

1 KONA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN
2 ACTION COMMITTEE
3 COUNTY OF HAWAI'I
4 FINAL MINUTES
5 May 12, 2026

6 **Call to Order**

7 Chair John Pelletier called the meeting of the Kona Community Development Plan (CDP)
8 Action Committee (AC) to order at 12:02 p.m. The meeting was held in person at the West
9 Hawai'i Civic Center – Building G and online via the Zoom platform.

10 The full YouTube video of this meeting can be found here:
11 <https://youtu.be/MPNqUn08EaQ?si=TuU9QntFSAukWJwy>

12 **Roll Call**

13 Members Present (in person):

- 14 • John Pelletier, Chair
- 15 • Nancy Pischio, Vice Chair
- 16 • Charles Young
- 17 • Charla Thompson
- 18 • Raymond "RJ" Kirchner

19 Members Present (via Zoom): Shane Palacat-Nelsen

20 Members Absent: Roselyn Molina

21 Planning Department Staff Present:

- 22 • Janice Hata
- 23 • Maryam Palma
- 24 • Kawelo Kalili (via Zoom)

25 There were approximately eight members of the public in attendance (three in person
26 and five via Zoom).

27 **Approval of Minutes**

28 Chair Pelletier requested approval of the April 14, 2026 draft meeting minutes at
29 approximately 12:05 p.m. Vice Chair Pischio moved to approve the minutes, and
30 Committee Member Young seconded the motion. There being no discussion or
31 corrections, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the April 14, 2026 draft meeting
32 minutes. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 02:47]

Public Testimony on Agenda Items

Chair Pelletier called for public testimony on agenda items at approximately 12:06 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 03:41]

Josephine Keli'ipio testified regarding Bill 66 and the Draft General Plan 2045. She referenced testimony and discussion from the May 4, 2026 County Council Planning Committee meeting, expressed concern that the 2045 draft includes too many actions compared with the 2005 General Plan, raised concerns about map errors and Planning Department capacity, and questioned whether amendments would be allowed after adoption. She stated that General Plan 2045 is poorly written, contains mistakes, and should not be adopted without an amendment process. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 04:32]

Chair Pelletier acknowledged written testimony from Eugene Elmer in opposition to Bill 66 and written testimony from Leslie Cook urging a veto of Bill 66. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 07:02]

Third-Party Reports; Government Officials

Pursuant to Hawai'i Senate Bill 405 (2025), signed into law as Act 72, the AC may receive and discuss information from third-party reports by any government official not included in the publicly noticed agenda, but may not make decisions on matters raised through such reports until a later meeting with proper notice. Chair Pelletier called for third-party reports from government officials. No third-party reports were presented. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 07:19]

Business

1. Hawai'i County Council Bill 66 (Draft 2): The AC will discuss Bill 66 (Draft 2), including updates from the May 4, 2026 meeting of the County Council Policy Committee on Planning, Land Use, and Economic Development. The AC may take action, including the consideration of submitting testimony to the County Council.

This item was called to order at approximately 12:10 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 07:33]

Chair Pelletier asked whether there was additional public testimony on Bill 66. No additional public testimony was provided. Committee Member Palacat-Nelsen reported that he had attended part of the May 4 Council committee meeting and understood that Council members had emphasized the importance of public process and the process followed for General Plan 2045. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 08:00]

Vice Chair Pisicchio summarized the outcome of the Council committee discussion. She stated that the Committee had previously submitted testimony supporting General Plan 2045 and opposing the proposed 2026 substitute document, and that the Council committee vote was 5-4 in favor of moving forward with the 2045 plan and rejecting

70 consideration of the 2026 proposal. She stated that amendment procedures for the
71 2045 plan remained unclear, but she believed the County should move forward
72 because the general plan comprehensive review had been underway for many years
73 and because the 2045 draft contains tools that may support implementation of the
74 Kona CDP. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 09:22]

75 Committee Member Kirchner stated that, without an updated general plan and without
76 a current Community Development Plan, the County effectively lacks planning
77 direction and land use decisions may be driven by those with the most influence. He
78 stated that the proposed general plan should be supported because the County needs
79 written rules for land development. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 13:19]

80 Committee Member Young stated that the AC should remain consistent with its prior
81 position of supporting the plan and acknowledging the many years of work that had
82 gone into it. Committee Member Thompson stated that she had concerns about
83 General Plan 2045, including whether certain safeguards, infrastructure language, and
84 community protections were sufficiently clear, but that she was more comfortable
85 moving forward if there is an amendment process and if the CDPs continue to have
86 influence. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 14:17]

87 Committee Member Palacat-Nelsen stated that he supported the motion and reiterated
88 his prior position. He spoke as a Native Hawaiian and generational resident of
89 Nāpō'opo'o, stating that Kanaka are connected to the environment and that he
90 believed General Plan 2045 was the plan currently before the County that supports
91 that connection. Vice Chair Pисicchio stated that the 2045 plan places stronger
92 emphasis on cultural preservation than the 2005 General Plan. [SEE YOUTUBE
93 TIMESTAMP 21:00]

94 Vice Chair Pисicchio moved that the Kona CDP AC recommend that the Hawai'i County
95 Council adopt Bill 66, Draft 2, General Plan 2045. The motion stated that the last
96 comprehensive review of the General Plan was completed with the adoption of General
97 Plan 2005; that the Planning Director initiated review of General Plan 2005 by public
98 notice on February 6, 2015; that the review resulted in 2025 meetings before the
99 Windward and Leeward Planning Commissions, which voted to forward a favorable
100 recommendation to the County Council; that the AC hopes the Council will approve
101 General Plan 2045 before the upcoming election; and that the AC believes the
102 document contains visions, objectives, policies, actions, and implementation tools that
103 align with the Kona CDP. Committee Member Kirchner seconded the motion. [SEE
104 YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 23:47]

105 Chair Pelletier stated that Council discussion had helped address some concerns
106 about whether the general plan could be used for government overreach, and he
107 stated that long-range planning is at a standstill until the general plan is completed.
108 Committee Member Thompson asked whether the Kona CDP would continue to have
109 influence under the plan, and Vice Chair Pисicchio stated that the CDP is included in

110 the 2045 plan. Committee Member Thompson stated that this made her more
111 comfortable because the CDP provides an important safeguard for community
112 planning. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 25:47]

113 The Committee voted unanimously to submit the testimony at an upcoming Council
114 meeting. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 27:41]

115 Following the vote, Committee members continued discussing concerns raised by the
116 public, including use of the word “stakeholder,” interpretations of landowner rights,
117 and the limits of government authority. Vice Chair Pisicchio stated that she
118 understands stakeholders to include residents and others with kuleana to the island,
119 while others may interpret the term as referring to outside special interests. Committee
120 Member Kirchner stated that government already has eminent domain powers subject
121 to just compensation and that the General Plan does not change those constitutional
122 requirements. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 28:05]

123 This item concluded at approximately 12:34 p.m.

124 **2. Hawai‘i County Council Bill 147, Relating to Transient Accommodations:** The AC
125 will discuss Bill 147 and its potential implications for the Kona CDP. The AC may take
126 action, including the consideration of submitting testimony to the County Council.

127 This item was called to order at approximately 12:34 p.m. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP
128 31:59]

129 Chair Pelletier called for public testimony on this item.

130 Jason Masters, Chair of the Ka‘ū Community Development Plan Action Committee,
131 testified as a private individual. He expressed concern that the bill’s definitions of short-
132 term vacation rental, transient vacation rental, hosted use, and bed and breakfast were
133 confusing and could make enforcement more difficult. He stated that the code should
134 clearly identify what is being regulated and who is responsible. [SEE YOUTUBE
135 TIMESTAMP 33:23]

136 Kalei Kailikini testified via Zoom regarding short-term rentals. She stated that
137 government should not regulate short-term rentals because people use them to earn
138 income and should be able to support themselves. She also raised concerns about
139 housing costs, fixed-income residents, Maui fire-related rental impacts, hotel interests,
140 and the need for decision makers to hear different perspectives. [SEE YOUTUBE
141 TIMESTAMP 39:11]

142 Chair Pelletier presented an overview of Bill 147. He explained that the bill would revise
143 definitions and regulations for transient vacation rentals, including distinguishing
144 between hosted and unhosted rentals. He stated that, under his understanding of the
145 bill, transient vacation rental would be the broader umbrella term, hosted rentals would
146 replace or modify the existing bed-and-breakfast framework, and short-term vacation

rentals would refer to unhosted whole-unit rentals. He noted that hosted rentals would become allowable uses in many residential zones, while unhosted rentals would continue to be allowed in certain districts and would be expanded into commercial neighborhood districts. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 46:59]

Chair Pelletier stated that his proposed testimony focused on unhosted short-term vacation rentals in multifamily residential and commercial neighborhood districts. He stated that Kona has the largest concentration of vacation rentals on the island and that allowing unhosted rentals in multifamily residential zones contributes to housing pressure, particularly for condominiums and other higher-density housing that could otherwise support residents near employment and services. He presented zoning and CDP excerpts regarding affordable housing in the urban core and housing near major employment centers, and stated that the AC should ask that unhosted short-term vacation rentals be removed as an allowable use in multifamily residential and commercial neighborhood districts. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 53:40]

Committee Member Kirchner raised concerns about allowing the same vacation rental use across multiple zoning districts and questioned the purpose of zoning if multifamily residential districts are treated similarly to resort districts. He stated that allowing short-term rentals in multifamily residential zoning reduces the supply of long-term rentals and drives up long-term rental costs. He further stated that removing short-term rentals from multifamily residential zoning would make future multifamily zoning more acceptable to the public because it would be more clearly tied to housing for residents rather than investor-owned vacation rentals. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 55:28]

Committee Member Palacat-Nelsen described changes in Kealahou Bay, stating that very few generational residents remain and that vacation rental activity has affected village life, cultural resources, shoreline resources, and community management efforts. He stated that regulation is needed and that visitors using residential areas as resorts can create impacts on local communities. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 01:00:33]

Committee Member Palacat-Nelsen moved to support the proposed testimony, and Vice Chair Pisicchio seconded the motion. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 01:02:50]

Committee Member Thompson asked about the permitting process for bed-and-breakfast uses and discussed neighborhood impacts from vacation rentals based on her own experience. Committee members discussed nonconforming use certificates, grandfathering of existing uses, whether grandfathered uses can be phased out, and whether the County could limit existing short-term vacation rental approvals upon transfer or sale of a property. Committee Member Kirchner asked staff whether Corporation Counsel could provide guidance on whether grandfathered short-term vacation rental use could expire upon sale of a property. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 01:03:28]

186 Committee Member Young proposed an amendment to add language indicating that
187 the AC's testimony was identifying this concern "among other things," so that the
188 testimony would make clear that the AC may have additional concerns about Bill 147
189 after further review. Vice Chair Pisicchio seconded the amendment. Committee
190 Member Young also described enforcement concerns based on vacation rental
191 impacts in Volcano, stating that unpermitted or poorly regulated rentals can create
192 neighborhood conflicts and that enforcement capacity is critical. [SEE YOUTUBE
193 *TIMESTAMP 01:11:34*]

194 Chair Pelletier stated that the testimony would be amended to include the "among
195 other things" language and that the Committee could continue reviewing other parts
196 of Bill 147 at a future meeting. Vice Chair Pisicchio stated that the bill is complex and
197 that the hosted-rental provisions also warrant further discussion. [SEE YOUTUBE
198 *TIMESTAMP 01:22:34*]

199 The Committee voted unanimously to submit the amended testimony at an upcoming
200 Planning Commission meeting if Bill 147 is scheduled. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP*
201 *01:23:34*]

202 This item concluded at approximately 1:26 p.m.

203 **Public Testimony on Matters Not on the Agenda**

204 Chair Pelletier called for public testimony on matters not on the agenda at approximately
205 1:26 p.m. No public testimony was provided. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 01:24:08*]

206 **Proposed New Business**

207 This item was called to order at approximately 1:27 p.m. Committee members discussed
208 placing Bill 147 back on the next agenda, and possibly Bill 66 if additional Council action
209 occurs. Committee Member Thompson stated that she hoped to provide a Tree City USA
210 update and had reached out to potential presenters regarding Tree City USA, tree
211 standards, and procedures. Committee Member Young requested that the Holomua
212 Marine Initiative and aquarium fish collecting be placed on a future agenda because those
213 matters affect Kona residents even though they are largely within State jurisdiction. [SEE
214 *YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 01:24:41*]

215 **Announcements**

216 Chair Pelletier announced upcoming Mālama 'Aimakapā Community Workdays at Kaloko-
217 Honokōhau National Historical Park. Workdays were scheduled for Thursday, May 14,
218 June 11, July 9, and July 11, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. He stated that volunteers had
219 recently helped remove invasive plants and that the area is also a good place for
220 birdwatching. [SEE YOUTUBE *TIMESTAMP 01:26:09*]

221 Chair Pelletier announced Holomua Marine Initiative talk story sessions scheduled for
222 Wednesday, May 20, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at Yano Hall, and Thursday, May
223 21, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Hawai'i Big Game Fishing Club. [SEE
224 YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP 01:27:30]

225 The Planning Department is seeking applicants for the Kona CDP Action Committee. The
226 application can be found on the Mayor's office website at:
227 <https://www.hawaiicounty.gov/our-county/boards-and-commissions>

228 Vice Chair Pisciocchio announced that several members had participated in training
229 regarding legislative changes to the Sunshine Law affecting CDP Action Committees,
230 including the ability to receive testimony on matters not on the agenda. She stated that
231 the training was useful and thanked staff for organizing it. [SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP
232 01:28:16]

233 The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 9, 2026.

234 **Adjournment**

235 Chair Pelletier adjourned the meeting at 1:32 p.m.

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