

MAUI COUNTY CHARTER COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING
Old Hana High School, Hana
Wednesday, August 8, 2001
6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Teryl Vencl, Chair
R. Sean McLaughlin, Vice-Chair
Vince Bagoyo
Bill Fuhrmann
Gwen Hiraga
Karolyn Mossman
Stephen Petro
Donn Takahashi

ABSENT

Erlinda Rosario

STAFF

Myles Inokuma, Executive Assistant to Mayor
Brian Moto, Corporation Counsel
Ke`ala Pasco, Charter Commission Assistant

EXCUSED

Carole Ameral
Stephen Holaday

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Teryl Vencl thanked those attending the public meeting and called the meeting to order at 6:52 p.m. She asked Commissioner Fuhrmann, who is from Hana, to introduce everyone at the table. First, he introduced Patty Eason, the only person present to testify. He then introduced the commissioners and staff: Myles Inokuma, Brian Moto, Ke`ala Pasco, Teryl Vencl, Sean McLaughlin, Stephen Petro, Karolyn Mossman, Vince Bagoyo, Gwen Hiraga, and Donn Takahashi. Excused: Carole Ameral & Steve Holaday. Absent: Erlinda Rosario.

Chair Vencl explained that the Commission had some business to address first. She mentioned that the minutes from the Pa`ia meeting had been mailed to the commissioners, and that copies were also brought to the meeting. She asked if there were any comments, corrections, or an approval. Motion was made (Commissioner Bagoyo) and seconded (Vice-Chair McLaughlin) to accept the minutes as is. The motion was unanimously carried. Excused: Commissioner Ameral and Holaday. Absent: Commissioner Rosario.

Chair Vencl mentioned that a letter regarding Chapter 50 of the Hawai`i Revised Statutes (pertaining to county charter commissions) needed to be accepted into the record. Brian Moto explained that in the ten-page letter to Earl Anzai, the Attorney General, they tried to do as much of the legwork for them as possible so that they'd have an easier time responding. It's very organized; the letter covers background, history, arguments against validity of statute, and arguments in favor of HRS 50. Brian will let the Commission know as soon as he gets a response. Vice-Chair McLaughlin asked whether or not the past Charter Commission took a different approach. Brian replied that their position was sketchy, but they didn't comply (Honolulu particularly disregarded it). Vice-Chair McLaughlin asked if there was any other action the Commission could take to encourage the Attorney General to respond in a timely manner. Brian replied that there's nothing to do at this time, since the letter just went out last week, but that perhaps later a reminder letter could be sent later. Motion was made (Commissioner Petro) and seconded (Vice-Chair McLaughlin) to accept this correspondence into record; motion was unanimously carried. Excused: Commissioner Ameral and Holaday. Absent: Commissioner Rosario.

Chair Vencl then explained that the Charter is the "Constitution" of Maui County. The Commission's purpose is to get community input. There have been five or six community meetings so far, with Moloka'i, Lana'i, and the central area remaining. She then suspended the three-minute rule, and welcomed Patti Eason.

TESTIMONY

MS. PATTI EASON

Ms. Eason said it was nice to be a part of the group, and expressed disappointment that more people weren't in attendance. She asked how this meeting was publicized, then said that most of her concerns had to do with education (the high school still doesn't have a vice principal). She applauded the Commission for coming.

Chair Vencl thanked Ms. Eason and said that notices of this meeting were posted at the store and post office, in community publications, public service announcements, and in the Maui News. She then clarified that the Charter doesn't deal with education, which is a State Department of Education issue.

Ms. Eason expressed concern that Hana doesn't have a fire department, and said that they need more people. Chair Vencl suggested that she speak to the Fire Chief, and mentioned that the Mayor will be holding a budget meeting on August 21. She also suggested that Ms. Eason write a letter to the administration expressing her concerns.

Commissioner Fuhrmann said that the problem with the fire department is with the water transmission systems, that staffing suffered due to budget constraints, and that it all comes back to insurance rates.

Vice-Chair McLaughlin asked Ms. Eason about the current structure of district residents vs. at large, and whether she thought it was okay or needed to change. Ms. Eason replied that she thinks it's working: "If it's not broken, don't fix it."

Vice-Chair McLaughlin then asked if the commission should interpret the evening's poor attendance as everything's good, or that we need to get more people involved. Ms. Eason replied that people must not have known about the meeting.

Mr. David Craddick informed everyone that the fire department is now fully staffed, and that Hawai'i Insurance will re-rate Hana in two weeks.

Commissioner Takahashi asked if there were any issues the Commission could discuss. Commissioner Fuhrmann responded that his opinions are knowledgeable and biased. He will fight for the East Maui seat. He wants a Planning Commission for Hana that isn't stripped of authority. Community and general plans should be equal to law. He said there's a lot of trust in Hana. Patti agrees, feels confident that Hana's being taken care of.

Commissioner Bagoyo mentioned the public hearing that he wants department directors to meet with the commission discussions. Chair Vencl asked for input from them, but they're giving their comments directly to the Mayor.

Commissioner Bagoyo said he'd like to speak with the Planning Director, Corporation Counsel, the Water Director, and Finance. Commissioner Hiraga requested a meeting with the Public Works Director.

Commissioner Petro concurs with Commissioners Bagoyo and Hiraga. He said it's crucial to hear from the department heads because some testimony reflects Commission decisions. Commissioner Petro asked if there would be testimony regarding how commissioners feel (their own ideas).

Bagoyo wants to invite three commissioners to Moloka'i, Lana'i, and the central area to the public meetings. Commissioner Petro wants to speak to other Water Board members in terms of operation.

Commissioner Fuhrmann said that as a courtesy, the staff of Charmaine's committee should be invited to discuss the direction this is going to go or needs to take. Power gets restricted and held back (like Moloka'i and Lana'i). We need to hear from them (Moloka'i is very possessive). Chair Venci replied that she sent letters to all boards and commissions, and questioned how to interpret no response (they either have nothing to say, or think all is fine). Commissioner Fuhrmann said the Commission should try to get more reaction as to what we heard and see how they respond to that.

Regarding relying on the Mayor's office to sort and gather all input, Commissioner McLaughlin questioned if the Commission should rely solely on them or pursue information independently. Commissioner Bagoyo said that while the information submitted is helpful, we need firsthand experience from department heads. Engaging in issues is helpful, so we should invite them to meetings before we start the deliberations. We need all the facts, public speakers, and both sides of issues; we don't know the legal aspects.

Brian Moto responded to Commissioner McLaughlin's question, saying that it's no problem for the Mayor's office to receive the information. He added that on Friday, August 10 at 10 a.m., the Board of Ethics will be having a meeting and focusing just on the Charter. He fully expects recommendations.

Chair Venci said we don't have enough time to do all this, so the commissioners should think about longer meetings (an additional two hours on Mondays); more meetings; or sub-committees. The decision didn't have to be made until next week, and asked everyone to check their schedules to add on for interviews. She'll discuss this with Vice-Chair McLaughlin, but requested that commissioners email her with their ideas about organization and the process.

Commissioner Fuhrmann suggested submitting questions ahead of time so people can respond.

Vice-Chair McLaughlin announced that Akaku would be providing TV coverage for the Commission at the Council Chambers on August 29 would be covered live. We have the technology; we should use it!

Chair Venci asked for any announcements or questions. Mr. Craddick suggested that if the Board of Water Supply asked to come before the commission they would not be able to come as a board because of the sunshine law. He also indicated that there was no board consensus, so they decided to come as individuals.

CONCLUSION

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.


Ke'ala Pasco, Charter Commission Assistant