:10]

Gretchen Grove provided testimony on Business Item 2. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 13:09]

BUSINESS:

1. Report from the Planning Director about:

- Planning Department's Public Notices Procedures
- Special Permit Process [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 16:35]

Chair Maikui called this item to order at 5:21 p.m.

36 Planning Director Jeffrey Darrow provided an overview of the Planning Department's
37 public notice procedures and the special permit process. The presentation focused on
38 how community members can access application information through the County's
39 website and Electronic Processing and Information Center (EPIC) system. It was
40 explained that public notices are posted regularly and that application details can be
41 accessed by using the assigned permit numbers. During the discussion, several
42 challenges were identified, including inconsistencies in how application numbers are
43 formatted – particularly the omission of leading zeros – and the overall complexity of
44 navigating the system.

45 Committee members raised concerns about accessibility and user experience, noting
46 that the current process may be difficult for the public to follow. Suggestions were
47 offered to improve transparency and usability, such as incorporating direct hyperlinks
48 to application files, standardizing internal data entry practices, and creating district-
49 specific summaries of applications. Director Darrow acknowledged these concerns
50 and shared that the department is working toward improving consistency, exploring
51 ways to generate district-level reports, and enhancing public access to information.

52 The discussion also included an overview of the special permit process. Director
53 Darrow explained the distinction between permits under and over 15 acres, the role
54 of the Planning Commission as the decision-making body for smaller applications, and
55 the involvement of the Land Use Commission for larger requests. Additional
56 explanation was provided on the criteria used to evaluate applications, the preparation
57 of staff reports, and the contested case hearing process. Members discussed the
58 importance of public participation and the multiple opportunities for community input
59 throughout the process.

60 **2. Letter to Windward Planning Commission regarding the Teppy Mountain**
61 **Application (PL-SPP-2024-000075):** Discussion and decision-making on
62 submitting testimony to the Windward Planning Commission. [SEE YOUTUBE
63 *TIMESTAMP 1:16:24, 1:24:19 & 1:59:36*]

64 Chair Maikui called this item to order at 6:21 p.m.

65 The Committee discussed whether to submit testimony to the Windward Planning
66 Commission regarding the Teppy Mountain Special Permit application. Building on
67 earlier public testimony, members shared concerns about the nature and potential
68 impacts of the proposed uses. Discussion included the combination of industrial-type
69 activities and large-scale event operations on agricultural land, as well as whether the
70 application aligns with the intent of the General Plan and the Hāmākua Community
71 Development Plan.

72 Members raised concerns regarding potential noise impacts and the adequacy of
73 proposed mitigation measures, noting that sound may travel across the landscape due
74 to local wind patterns and topography. There was also skepticism about the
75 enforceability of certain conditions, such as event time limits, particularly for large,
76 multi-day gatherings. Additional concerns included the precedent that approval of this
77 application could set for future special permit requests, as well as impacts related to

78 access, including the use of private roads and potential effects on surrounding
79 communities.

80 In response to these concerns, the Committee discussed the need to provide formal
81 input to the Windward Planning Commission. A Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) was
82 established to draft a letter on behalf of the committee.

83 The motion was clarified by County staff and read as follows: the Action Committee
84 establish a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG), consisting of members Kurokawa,
85 Lavea-Malloe, Nishimoto, and Keeney, to draft and present testimony at the Planning
86 Commission's scheduled special meeting in May regarding the Teppy Mountain
87 application. The group will work collaboratively to prepare a letter that includes an
88 introductory summary of the application, a rationale outlining its consistencies and
89 inconsistencies with the Hāmākua Community Development Plan (CDP) policies, and
90 any additional recommendations based on those policies. The testimony will be
91 presented on behalf of the action committee. The motion was seconded by committee
92 member Kurokawa. Chair Maikui conducted a roll call vote. Committee Members
93 Kurokawa, Nishimoto, Keeney, Dalauideo, Vice Chair Lavea-Malloe, and Chair
94 Mahealani all voted aye. The motion passed unanimously.

95 Jim McMahon provided testimony. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:10:37]

96 **THIRD-PARTY REPORTS; GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS** [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP
97 1:47:40]

98 Council Member Heather Kimball provided updates on several district and legislative
99 matters. She shared progress on the Hāmākua Heritage Trail, noting a potential corridor
100 has been identified and that a feasibility study will be the next step.

101 She also discussed recent developments related to the General Plan, including proposed
102 amendments that may significantly alter the current plan, and encouraged continued
103 community engagement.

104 Additional updates included proposed changes to short-term vacation rental regulations,
105 as well as transportation improvements such as planned bus shelter installations, which
106 are currently pending state permits.

107 **PROPOSED NEW BUSINESS**

108 Due to the meeting running late, proposed new business can be emailed to Chair and
109 Vice Chair at CDP@hawaiicounty.gov. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:23:17]

110 **ADJOURNMENT**

111 Chair Maikui adjourned this meeting at 7:30 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 2:25:22]

112 These minutes and all related documents are available in the Planning Department's
113 [Hāmākua Community Development Plan Action Committee folder](#) via the County of

114 Hawai'i Public Documents Repository. These documents may also be requested from the
115 Planning Department by calling (808) 961-8288 or emailing CDP@hawaiicounty.gov.