

**STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
HEEIA MEETING**

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Hawaii Community Development Authority ("Authority" or "Board"), a body corporate and a public instrumentality of the State of Hawaii, met remotely (utilizing the state-supported Zoom Meeting platform) for a regular meeting on November 03, 2021.

Board Vice-Chairperson, Chason Ishii, called the meeting to order at 10:40 a.m.

Members Present: Chason Ishii, Vice-Chairperson
Punihei Lipe
JoAnn Leong
Donna Camvel
Peter Apo
Susan Todani
David Rodriguez (DOT)
Gloria Chang (B&F)
Eugene Takahashi (DPP) – non voting

Members Excused: Wei Fang

Legal Counsel: Kelly Suzuka, Deputy Attorney General

Staff Present: Deepak Neupane, HCDA Executive Director
Garet Sasaki, Administrative Services Officer
Lindsey Doi, Asset Manager
Carlson Schultz, Director of Planning & Development – Kakaako
Francine Murray, HCDA Program Specialist
Susan Tamura, HCDA Planner
Tommilyn Soares, HCDA Secretary

A quorum was present.

Acknowledgment that the Meeting is Being Convened Remotely

Vice-Chair Ishii reiterated the wording contained in the Meeting Agenda regarding the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state's efforts to slow the community spread of the virus, and Governor David Y. Ige's issuance of Supplementary Emergency Proclamations which suspended Chapter 92 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes to the extent necessary to enable public boards and commissions to conduct business without holding

meetings open to the public.

With regard to the foregoing, Vice-Chair Ishii reiterated the wording contained in the Meeting Agenda, noting that HCDA welcomes public attendance via the Zoom link, HCDA's Facebook Page, and its YouTube channel contained in the meeting agenda. HCDA also welcomes public comment and public participation via submission of written and/or verbal testimony (consistent with the social distancing guidelines and Emergency Proclamations directives in effect.)

Vice-Chair Ishii stated that individuals from the public who have requested to provide verbal testimony are on standby and will be permitted to speak during the public testimony session of the specific agenda item.

Vice-Chair Ishii announced that, as mentioned in the General Meeting, the Governor appointed new members to the Heeia board, and welcomed the newest members: Punihei Lipe, representing the Heeia Community, and Member Peter Apo, appointed to the Cultural Specialist Position. Vice-Chair Ishii thanked them both for their volunteer service to HCDA and said that the board looks forward to working with them. Vice-Chair Ishii noted that Members Lipe and Apo are interim members, subject to Senate confirmation which will likely happen during the next legislative session.

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Regular Meeting Minutes of January 06, 2021**

Vice-Chair Ishii asked for comments or corrections. There were none. Vice-Chair Ishii stated the Minutes of the January 06, 2021 Heeia Authority Meeting were approved as presented.

**III. DECISION MAKING
Consider Authorizing the Executive Director to Expend up to \$300,000.00 from the Hawaii Community Development Authority's Heeia Community Development District Special Fund, for Funds Appropriated to the Authority by the 2021 Legislature through H.B. 200, HD1, SD1, CD1 for the purpose of Remediating Invasive Mangrove in HCDA's Heeia Community Development District.**

HCDA Executive Director Deepak Neupane presented the staff report for this item.

The final budget revealed \$300,000 in federal funds that were appropriated to the HCDA, specifically for remediating invasive mangroves. Subsequently, the State's Director of Finance recommended approval, and the Governor released the funds to make them available. HCDA has sent out a Request for Proposal ("RFP") to find a contractor to remove the mangroves from the Heeia district.

Interim Member Apo asked if this is a one-time appropriation, and if there has ever been a continuum of maintenance strategies for that shoreline and the mangroves, such as how the

military takes care of the mangroves on the Aiea/Pearl City side of Pearl Harbor every couple of years and at an expensive cost.

Executive Director Neupane answered that HCDA does not have a maintenance program for the mangrove situation in Heeia, but that Kakoo Oiwi has been doing a good job of removing and maintaining the mangroves. This request involves a one-time appropriation that comes out of the Covid funding and provides for some environmental restoration; so those funds would be used to remove any remaining mangroves from the district.

Interim Member Apo replied that the reason he asked is that, eventually "all of this" has to be turned back to the state or the county jurisdiction, and at that point we should have a recommendation for a regular maintenance program for that shoreline.

Executive Director Neupane agreed that such requests can be made. The revolving fund currently has no funds, but a request can be made to the legislature.

Interim Member Apo asked if any dialogue has occurred regarding any long-term plans, versus addressing the situation year-by-year, particularly with mangrove and shoreline matters which require long-range planning – so when the land is eventually handed back, recommendations can be made regarding the fiscal responsibility to maintain that environment. He added that he is speaking as a cultural specialist because it is a sacred area.

Member Leong said that Kakoo Oiwi is not the only presence on the shoreline in that area, but also Paepae o Heeia and the state park, the latter of which is directly on the shoreline. So Paepae o Heeia is taking care of the mangroves, and their long-term plan through Kamehameha Schools is to ensure the fishpond remains mangrove clear. The current plan for Kakoo Oiwi is to restore the loi, and when the loi is restored and all the mangroves are removed, there should not be anticipated return of the mangroves in the long term because that land will be restored to loi and freshwater fishponds. So that is the long-term plan for Kakoo Oiwi, and if put into place and functioning the way it is with the plan from the NERR (*the Heeia National Estuarine Research Reserve*) for the biocultural restoration of that area, that would make it a long-term scenario for constant removal of mangroves.

Member Apo was pleased with that idea, and Member Leong suggested that he visit the site in person.

Vice-Chair Ishii asked if there were additional questions or comments.

Member Lipe asked about the selection process for the RFP and if it is based mainly on the lowest bid or is there also a consideration of a "malama aina" approach by the contractor during the removal.

Executive Director Neupane answered that the RFP does include selection criteria, and that cost is not the only factor in the selection of the contractor.

Interim Member Lipe thanked him for the answer. She also commented that there will probably be contractors bidding that have previously worked on the mangrove removal, and that it is good that there is a holistic approach to the mangrove removal.

Vice-Chair Ishii asked for further questions or comments from the Board. There were none.

Public Testimony

Vice-Chair Ishii asked if there were any public testimony. There was no written testimony or request to provide verbal testimony received.

MOTION:

Member Chang motioned the board to Authorize the Executive Director to Expend up to \$300,000.00 from the Hawaii Community Development Authority's Heeia Community Development District Special Fund, for Funds Appropriated to the Authority by the 2021 Legislature through H.B. 200, HD1, SD1, CD1 for the Purpose of Remediating Invasive Mangrove in HCDA's Heeia Community Development District.

Member Todani seconded the motion.

Vice-Chair Ishii asked the board if there were discussion on the motion. There were none.

Executive Director Neupane conducted the roll call vote:

The motion passed with 7 yes votes, 0 no votes, 1 abstained, and 1 excused.

IV. INFORMATION & DISCUSSION

Update from Kakoo Oiwi

Mr. Kanekoa Schultz, Executive Director of Kakoo Oiwi provided an update of activities in the Heeia Community Development District via a virtual tour and PowerPoint presentation. He also extended an invitation to the board members to schedule separate tours, in a manner legally permitted for the board members, to visit the HCDA property and lands.

Mr. Kanekoa Schultz asked if the Members had questions or comments.

Member Rodriguez said that he appreciated the cultural preservation of the area. He asked if Kakoo Oiwi is partnering with any organizations, on the enterprise/business side – such as for promoting kalo and how that is being sold – to assist in the general fund to help restore the area.

Mr. Schultz replied that they are partnering with Hawaii Food and Wine and also with Travel to Change. They also have their own online food market where viewers can see what is available and then pick up items on Thursdays. They are also selling directly to the Hawaii Food Bank. Now that they have the certified kitchen, they are starting to approach many of the charter schools and DOE (*Department of Education*) schools for certain product. He acknowledged that their program does need to grow more, and they are able to

do that now that they have the certified poi meal and kitchen. Because the poi sells out every week; almost immediately, there has not yet been a need to go outside of the initial community to sell the poi, the raw kalo and kalopaa. But they are working to increase planting, which coincides with funding and maintenance because they are dealing with the wetland. So, there are markets, but he would welcome suggestions. He reiterated his invitation to the board members to visit the site, in a manner legally permitted for the board members, to discuss strategies for market awareness and access.

Member Leong asked, regarding the business side of Kakoo Oiwi, if Mr. Schultz could provide to the board at a future meeting's progress report, a projection of how much production can be obtained from one acre, how many acres Kakoo Oiwi plans to have in production within one, two, and even five years, along with a projection for the amount of funds that would be potentially generated.

Mr. Schultz replied that he could provide that information. He mentioned a few caveats that might affect the projections – such as the water level and stream level being held constant; they do not have any major storm systems which often impacts their efforts negatively. There are also challenges with "two-legged predators". But he can get a good idea of the kalo production and will provide a conservative projection to the board.

Member Camvel highly praised Mr. Schultz's efforts and Kakoo Oiwi's achievement in turning acres of land that had been degraded for 100 years into kalo-producing wetlands. She called it "strides of success" in adaptive management. She commended their ability to replant food in a degraded landscape, contribution to the restoration at Heeia, and collaboration with Hawaiian and other community groups. She said that a community development template has become a template for a local, regional, and even global example of how to restore degraded landscapes. She added that Kakoo Oiwi and HCDA are both part of the community's return to the aina, bringing sustainability, food source, and cultural awareness to that area of Heeia. She ended with encouragement to obtain funds to help their efforts.

Member Todani said that she grew up on the Windward side and is also impressed with Kakoo Oiwi's achievements, stating it is an example of what can be achieved in community development and partnerships. It provides a different example of community development; the restoration of the lands. She also added her encouragement for finding ways to support Kakoo Oiwi's efforts.

Member Apo also commended Kakoo Oiwi, adding that it is contributing to the gradual sustainable growth on the Windward side.

Vice Chair Ishii thanked Mr. Schultz for a great presentation, adding that he also grew up on the Windward side.

Mr. Schultz stated that part of the poi mill's purpose is to help with fundraisers for Windward school programs, such as for the Castle High School basketball team to travel to the mainland for tournaments. He partially addressed the financing questions by saying that

there is a high cost with the mangrove project, but expected acreage production is approximately one-half pound per square foot. He will provide more detailed projections later. He wanted to emphasize that the non-profit's goal is to generate revenue to reinvest back to the education of the community and back to the restoration of the lands, to enable such efforts as a seabird population and an endangered bird program. He described examples of ideas to potentially use the revenue (after costs) as "seed money" to leverage for funding for federal, private, or even state grants by collaborating with Kakoo Oiwi's various partners such as The Nature Conservancy.

Vice President Ishii asked Members if there were other questions or comments. There were none.

Public Testimony

Vice President Ishii asked if there were any written testimony or request to provide verbal testimony received.

Executive Director Neupane replied that someone in the chat inquired about the road project. He noted that construction has not yet started on constructing the road.

Mr. Schultz agreed with Executive Director Neupane, adding that, the road, would include infrastructure that is needed throughout the property.

Executive Director Neupane asked if there were any additional requests to provide verbal testimony. There were none.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Ishii thanked those who joined the meeting on Zoom and then adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Wei Fang, Secretary

Date