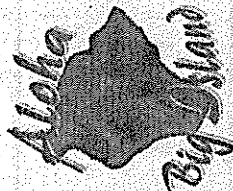


Hawaii

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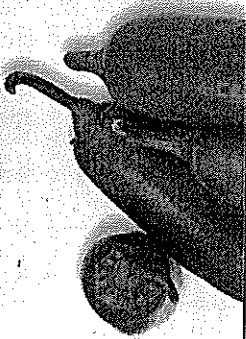


Saturday, July 26, 2008

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# Contrary views over Puna plan

### Citizens disagree but tenor of meeting remains civil

By JOHN BURNETT  
Tribune-Herald staff writer

PAHOA — About 100 people crowded into Pahoa Community Center on Friday night to sound off on the Puna Community Development Plan and changes proposed by Puna Councilwoman Emily Naeole.

Naeole and county planner Larry Brown listened to a parade

of citizens, several of whom said they had not heard of the CDP until recently, and that their views had not been solicited.

Two uniformed police officers stood by to maintain order if necessary, but the high-decibel, angry din that some had predicted did not materialize.

Several Hawaiian Shores residents voiced opposition to plans as a village center," she said.

"We're not opposed to having a community center. We are opposed to having our property earmarked without our input."

David Johnson, the association's president, said he had not heard of the plan before Friday.

"I think if you are looking at planting a garden in your neighbor's yard, you should consult them first," he said. "... I don't want a government office in our community. I have a phone and I have a computer. I like my nice

little quiet community." Frankie Stapleton, who worked on the CDP, said that community notification was sufficient.

"Notice was sent to all the community associations," she said. "Many of the community associations are not very functional."

James Weatherford of Hawaiian Paradise Park, who also worked on the plan, agreed.

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# PUNA PLAN

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"I support passing this plan exactly as it is," he said. "... I participated in the small group meetings. ... I simply cannot believe that people did not hear about it."

A woman representing the Makuu Farmers Association sided with Naeole.

"I support the amendments that Emily is making," she said. "For those of us on Hawaiian Home Lands, we have to deal with Hawaiian Homes and the (Federal Aviation Administration), who has its radar out there, and then we have to go through the county planning process."

Stapleton said that plans for Hawaiian Home Lands were "not our kuleana."

"There is nothing said about the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, because it was not within our authority," she said.

The Kanaka Council's Kale Gumapac, who running against Naeole for the 5th District council seat, said that the Kanaka Council does not agree with the entire document, but says it has "good mana'o (ideas)."

Others decried "too much input from Hilo," especially from the county Planning Department.

"This plan is a living document," said Steve Sparks, a Democrat who is running for the 4th District State House seat currently held by Faye Hanohano. "... These amendments are just a stall tactic. They are not necessary. ... We should be enraged. We should all be in Chris Yuen's office saying, 'What are you trying to do to our plan?' ... The plan should be passed as it is."



Photos by JOHN BURNETT/Tribune-Herald

Puna Councilwoman Emily Naeole listens as county planner Larry Brown speaks to a large crowd, seen below, during Friday night's meeting.



But Bill Walter of Keaau, president of W.H. Shipman Ltd., said that Yuen, the county planning director, is looking after the public's best interest with his suggestions for the plan.

"This plan takes away things that are good for Puna," Walter said. "That is why the planning director came forward on this and believe me, he's not my best friend.

There are changes that Emily has made that are good for Puna, as well. ... If this gets passed, it gets passed as law. ... Let's do it right. Let's build on a solid foundation, not on the sand or on the grass."

Kevin Anderson, who said he's lived in Puna for 31 years, likened the plan to totalitarianism.

"As written, this document is the groundwork for another

Cuba right here," he said. "Don't let election year politics get you to rush the plan. ... Government thinks they run us. They work for us."

Amy Smith of Nanawale Estates said that she trusts both Naeole and the citizens who drafted the CDP, even if some feathers were ruffled in its making.

"Democracy is a contact sport," she said. "You can't get involved sitting on the sidelines."

The County Council's Planning Committee will be taking public testimony on the Puna plan when it meets at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday in the Ben Franklin Building, 333 Kilauea Ave., second floor, in Hilo. Written testimony can be e-mailed to counciltestimony@co.hawaii.hi.us.

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