



On the calendar

February 16

The next HCDA General Board meeting will be held.

For updates and more information on this board meeting or about HCDA visit dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda.

Know someone?

If you want to include an event, know an individual or a business in Kaka'ako, Kalaeloa or He'eia that we could feature, or just want more Community Connection, let us know by emailing us at: dbedt.hcda.contact@hawaii.gov.



Aloha Beer, bacon-fondue fries, cauliflower wings, and creme brulee. Photos courtesy of Aloha Beer.

Support local

Serving Aloha

One Pint at a Time

By Sara Lin

As a veteran real estate investor, realtor and businessman, Steve Sombrero knew the masses of young professionals moving into the newly constructed high-rise apartments and condos in Kaka'ako would need a new watering hole. So when the space on Queen Street came up for sale, he jumped at the opportunity and opened Aloha Beer.

Kaka'ako "kind of reminds me of the Pearl District of Oregon, an industrial neighborhood that is really rapidly growing and has that vibe that appeals to millennials," Sombrero says.

This year marks the brewery's 5th anniversary at this location, cementing Aloha Beer's role as the anchor catalyst of a new vibrant pedestrian-friendly community that now includes hip coworking spaces, Biki bike share stations and professional offices.

"I think residents appreciate the fact that we're within walking distance," Sombrero says. "We have customers that tell their wives they're taking the dog for walk, and they make a pit stop and have a beer."

It takes some vision and guts to be the first business to open in an industrial area on a street that usually goes dark at night.

"I think our presence there has helped put a little bit of light in that part of Kaka'ako. Prior to us being there, we had problems with vagrants, and I think our presence there has really brought some security...some place that you want to be in and be around rather than being around an industrial complex, now you have a place people like to hang out."

"We've added value to the community."

Opening a brewery in Honolulu has been on Sombrero's mind since he was in graduate school. He teamed up with noted local brewer Dave Campbell and incubated the business in Iwilei, adjacent to the old Sam Choy's Restaurant on Nimitz before moving to Queen Street.

The new site was perfect for a new production facility and tap room. Kaka'ako was once home to Hawai'i's booming beer business from 1900 to the late 1960s. There was just one problem: The Queen Street site lacked dedicated parking – a typical condition that must be satisfied before a permit is granted. In this manner, Aloha Beer's story illus-



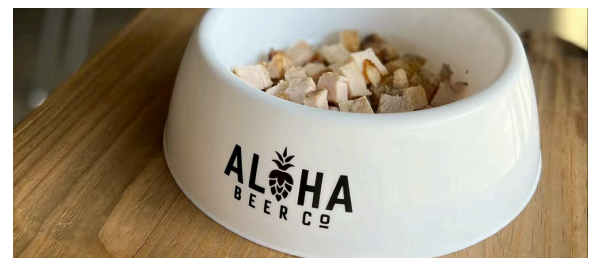
trates the positive collaboration that can happen between the Hawai'i Community Development Authority and local business. When Sombrero first approached HCDA for a permit, then-Director of Planning Deepak Neupane willingly granted them a permit based on a shared parking solution with an adjacent landowner who had rooftop parking available for lease. Sombrero worked out a deal with Waterhouse Properties for reserved stalls and HCDA granted the permit.

In the evening hours, Aloha Beer provides valet service for customers.

There was prescience to Sombrero's purchase of the property – the outdoor dining set up proved to be a major perk during the ups and downs of the pandemic.

Still, Aloha Beer is growing – last year they opened a new location downtown as part of the Tidepools, a new space in the Central Pacific Plaza. Customers can have a beer and a bite to eat in the new café-style co-working space while also getting their banking done.

There's more on the horizon – Aloha Beer is planning a new location in Waikiki this year and plans to expand its global licensing footprint. They already have a deal with Uniqlo for Aloha Beer-branded apparel and tote bags.



Dog snacks and bowls available at the Kaka'ako location.

Aloha Beer is at 700 Queen Street in Honolulu. Visit to host a party or see weekly events list: aloha@alohabeer.com

We've come a long way

Susan of HCDA summarizes then and now

By Francine Murray

Deepak Neupane, HCDA Executive Director and Susan Tamura, HCDA Urban Planner/ Program Specialist will each retire at the end of the month.

Deepak will be enjoying retirement in Texas with his family, and Susan plans on spending more quality time with loved ones including Tibby, her 14-year-old dog.

Since they began working at HCDA (Susan 34 years ago, and Deepak 15), the districts have come a long way.

In a chat with Susan, she described Kaka'ako, in her early years at HCDA. "There were a few development projects, but basically infrastructure was non-existent, so lots of flooding when it rained and no pedestrian environment to speak of. Majority of the businesses were industrial and commercial uses."

Although Susan had her master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning, she said it primarily was 'on the job training'.

At one point, she worked in the Development Section at HCDA, helping with relocation during Improvement District-3, about 60 acres of infrastructure improvements involving portions of Cooke Street, Kapi'olani Boulevard, Halekauwila, Keawe, Coral, Victoria and Curtis Streets. (See the before and after photos.)

Looking around Kaka'ako now, "our infrastructure projects, completed in the 1990s and 2000s, set the stage for the redevelopment of the district," said Susan. "I feel that the Plan and Rules we implemented in 2011 created a vibrant live, work, and play community."

"I definitely like the public projects (senior housing and family rental) that were built in the 1990s and early 2000s," she continued. "The Ewa side of the District, provides a mix of public rental, reserved housing and market residential projects. In addition, there are a lot of restaurants, personal services as well as smaller grocery stores. Definitely a livable community."

Susan is most proud of working on the Waterfront Park Master Plans and Plan and Rules for the three Districts, Kaka'ako, Kalaeloa, and He'eia, which contain extensive community input and act as guides for redevelopment that aims to meet the highest needs and



aspirations of Hawai'i's people.

In He'eia, "The taro lives; abundance returns to the land!" said Susan. "It was the lineal descendants, community members and kupuna that spearheaded the effort to create the He'eia Community Development District for use as an agricultural (loi), cultural and educational district."

"It's amazing to see how much our lessee, Kāko'o Ōiwi, has been able to accomplish in the 10 years since the initial lease was signed," she continued. "Poi is now grown and produced on-site, the invasive mangrove is almost eradicated, nearly 30 acres of wetlands and mauka lands has been restored for agricultural use, and endemic/endangered water birds have returned to feed and nest within the loi."

As the Planning Director and then the Executive Director of HCDA, Deepak Neupane has been involved in almost everything HCDA accomplished during his time at the state agency.

In 2021, as we strived to help the state's economy recover from the worldwide pandemic, he accomplished a record number of tasks from this small office - collaboration with private entities in both Kaka'ako and Kalaeloa of which is expected to result in over \$3.14 billion in construction spending, helping to create over 2,600 construction jobs, and changing policies to better help residents.

Both Susan and Deepak will be greatly missed. We at HCDA wish them all the best.

Kaka'ako watchdog

Community contribution by Sherry Goya

It's nice to know someone is looking out for our community.

In 1987, the Kaka'ako Improvement Association (KIA) was formed in an effort to make Kaka'ako a dynamic place in which to live, work, play and conduct business, while also being a 'watch dog' over the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA), that the State Legislature created in 1976.

Over the years, KIA and HCDA have become partners in providing information to KIA members. Periodically, HCDA has participated with KIA at their general membership meetings, such as the one held Wednesday, January 26th, with Mark Hakoda speaking about the Kaka'ako Mauka Rule Amendment process. KIA hopes to assist HCDA with this process and be kept abreast of the progress.

Individuals and companies of all sizes join KIA to be kept abreast of what has, is and will happen in the area.

Its thirteen-member board is dedicated to spreading the news among members regularly via monthly newsletters, their website, biannual general membership meetings and networking events.

A very active non-profit association, since 2007, KIA has had eight golf tournaments and awarded a total of \$86,000 to those in Kaka'ako whose donation monies assisted in improving their facilities or services. The most recent recipients were the Children's Discovery Center and KCAA Muriel Pre-School, both KIA members.

The 2022 golf tournament will be held at the Pearl Country Club on Friday, May 20th from 11:30 a.m. Golfers and sponsors are welcome, your support will benefit the KCAA Muriel Pre-School this year.

For more information visit www.kia-hawaii.org or contact Sherry Goya, KIA Executive Director at 808-722-8487 or sgoyallc@aol.com.