

**STATE OF HAWAI‘I
HAWAI‘I COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
HEEIA MEETING**

**Wednesday, October 4, 2023
MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

The Hawai‘i Community Development Authority (“Authority” or “Board”), a body corporate and a public instrumentality of the State of Hawai‘i, met virtually (utilizing the state-supported Zoom Meeting platform) for a Regular meeting on October 4, 2023.

Chairperson Chason Ishii called the October 4 2023, HCDA Heeia Authority Regular meeting to order at 10:36 a.m.

Acknowledgement that the Meeting is Being Convened Virtually

Executive Director Craig Nakamoto reiterated the wording contained in the Meeting Agenda regarding the guidelines and directives provided by Section 92-3.7, Hawai‘i Revised Statutes (“HRS”), to enable public boards and commissions to conduct business virtually with a meeting site open to the public.

About the foregoing, Mr. Nakamoto reiterated wording contained in the Meeting Agenda, noting that the HCDA welcomes public attendance via the Zoom link provided and also at the meeting site, located at The American Brewery Building, 547 Queen Street, 2nd Floor Board room, Honolulu, Hawai‘i 96813. Mr. Nakamoto stated that individuals, if any, from the public who had requested to provide testimony were on standby and would be permitted to speak during the public testimony session of the specific agenda item.

Chair Ishii conducted the roll call. Those present were as follows:

Members Present: Chason Ishii, Chairperson
Sterling Higa, Vice Chair
Melissa Miranda-Johnson, DOT (Ex-Officio)
Mark Anderson, B&F (Ex-Officio)
Mary Alice Evans, DBEDT (Ex Officio)
Kaiwipuni Lipe

Members Excused: Peter Apo, Secretary
Craig Hirai, DPP (Ex Officio)
JoAnn Leong

A quorum was present.

Legal Counsel: Kelly Suzuka, Deputy Attorney General
Kevin Tongg, Deputy Attorney General

Staff Present: Craig Nakamoto, HCDA Executive Director
Francine Murray, HCDA Community Outreach Officer
Tommilyn Soares, HCDA Executive Secretary

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Regular Meeting Minutes of January 4, 2023

Chair Ishii asked for comments or corrections. There were none. The meeting minutes were approved as presented.

III. INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

Presentation by the Executive Director of Kako‘o ‘Oiwī (the Lessee of the Heeia Community Development District), Updating the Authority on the Activities and Accomplishments for the year 2023.

Mr. Kanekoa Shultz, Executive Director of Kako‘o ‘Oiwī, virtually provided his presentation as he remained on site in the He‘eia Community Development District. Shultz stated their primary activities are to:

1. Restore and maintain 24 acres of bird habitat and 7 acres of an 88-acre fishpond
2. Maintain and enhance 20 acres of constructed wetlands concurrently used for culturally important Hawaiian agriculture
3. Provide 51 acres of wetland bird habitat to increase populations of endangered Hawaiian wetland birds
4. Community engagement and education on the 139 acres of green infrastructure integrated with Indigenous Traditional Hawaiian Knowledge
5. Educate community on Hawaiian Natural Resource Management Techniques
6. Conduct restoration monitoring with community and partners.

Mr. Shultz noted that Hawaiian agriculture not only provides economics, jobs, cultural activities, but also ecosystem services. They are providing a habitat for the endangered native Hawaiian bird species: Alae‘ula, Ai‘o, ‘Alae Ke‘oke‘o, and ‘Auku‘u. Shultz further explained the importance of having the lo‘i kalo, as it can hold a large capacity of water within its wetlands, an important feature to have especially on the Windward side, where heavy rains and flow from the mountains is common.

Mr. Shultz provided further details about the history of the land, from its transition from rice fields to taro patches, and the settling of sediments from the land into the fishpond, to create the diverse and collaborative ecosystem.

Mr. Shultz mentioned that the birds are thriving in the 24 acres of wetlands, so they have cleared away the mangroves to progress the wetland restoration, and stream management has been put in place for the benefit of the lo‘i kalo.

There is funding that was allocated to build a pedestrian bridge where students from He'eia Elementary can walk over to the site. Though there may be concern for neighbors who may be disturbed by the increased foot traffic, it would be beneficial to provide an accessible outdoor and cultural experience for the students without the need for bus transportation.

In their focus of sustainable food systems, Kako'o 'Oiwī has been able to produce vegetation and sell products that they were able to make from it, such as kulolo, kulolo crunch, poi, and lu'au, in which the revenue generated has helped to offset rent expenses.

Shultz provided a map of the area, showing the various land ownerships and the unique natural characteristics nearby. He highlighted that HCDA/Kako'o 'Oiwī's continued land preservation and watershed restoration will help protect the shoreline and offset the pollution sources surrounding Kaneohe Bay, as it is one of the larger land owners in the area.

Member Evans referenced Conservation International's statement that mangroves are a protective feature in other parts of the world, so she asked why Kako'o 'Oiwī decided to clear away the mangroves in this area in their approach to reduce the risk from storm surge and other dangers.

Shultz agreed that mangrove is an important species in the coastal communities, but pointed out that it is only true in places where it is native. Mangrove is a non-native species, so when they did their initial federal surveys, only one of the seven species on their species list was native – the auku'u. Nature Conservancy and Conservation International came to assess the area and they observed that the mangroves that grew in the area were behaving uniquely from anywhere else in the world in that the canopies were high and narrow, causing a high density of leaf litter within a small radius. This caused the decision to clear the mangroves, and they noticed that the sand began to return to the fish pond and in front of the bay, and native species such as the purple hibiscus and other various birds returning to the area. Shultz reiterated that he does not doubt the effectiveness of mangroves in their native systems, but the native Hawaii ecosystems did not evolve with mangroves, so it is more ideal to grow native species in their native ecosystem.

Shultz continued to provide photos of the loko'ia (fishpond), educational programs, wetland areas, and features of the land. He thanked the Authority for the opportunity to showcase their work and invited the Board or anyone interested to

There were no further comments or questions from the board members.

Public Testimony

Chair Ishii called for public testimony. There were no inquiries to provide oral testimony, and no written testimonies were received.

IV. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Monthly Report and Other Status Reports

Approved permit applications that did not require HRS § 206E-5.6, public hearings.

Mr. Nakamoto noted in addition to Director Schultz' updates, for sunshine law purposes, he and board members Apo and Todani conducted site visit and tour of Kako'o Oiwi, led by Executive Director Schultz.

Public Testimony

Chair Ishii called for public testimony. There were no inquiries to provide oral testimony, and no written testimonies were received.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ishii thanked those who joined the meeting on Zoom and then adjourned the meeting at 11:24 a.m.

Miki'ala Lidstone, Secretary

Date Board Approved