

# Meeting Minutes

**Tuesday, October 1, 2019**

Hyperlink to [Meeting Video](#)

## **Community Plan Advisory Committee**

**Attending:** Chair Kai Nishiki, Donald Robert Gerbig, Hans Michel, Joseph D. Pluta, Karen J. Comcowich, Leilani Pulmano, Dylan Payne, Dawn Hegger-Nordblom, Ravi Bugga, Joseph Aquino

**Absent:** Vice-Chair Jeri Dean, Aina Kohler, Yvette Joyce Celiz

## **County of Maui – Planning Department**

Jennifer Maydan, Long Range Planning Division

Kate Blystone, Long Range Planning Division

Annalise Kehler, Long Range Planning Division

Jaime Paa, Long Range Planning Division

Call to order at 5:34 p.m.

## **Public Testimony (00:00 to 47:54 in Meeting Video)**

Much of the testimony focused on the Draft Letter to County Council and/or Mayor Victorino.

In support of the letter were testifiers Dick Mayer, Jen Mather, Tiare Lawrence and Albert Perez, who all stated that development needs to slow down and be done right. Opposed to the letter were testifiers Tom Blackburn-Rodriguez, Linda Garcia, Bill Valle, Buz Moffett, Trisha Higashi and Van Fisher, the general consensus being that a 100% affordable housing requirement is too restrictive and would either delay or prevent development altogether, and that affordable housing is needed NOW.

Other testimony:

Tom Blackburn-Rodriguez briefly read written testimonies from three of his acquaintances that were unable to attend the meeting (links to testimonies unavailable at this time).

Jen Mather reiterated the importance of moving the southern portion of Honoapiʻilani Highway mauka, and to put the focus on getting housing (preferably light industrial/mixed use residential) for West Maui residents and diversifying the economy.

Tiare Lawrence was disappointed that the Department of Transportation did not come to the meeting to discuss the critical issues West Maui is facing, and urged community members to create a coalition to address these issues.

Dina Edmisson read from her written testimony, providing CPAC members with a list of suggestions to address low-income, affordable and workforce housing developments. ([Link to written testimony](#))

Van Fisher answered questions from CPAC regarding his opposition to the letter. He noted that developers need to make a fair return on their business, and that he feels a 51% affordable housing requirement is a good number. He briefly described the 201-H fast track process (45-day deadline to review and either approve/disapprove a development application that does 51% affordable housing), and stated that he would prefer it if there was a separate team from the County Council to deal with fast-track applications, as it is very taxing on the Council.

Albert Perez was impressed with what he learned at the Hawaii Congress of Planning Officials Conference in September and noted that 100% affordable housing would only work if nonprofits are developing. He also noted that Kauaʻi acquired land and then offered incentives to nonprofits, and that this seems like a good plan. He, like Tiare Lawrence, was also disappointed that the Department of Transportation did not show up to the meeting, and said that incentives should be provided for people to take alternative methods of transportation to work.

Selina Blackwell stated that she is more concerned about Mother Earth and the effects of development on the coral reefs. She urged CPAC to be wary of who we are doing business with when it comes to developers.

Duke Johnson noted that all the development coming in doesn't seem to be helping the residents who are already here, and that we need housing.

**Continuation of a Discussion of Sending a Letter to County Council or Mayor Victorino Regarding Halting Approval of Major Development Projects Until the West Maui Community Plan Updated is Adopted by Ordinance (47:54 to 1:27:57)**

Chair Nishiki reiterated that the letter is merely a request to respect and honor CPAC's time, the community voice, and the CPAC process. She urged committee members to listen to the West Maui community and be courageous, and approve the letter. She asked for comments from members. ([Link to Proposed Letter](#))

Karen Comcowich supported the letter, and thought that there should be stronger guidelines for affordable housing.

Leilani Pulmano did not support the letter, as she felt that it was outside CPAC's mandate and that they should be focusing on policies and the plan itself.

Donald Gerbig did not support the letter, as he felt like it was a waste of time.

Ravi Bugga struggled with his feelings about the letter, as he understood where both sides were coming from. He recommended modifying the letter to require 51% affordable housing (instead of 100%), no real estate on land designated for agriculture, and no new visitor accommodation development or expansion.

Dawn Hegger-Nordblom supported the letter, as it is just showing how the community feels and would only stay in effect until the CPAC process is complete. She also supported Ravi's recommendations, however she didn't want developers to leave because of an inability to get their projects approved.

Chair Nishiki stated that she also supports Ravi's recommendations.

Dylan Payne did not support the letter. He felt that it oversteps the mandate of CPAC, and that they should be focusing on updating the Community Plan with what little time they have. He said that he understands the intent of the letter but that it's been a waste of time, as it's not CPAC's job to be making requests of decision-making bodies; the letter doesn't even carry any weight, and it's the wrong message to be sending when we are in a housing crisis.

Hans Michel did not support the letter, stating that we need affordable housing and that this isn't the way to do it. When asked by Chair Nishiki if he would support the letter with Ravi's recommendation to change the number to 51%, Hans said no.

Joseph Pluta did not support the letter. He said that the committee body as a whole never asked for such a letter to be drafted, and that CPAC members have so much more they need to focus on. He also noted that CPAC has no legal right to interfere with the lawful process of the Planning Department. **He then made a motion for the letter to be dismissed, which was seconded by Dylan.**

Chair Nishiki noted that the letter is not illegal, and there is precedent based on a similar letter that was submitted by GPAC (General Plan Advisory Committee) and vetted by the County's Corporation Counsel in 2008. She then asked Joseph Aquino to provide his comments.

Joseph Aquino supported the letter with Ravi's recommendations, just to let Council know that West Maui wants affordable housing.

Joseph Pluta reminded Chair Nishiki that he had already put a motion on the floor and that it needed to be voted on before moving forward. **He restated the motion: to cancel further discussion and consideration of the letter. The motion was seconded by Dylan Payne.**

Chair Nishiki and members Karen Comcowich, Ravi Bugga, Dawn Hegger-Nordblom and Joseph Aquino were in favor, while members Leilani Pulmano, Donald Gerbig, Dylan Payne, Hans Michel and Joseph Pluta opposed. **5-5, Motion failed.**

Leilani Pulmano suggested some language changes, and Chair Nishiki issued a brief recess to allow Leilani time to draft them.

## **2-MINUTE RECESS**

Leilani noted that while she still doesn't support the letter, she is proposing some language changes so that CPAC can move on from the letter and focus on the meeting's scheduled guest presentations. **She then made a motion: to change the bold underlined text to say, "therefore our CPAC sincerely requests that until after our community plan process has completed our review period, no new visitor accommodation or expansion, and CPAC strongly encourages 100% affordable housing projects." Karen Comcowich seconded the motion.**

Everyone but Joseph Pluta and Dylan Payne verbally accepted Leilani's changes. Dylan then recommended keeping Leilani's new language, but omitting the "100%." He stated that he still doesn't support the letter, but that he does want to get on with the work of CPAC.

Leilani then retracted her earlier motion and reissued it based on Dylan's recommendation: **for the changes to read, "therefore our CPAC sincerely requests that until after our community plan process has completed our review period, no new visitor accommodation or expansion, and CPAC strongly encourages affordable housing projects."** (She noted that the wording seemed a bit off, and that there was a word missing somewhere that needed to be included to make it flow better.) **Karen Comcowich seconded the motion.**

Chair Nishiki and members Karen Comcowich, Ravi Bugga, Leilani Pulmano, Dawn Hegger-Nordblom, Donald Gerbig, Dylan Payne, Hans Michel and Joseph Aquino were in favor, while member Joseph Pluta opposed. **9-1, Motion passed.**

Chair Nishiki then requested to defer further discussion of the letter so that they could move on to the guest presentations. Leilani asked why CPAC would be revisiting the letter, as she thought they were moving forward from the letter. Chair Nishiki asked if members would like to vote; Dylan affirmed.

**Karen Comcowich then moved to vote on the amended letter how it was amended by Leilani. Ravi Bugga seconded the motion.**

Hans Michel noted that he doesn't trust this method; he wants the changes written out and he can read it on paper at a future meeting, so that things can't be added on without them first agreeing on it. Chair Nishiki asked if he would like her to write out the changes on a paper and give it to him now; he declined. Chair Nishiki moved on to the vote.

Chair Nishiki and members Karen Comcowich, Ravi Bugga, Leilani Pulmano, Dawn Hegger-Nordblom, Donald Gerbig and Joseph Aquino were in favor, while members Dylan Payne, Hans Michel and Joseph Pluta opposed. **7-3, Motion passed.**

**Guest Presentation Related to Goal 2.2: A Complete, Balanced and Connected Transportation Network**

1. ~~State Highways – Department of Transportation – Ed Sniffen, Hawai'i Department of Transportation~~  
Cancelled due to scheduling conflict

**Guest Presentation Related to Goal 2.4: Economic Opportunity through Innovation and Collaboration (1:27:57 to 2:07:08)**

2. Mufi Hanneman and Jared Higashi, Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

Mufi Hanneman gave a presentation on Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association's priorities in the tourism industry, and provided recommendations based on lessons learned from overtourism at Hanauma Bay. ([Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)) (1:27:57 to 1:55:12)

Questions/comments from CPAC included the points provided in the section on Hanauma Bay; alternative modes of transportation to and from the airport; where money from cruise ship tourists goes; having Hana as a money-generating site; statistics on missed flights/tourism dollars lost due to traffic congestion to/from West Maui; and the state of infrastructure on Lower Honoapi'ilani Highway in regards to coastal resiliency. (1:55:12 to 2:07:12)

**RECESS/DINNER BREAK**

**Guest Presentation Related to Goal 2.4: Economic Opportunity through Innovation and Collaboration (Cont.) (2:07:12 to END)**

3. Terryl Vencl – Office of the Mayor

Terryl Vencl provided a brief background on her experience in the tourism industry, and her duties as Community Liaison for Tourism for Mayor Victorino. She spoke about the issues we face with visitor impacts and how they are being addressed, and what the next steps are. ([Link to PowerPoint presentation](#)) (2:07:12 to 2:24:14)

Due to time constraints, Chair Nishiki requested that questions from CPAC be asked after all remaining presentations are heard.

#### 4. Wayne Hedani

Wayne Hedani provided CPAC with his written presentation and, in respect of CPAC members' time, offered to forego his oral presentation and answer any questions they may have either during the question period or at a later meeting (if time didn't permit). ([Link to written presentation](#)) (2:24:14 to 2:26:28)

#### 5. Dick Meyer – Retired Economics Professor

Dick Meyer gave a brief history of tourism in Hawai'i, talked about the issues with the tourism industry, and provided recommendations to CPAC to best address these impacts. He urged CPAC to continue to stay active and engaged even after the CPAC process is over, and suggested a recommendation in the plan for the creation of another CPAC to monitor plan implementation. ([Link to written presentation](#)) (2:26:28 to 2:42:40)

Questions and comments from CPAC included the main issues affecting West Maui; where to find the 10-Year Strategic Plan for Maui County; how to implement specific policy recommendations (from Wayne Hedani's written presentation); comprehensive rezoning; beach nourishment; and water availability for new housing developments. (2:42:40 to END)

**NEXT MEETING IS ON OCTOBER 8, 2019. MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:06 P.M.**

