

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

MINUTES

November 28, 2005

Site Inspection

CONVENE: 7:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Councilmember Joseph Pontanilla, Chair
Councilmember Michael J. Molina, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Robert Carroll, Member
Councilmember Danny A. Mateo, Member
Councilmember Dain P. Kane, Nonmember

EXCUSED: Councilmember G. Riki Hokama, Member

STAFF: Richelle Kawasaki, Legislative Attorney

ADMIN.: Milton Arakawa, Director, Department of Public Works and Environmental
Management
Cindy Young, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the Corporation
Counsel
John Buck, Deputy Director, Department of Parks and Recreation
Officer Anthony Krau, School Resource Police Officer, Department of Police

OTHERS: Stephen Yamada, Principal, H.P. Baldwin High School

PW-40 PARTIAL CLOSURE OF HALI`A NAKOA STREET (WAILUKU)

The Committee assembled on Hali`a Nakoia Street in Wailuku, Maui across from the H.P. Baldwin High School Gymnasium.

Chair Pontanilla convened the site inspection and explained that the purpose of the inspection is to view traffic in the area as it relates to safety for students, parents, and faculty.

There was no public testimony.

Stephen Yamada, Principal of H.P. Baldwin High School, indicated that traffic in the area is a safety concern for the school due to students crossing the street, and incoming and exiting

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vehicles. He indicated that the current situation is an “accident waiting to happen.” Mr. Yamada expressed a preference to close the street and modify the practice of unloading students in the area and at the War Memorial complex. Mr. Yamada further indicated that the traffic at the intersection of Kaahumanu Avenue and the entrance to the school is also a safety concern. In both areas, he feels that safety is being compromised because drivers are responsible for watching other vehicles and student pedestrians. Mr. Yamada thanked all those present for attending the site inspection.

The Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation asked Mr. Yamada where he would like to see the street closed.

Mr. Yamada indicated that a gate should be installed below the gymnasium and at the top of the street near the faculty parking lot.

The Director of Public Works and Environmental Management asked whether the State Department of Education would be willing to accept ownership of Hali`a Nakoa Street.

Mr. Yamada said that he would support accepting the street.

Councilmember Kane asked whether the street light at the entrance of the school could be coordinated with the flow of traffic if the street was closed. He noted that the State Department of Transportation would have to be involved in such coordination, and requested that the Director of Public Works and Environmental Management assist in notifying the State Department of Transportation of the school’s and the Council’s concerns.

Mr. Yamada said that he believes that people use Hali`a Nakoa Street for convenience. He inquired about the status of closing the street temporarily as was discussed in a previous Committee meeting.

The Director of Public Works and Environmental Management stated that the Department of the Corporation Counsel has opined that the Director does not have the authority to temporarily close the street since the closure of the street is not a “traffic control device” as referenced in the Maui County Code. The Director said that the Public Works Committee is able to consider a permanent measure to close the street.

Mr. Yamada said that he has observed a noticeable, positive difference in traffic flow during the fair when the street was temporarily closed.

Councilmember Kane said that the Council can consider authorizing the permanent closure of Hali`a Nakoa Street. In response to Councilmember Kane’s inquiry, the Director of Public Works and Environmental Management said he did not know who authorized the temporary closure of the street during the fair.

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The Deputy Corporation Counsel indicated that the opinion regarding the Director of Public Works and Environmental Management's inability to temporarily close the street was limited to whether temporary closure of the street is considered a "traffic control device."

The Director of Public Works and Environmental Management asked how access to the faculty parking lot would be affected if the street was closed.

Mr. Yamada said that he would propose that the street be closed from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Access to the faculty parking lot would be available outside those hours.

Councilmember Mateo asked whether the Department of Public Works and Environmental Management is looking into turning over the ownership of the street to the State.

The Director of Public Works and Environmental Management responded that this option is being explored due to the Committee's prior discussion on this matter. He noted that Hali'a Nakoia Street splits the school campus.

Chair Pontanilla indicated that the Committee will be looking at all alternatives and needs the State Department of Transportation to be involved in any decision making.

Councilmember Molina asked the School Resource Police Officer if the driving patterns being observed by the Committee were illegal. He noted that the Committee had been observing vehicles stopping in the middle of the street and making U-turns.

The School Resource Police Officer affirmed that the driving behaviors noted by Councilmember Molina were illegal.

There being no further questions or discussion, Chair Pontanilla adjourned the inspection at 7:42 a.m.

APPROVED:


JOSEPH PONTANILLA, Chair
Public Works Committee

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