



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

NANI MEDEIROS
LEAD HOUSING OFFICER

Build Beyond Barriers Working Group (BBB)

Tuesday, August 29, 2023

9:30 – 11:30 A.M.

MEETING SUMMARY

MEETING RECORDING:

<https://www.facebook.com/GovernorHawaii/videos/6685181758213684/>

No.	Representatives	Name
		*virtual attendance
1	Office of Planning and Sustainable Development	Mary Alice Evans
2	Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism	Absent
3	Hawaii Housing Finance Development Corporation	Dean Minakami
4	Department of Land and Natural Resources	Dawn Chang
5	State Historic Preservation Division	Alan Downer, Susan Lebo
6	Commission on Water Resource Management	Dean Uyeno
7	Land Use Commission	Daniel Orodenker
8	Department of Health	Dr. Kenny Fink
9	Department of Transportation	Absent
10	Hawaii Public Housing Authority	Hakim Ouansafi
11	Department of Budget and Finance	Luis Salaveria
12	Island Burial Council, Hawai'i	*Scott Mahoney
13	Island Burial Council, Kaua'i/Ni'ihau	Absent
14	Island Burial Council, Maui/Lāna'i	Absent
15	Island Burial Council, Moloka'i	Keomailani Hanapi Hirata
16	Island Burial Council, O'ahu	Kamana'o Mills
17	Chair of legislative subject matter committees relating to housing	Rep. Troy Hashimoto
18	Chair of legislative subject matter committees relating to housing	Sen. Stanley Chang
19	Mayor, City & County of Honolulu	Alternate: Kevin Auger
20	Mayor, County of Hawai'i	Absent
21	Mayor, County of Kaua'i	Absent
22	Mayor, County of Maui	*Alternates: Pono Asana; Priya Landgraf

No.	Representatives	Name *virtual attendance
23	County permitting and regulatory agency representatives, Hawai'i	Susan Kunz
24	County permitting and regulatory agency representatives, Hawai'i	Zendo Kern
25	County permitting and regulatory agency representatives, Hawai'i	Absent
26	County permitting and regulatory agency representatives, Honolulu	*Dawn Takeuchi-Apuna
27	County permitting and regulatory agency representatives, Kaua'i	Adam Roversi
28	County permitting and regulatory agency representatives, Kaua'i	Kaaina Hull
29	County permitting and regulatory agency representatives, Maui	*Lori Tsuhako
30	County permitting and regulatory agency representatives, Maui	*Kathleen Aoki
31	County department of water supply representatives, Hawai'i	Keith Okamoto
32	County department of water supply representatives, Honolulu	Ernie Lau
33	County department of water supply representatives, Kaua'i	*Joe Tait *Alternate: Micheal Hinazumi
34	County department of water supply representatives, Maui	Absent
35	Hawaiian Electric Company	Alternate: Colton Ching
36	Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative	*David Bissell
37	Honua Consulting	Trisha Watson
38	The Executive Director of Housing Hawai'i's Future	Sterling Higa
39	Economic Research Organization at the University of Hawai'i	Carl Bonham
40	The Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Hawai'i	Wayne Tanaka
41	The Executive Director of the Land Use Research Foundation	*David Arakawa
42	Lead Housing Officer	Nani Medeiros
44	Department of the Attorney General	Linda Chow
45	State Housing Team	Scott Glenn
46	Department of Human Resources Development Subject Matter Expert	Brenna Hashimoto
47	Hawai'i Government Employees Association Subject Matter Expert	Debra Kagawa-Yogi

I. The meeting is called to order [00:06:11]

II. Opening remarks from Governor Josh Green [00:09:04]

Governor Josh Green opened the meeting by emphasizing the importance of collective input and open dialogue for the challenges Hawai'i is facing, particularly in housing and the recent crisis in Maui. The Governor reassured attendees that all opinions are respected and the process will be open and transparent. Before the crisis in Maui, the state had declared a housing emergency. The Governor pinpointed housing as a critical issue that will shape the years ahead.

The situation in Maui is a tragedy and has displaced about 12,000 people, with about 6,000 currently housed in hotels or short-term rentals. The Governor vowed to rebuild Lahaina only when Lahaina is ready and based on Lahaina's voice at the forefront.

The Governor briefly touched on plans to keep displaced people in stable housing for at least 18 months and to explore options for building semi-permanent structures outside Lahaina. Given the dire situation in Maui, where many people are without basic services, the Governor emphasized the need for humanitarian support and federal aid. Despite the crisis, the Governor explained that it is essential to continue working on pressing issues like housing and homelessness, which is why this meeting was not canceled. Governor Green expressed his gratitude to everyone for participating in the dialogue and emphasized the need to find housing solutions that work for all alongside the immediate challenges in Maui.

III. Lead Housing Officer's (LHO) opening remarks to the BBB, providing an updated perspective on the working group's role in the context of housing and the redevelopment of Lahaina. [00:14:47]

Lead Housing Officer Nani Medeiros outlined the role and responsibilities of the BBB, which was established following the Emergency Proclamation Relating to Housing. She highlighted the importance of this inter-agency collaboration in accelerating housing projects and emphasized the need for compassion and community input in decision-making.

The BBB includes state and county agencies, private sector experts, and advocates. It is responsible for reviewing and certifying housing project applications. Members are expected to evaluate projects with the same diligence as they would for those not covered by the emergency proclamation.

Medeiros reiterated the Governor's earlier statement that Lahaina redevelopment is not under discussion until the community is ready. The Working Group stands ready to assist when the time comes. Assessments have been conducted in Maui to understand residents' housing and infrastructure needs affected by recent fires.

Efforts by the Housing team to enhance communication are in progress, including launching a website at <http://hale.hawaii.gov> to disseminate pertinent information. Lastly, plans are in place to update the emergency proclamation, including refining state and county housing project definitions.

Medeiros closed her remarks by urging the Working Group to move forward with "aloha in their hearts" and stressed the importance of listening and learning from communities to support them effectively.

IV. Project Proposals to the Lead Housing Officer

- A. Department of Hawaiian Home Land's (DHHL) request for the LHO's determination to develop the following for beneficiaries: 1) Honokowai Water System, including source and transmission to support housing in the Villages of Leiali'i and DHHL property in Honokowai; 2) Villages in Leiali'i; 3) Wailuku Single-Family Residential homestead; and 3) Waiehu Mauka Homestead in response to an increased need for housing on the island of Maui due to the wildfires. [00:17:55]**

The agenda was set to discuss four project proposals submitted by the DHHL related to housing needs in Maui, particularly in response to the wildfires. However, the projects were withdrawn at DHHL's request and following an overwhelming public response. Medeiros emphasized the importance of community input and thanked the Working Group for their willingness to review the projects.

The projects are with the DHHL and the Hawaiian Homes Commission for any additional steps, particularly concerning the Villages of Leali'i.

Medeiros closed by thanking everyone for their input and emphasizing that the community's voice had been heard "loud and clear."

- B. Hawai'i Public Housing Authority's (HPHA) request for the LHO's determination to proceed in hiring qualified personnel for public housing construction, renovations in compliance with the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) standards, vacancy management, accommodations for individuals with disabilities, housing vouchers, inspections, and staff recruitment. [00:20:00]**

HPHA's Hakim Ouansafi highlighted challenges in staffing, federal procurement requirements, and the implications of using emergency proclamations for hiring. The proposal focuses on staffing to manage existing vacant units and does not involve new construction. The Housing Authority has over 300 vacant units and a similar number of available housing vouchers, but they lack the staff to manage these resources. They have over 80 vacant positions. The proposal seeks permission to hire staff on a temporary basis or contract with firms to help bring vacant units into use.

Questions about adherence to state and federal procurement standards and the agency's plans to comply were raised. Concerns about bypassing existing civil service rules and the potential impact on current employees were expressed.

It was highlighted that the staffing issue is not unique to HPHA but is a broader problem affecting multiple agencies involved in housing. Broader reforms outside the emergency proclamation are needed to help agencies staff up more efficiently without compromising skills or pay.

C. HPHA’s request for the LHO’s determination to proceed with the construction project, Hale Aloha O Puna in Keaau, Hawai’i, to accommodate very low-income tenants displaced by fires caused by Hurricane Dora’s high winds. [00:36:01]

The HPHA’s Hakim Ouansafi presented an update on their construction project, Hale Aloha O Puna, in Keaau, Hawai’i. The project aims to renovate public housing units to accommodate very low-income tenants displaced by fires caused by Hurricane Dora. HPHA also experienced losses from fires in Maui, including two projects, and one tenant confirmed deceased.

Initially, HPHA sought approval to expedite this project through the Lead Housing Officer (LHO) under the emergency proclamation. However, Hakim Ouansafi announced that they have reached an agreement with Hawai’i County officials to issue the necessary permits within the next two weeks, rendering the need for an emergency proclamation moot.

Keith Okamoto from the County of Hawai’i confirmed no objections to the project.

Susan Kunz from the County of Hawai’i supported the project and appreciated the coordination between HPHA and the Department of Public Works.

Zendo Kern from the County of Hawai’i’s planning department also offered support and help to expedite the process.

V. Oral Testimony [00:41:35]

- Al Medeiros [00:42:42]
- Testifiers name is unknown [00:50:33]
- Kamie Davis [00:55:37]
- Mrs. Coon [00:57:42]
- Wylann Christian [00:58:31]
- Gary Cordery [01:09:31]

Medeiros called a recess [01:11:53]

- Bj Penn [01:18:33]
- Jessica “Priya” Ciazzo [01:26:00]
- Marty Townsend [01:29:19]
- Testifiers name is unknown [01:33:00]
- Jessica Wortham [01:38:21]
- Sterling Higa [01:40:09]
- Dalyin Heather [01:44:42]
- Tara Rojas [01:47:24]

VI. Member Discussion: Wayne Tanaka & Sterling Higa [1:53:08]

VII. Announcements [01:59:59]

- **Next meeting:**

- Date and Time: Tuesday, September 26, 2023, 9:30 – 11:30 A.M.
- Location: State Capitol Conference Room 329, 415 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, HI 96813

VIII. Adjournment [02:03:07]