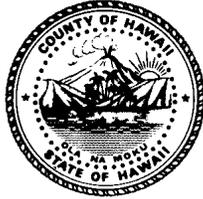


William P. Kenoi  
Mayor



BJ Leithead Todd  
Director

Margaret Masunaga  
Deputy Director

## County of Hawai'i PLANNING DEPARTMENT

### PUNA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN ACTION COMMITTEE

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**Tuesday, November 8, 2011**

### Meeting Minutes

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Dan Taylor called the Puna Community Development Plan (PCDP) Action Committee (AC) meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. in the Pāhoa Community Center, with the following persons present:

Action Committee: Dan Taylor, Barbara Bell, Greg Braun, Madie Greene, Tim Tunison, Frank Commendador, Wesley Owens. Excused: Jeffrey Krepps. Unexcused: Keikialoha Kekipi.

Staff: Larry Brown (Planning Department, Project Manager), Elizabeth "Liz" Hultman-Salfen (Planning Department, Community Planning Assistant), Audra Ghiotto (Planning Department, Recorder).

Members of the public: 24

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Larry announced that the 4 PCDP AC nominee recommendations (René Siracusa, Kelly Nafie, Patti Pinto and Oshi Simsarian) of the Planning Director were forwarded to and accepted by the Mayor. The nominations have been forwarded to the County Council for confirmation.

#### ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dan has requested a motion to approve the minutes for the October meeting. **Barbara moved to delete #2 and #3 under the announcements section. Second by Madie.** Discussion: Items #2 and #3 were part of the previous months minute's and inadvertently included in the draft October minutes. **All approved. Barbara moved to approve rest of minutes. Second by Madie.** Discussion: Barbara stated that she didn't believe she made the statement attributed to her under Public testimony #1 stating that an environmental study would be the next step in the Kapoho wastewater issue. **Dan moved to delete "we will have to do an environmental study first to see what the next step will be" from the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence of this section provided it is consistent with the recording. Second by Madie. All in favor.** (A review of the meeting recording confirmed that Barbara did not make the statement in question.) **Barbara moved to approve the minutes as amended. Second by Madie. All approved.**

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## **ADDITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. Dan announced the sudden tragic death of Jeffrey Krepps wife Raji and offered his condolences.
2. Larry presented a certificate of appreciation from the Mayor and letter from the Planning Director to those members leaving the committee.

## **PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

1. Larry Brennan. Testified against the AC sending a letter to the governor requesting release of funds to do the PMAR EIS. His primary concern is the decrease in property values for lot owners and the road may never actually be built.
2. James Weatherford. Testifying on two agenda items: 1) Regarding three items on the AC priority action list: a) Pointed out the questionable meaning of the last sentence in the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph of §4.3 of the PCDP regarding a “shorter route through HPP...”; b) The development of village and town centers does not include any of those designated for HPP in the PCDP; c) Under Roadway Network - PMAR recommends disaggregating the project and thought Connectivity should be a higher priority and that there has been inadequate communication with the community concerning this matter. 2) AC should not send PMAR letter of support to the governor since it is known that the project will cause a disruptive action for HPP with the loss of some homes, neighborhoods being destroyed, disruption during construction will be noisy, dusty and dangerous well beyond the site and traffic will increase on internal HPP roads. This will cause a substantial and permanent destructive act on this community. Is opposed to spending 2 million dollars to know this identify these impacts and already know that the Hawaii Department of Transportation has encountered un-resolvable complications acquiring right-of-way needed for Hwy. 130 projects. Wants AC to use some of the existing funds to take PMAR concept to HPP and explain the need, explain the process and ask what the community needs.
3. Jerry Carr, Chairman of HPP Committee on PMAR. This committee was formed about 1 year ago by the general membership of HPP. Surveys have been distributed and completed by 220 people, and have also sent a letter to the Mayor asking that this project needs to be more specifically defined because all of the destructive things that have been mentioned in earlier testimony. The community does not feel that they have been adequately consulted or informed. There are still too many unanswered questions. Where will road start and end, what other roads will be connected to PMAR how will the community be helped with the effects the increased traffic will have on our private roads plus many more issues? There are people who believe that this is a project that will happen but they want to know more.
4. Karen Daniels. Stated her agreement with the previous testimony on the PMAR issue. Asked who will be helping with the other roads in HPP. The HPP community is paying for their own roads with no help from the state or county. If traffic is increased the roads will become even more dangerous than they already are.
5. Barbara Kahn-Langer. Provided some history on this issue. This master idea was started by a single individual and this idea never had the full understanding of the people of HPP.
6. Elizabeth Weatherford. Testified she had previously felt that PMAR was a good idea, but now being on the HPP board she has learned many more details about this project which have caused her to change her mind. One large route is being seen as the only alternative and this

will cause HPP to be split in half and will cause it to lose its integrity. Integrity of HPP is essential due to the fact that the community is dependent on one another for financial, social and safety reasons. This main road is expected to go to Hilo and we need to know where the other non-road priorities are, such as demand management, improvements to mass transit, investment in the local community and in this connection there was a neighborhood, community and regional center proposed for HPP and all of these have been removed from PCDP action committee priority list. Stressed that other actions should be acted on before moving forward on PMAR.

Greg Braun, AC Member, offered his recollection on the subject of the PMAR in discussions by the PCDP Steering Committee (SC) by stating that the concept of the PMAR was to give the residents of HPP a way to get to Hilo without having to use Hwy. 130. In terms of connectivity there was talk about connecting HPP with Hawaiian Beaches, but at that time that was not going to be a PMAR that went through HPP and went onto Hawaiian Beaches. Stated that the Planning Dept. changed the PMAR concept approved by the PCDP SC. Feels it is important to act now while the money for the EIS is available.

7. René Siracusa. Shared that Patrick Kahawaiolaa has expressed his opposition to PMAR due to the fact that it might run through the Hawaiian Homes in Panaewa. Suggested it might be premature to look at the Puna end of the PMAR without determining whether getting it to Hilo is even possible.
8. Jon Olson. Stated the PCDP Steering Committee had no intention of running a road through HPP and suggested that since the population beyond HPP declines substantially the PMAR would not really serve anybody.
9. Patrice Macdonald. If HPP is concerned about 25 thousand cars coming through then the proposal from DPW will put 45 thousand through Hawaiian Acres. For 13 years now Hawaiian Acres has had the public used road and basically all of the road corporation money has been used to maintain that one road and there are 92 miles of road. DPW has no intention of doing an environmental assessment for upper Puna.
10. Mac Castillo, Fern Forest road manager. Testified on the issue of connectivity between Eden Roc and Fern Forest. Concerned about what is going to happen if it does not work out. Wants to know the cost and advantages of connecting the subdivisions. Fire trucks were unable to reach a fire due to very bad road conditions. His concern is what will be the plus to open up this road, and who will be responsible for maintaining this road.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Eden Roc Estates and Fern Forest Connectivity:**

Louis Miller, representing Eden Roc Estate Association (EREA), stated that EREA is opposed to opening up this road for a couple of reasons. A few years back Eden Roc and Fern Forest were told by the fire department that an existing access trail connecting the two subdivisions should be bulldozed to allow for emergency access only and that a gate would be put in. Shortly after the gate was installed the lock was cut allowing traffic to come through Eden Roc from Fern Forest, which provided a substantial shortcut to Hwy. 11. EREA has spent an additional \$1,500.00 to \$2,000.00 to try and block this access off so that this trail would only be used for fire trucks, but some folks continually removed all obstacles to general vehicular traffic they deployed. Eventually, EREA quit trying to block off the access road and estimates

that about 75 to 100 cars use this access every day. Maintenance, safety and liability are some big issues of concern. There have been 2 serious accidents in the last four months on this road, one of them actually being fatal. EREA liability insurance premiums have risen significantly in recent years. If the county would maintain and take responsibility of the road most residents of the subdivision probably would not be opposed of the idea of the road.

Paul Lackner, representing Fern Forest Community Association (FFCA), explained that a small group from Fern Forest met and identified some of the concerns with opening the access between the two subdivisions, such as liability, and funding. FFCA would like to see the county also take responsibility for maintenance of any portion of a connector road in Fern Forest. With the lack of funding, impacts from increased traffic, and lack of public information FFCA does not consider opening a connection road a priority at this time. His feeling is that if these concerns were addressed and needs were met, the community would support this road.

Discussion ensued between AC members, Paul and Louis exploring possible solutions to the concerns expressed and alternative connection possibilities between the two subdivisions.

## **2. Communication No. 2011-15 from Pāhoa Mainstreet Association:**

Rob Tucker, although not authorized to speak on behalf of the Pāhoa Mainstreet Association (PMA) pointed out:

- a) A new Pāhoa Village Plan Committee (PVPC) has been formed consisting of himself, Robin Stetson, Madie Greene, Jon Olson and Kelly Nafie. They are also looking for other community members to join the group to help take on the task of creating a village plan for Pāhoa.
- b) The PVPC does support the PMA desire to create a Pāhoa Design District. However, a village plan and a design district are two distinctly different things although they are moving in the same direction for improvement of the village. PVPC intends to work closely with PMA towards the development of a comprehensive plan.
- c) With Pāhoa designated for regional town center in the PCDP they are looking at the Pāhoa zip code (96778) area as the planning area constituency.
- d) PVPC is looking at a 50 year planning horizon and hopes to address a broad spectrum of issues including zoning, transportation, bike paths, preservation issues, parks, etc.
- e) Their goal is to do this in a manner that informs the land owners so that they have some type of understanding where their property and their investment may lay within a plan.
- f) Would like create investment opportunities for housing and commercial properties as well as for county services.
- g) Their goal is to bring this plan in front of the Action Committee and county in the spring of next year (2012).

Discussion ensued where it was clarified that PMA has taken a lead on creating a design district which is essentially an esthetic plan with short term or immediate results within Pāhoa and the Pāhoa Village Plan (PVP) is a longer term overarching plan that will include a lot of complexity on the different issues. The design district will be incorporated as a separate chapter in the PVP.

### **3. PMAR Letter of Support:**

Wesley commented in response to the earlier public testimony opposing funding of the PMAR EIS/PER that the EIS provides for a public participation process where community input can influence the final outcome. He disagreed with the suggestion that community concerns are not being heard, and that just because the EIS will have a conclusion that does not mean it will happen. It makes sense to take advantage of the funds available for the EIS, otherwise they may never become available again.

A discussion ensued among AC Members and public in attendance on the pros and cons of moving forward with the studies and what an EIS is. Dan asked for a motion to forward or not forward the PMAR draft letter to higher officials. **Wesley moved to forward the letter of support on to higher officials. Second by Frank. 5 in favor, 1 (Greg) against.**

### **4. Capital Improvement Projects:**

Larry reviewed the process for AC submittal of CIP proposals for inclusion in the budget. A general discussion ensued exploring possible CIP projects to be considered including additional buses for Hele-On, park development and improvement, and portable toilets for Wai'ōpae in Vacationland. Frank has suggested that we get a list capital park projects from Fred Blas and the AC can piggy back on his ideas. Madie is going to do more research and report back to the committee next month.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **5. Action Priorities:**

Dan suggested that the items on the priority list need to be somehow structured and evaluated against the list of questions shown in agenda item 6.c. It was also suggested that the Action list needs to be prioritized.

Barbara brought some TMK maps showing the type of wastewater treatment/disposal system is being used on individual lots. A smaller color-coded map will be sent out to all homeowners to inform them of the existing conditions.

Discussion ensued as to how the Kapoho Wastewater Project might serve as a model for addressing the impacts of private systems in other Puna communities.

## **AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING**

1. December 13, 2011 will be next meeting.
2. Continue with prioritizing Actions.
3. CIP proposals
4. Election of officers
5. County buses in private subdivisions (Frank)
6. HPP PMAR Committee Survey

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Greg moved to adjourn the meeting. Second by Wesley. All voted in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.**