

Maui County Arborist Committee

Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2015

1. Call to order at 1:37 pm upon determination that a quorum was present.
2. Public testimony
 - a. Kaluanui Road rubber tree—Several community members were present to testify in support of saving the ficus tree at the old stone wall on Kaluanui Road. A twelve year old student read a letter stating how meaningful the tree is to her as she travels Kaluanui Road to see a family member that lives across the road from the tree. Another neighbor had forwarded a letter in support of saving the tree. Eight pages of a signed petition were presented. The location defines a sense of place as well as provides a tree tunnel for those that regularly travel the road. Bill Myrter, committee member, stated that it would seem the County's interests are in safety or economics. He asked the testifiers if they knew the reason for the removal. There is a concern that if the tree roots are poisoned, the herbicide used may pollute the stream and harm the neighbors that are raising produce organically. The presence of the tree along the road creates traffic calming. Car accidents that have happened at the location would have been worse if the tree was not there.
3. Approval of the minutes—William Jacintho moved and Bill seconded the motion to approve the minutes as circulated. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Unfinished business – Tree Concerns
 - a. Kaluanui Road tree removal—The Committee wondered if the road has an official designation as a scenic road. Its history should be researched as it appears to have a cultural significance. Bill moved and Harlan seconded a motion to write a letter to Public Works with a cc. to Parks regarding the citizens' concern about the removal as well as the benefits to keeping the tree in place.
 - b. The harsh pruning of trees on State property was brought to the attention of the Committee by Chris Reynolds. The trees near the State Judiciary building were pruned of all leaves as were those at the Kihei library. Elaine Malina will contact the person that she knows provides care to the landscape as a beginning point for the conversation to remedy the situation. Jeff Ueoka suggested that the Court Administrator may also be a point of contact. DAGS on Oahu has good rapport with the Outdoor Circle there. Education according to ISA standards regarding the harm of topping trees needs to be made as the resulting "water sprout" branches are poorly attached and more dangerous in high winds. The importance of proper pruning of public trees is essential as they set an example that a layperson will be inclined to follow. Jeannie Pezzoli moved and William seconded a motion to begin a discussion with the State on proper pruning. The motion passed unanimously.
 - c. Trees at Wailea Blue golf course—A member of the public contacted the Committee with concerns about the removal of trees at the Wailea Blue golf course. The Committee recognized that these trees are on private property. However, educating the businesses on the merit of trees would be advantageous. Past chair Jordan Hart had crafted a letter of this nature. Jeannie will provide a copy of the letter to be updated along with brochures from ISA regarding the benefits of trees. The letter will be copied to the citizen that registered

her concern. Jeannie moved and William seconded a motion to send the letter. The motion passed unanimously.

- d. Kanaha Bird Sanctuary—Dennis Mirohiro expressed concern about the removal of several kiawe from the wetland area set aside for the seabirds. A Maui News article stated that the trees consume an inordinate amount of water, thus compromising the integrity of the wetland ecosystem and diminishing the habitat available for native birds and plant species. He didn't feel the trees should be removed outright as the area is quite windy. Maui Green and Beautiful had made contact and learned that the organization had been given grant funds to remove all the invasive species. This has allowed the regrowth of native plants in other areas. Dennis felt that since the trees have been there so long that the new native plants should be planted and established before the existing kiawe are removed. Jeannie suggested a letter be written expressing the concern and to request to see the plan for replanting.
5. Unfinished business—Keopuolani Park planting project
 - a. Kimberly has requested a meeting with the Parks Director to seek approval of the updated planting plan and set a date for the planting. She is waiting for it to be scheduled.
6. New business
 - a. Certificates of appreciation were presented to the retiring members – Harlan Hughes who served ten years; Dennis Mirohiro who served five years; and Bill Myrter that completed another's term for one year. Bill has been reappointed. All were given lei, letters of appreciation from the Chair, and certificates from the Mayor. Pictures were taken and will be forwarded to the County newsletter.
 - b. EAR Committee of the County Council—Don Guzman, chair of the committee, heard testimony regarding the arborist position as well as learning the functions of the committee. Corporation Counsel Jeff Ueoka spoke in support of the passion displayed by members. He personally feels the committee should be supported by the Planning Department rather than the Parks Department since the Planning department reviews proposed landscaping plans for compliance with the Maui County Planting Plan (MCP), the guiding document produced by the Arborist Committee. Furthermore, proposed projects that do not comply with the MCP are brought by the Department to the Arborist Committee for review. William wanted the council to be informed and felt that there was a disconnect between their understanding of the Committee and its future. Heather, in her work in property management, stated how important the choice of trees are to the subdivisions that she manages. It is quite costly when poor choices are made in the tree type. Arborist Committee members would like to know when something in regards to the Arborist Committee is discussed at the Council EAR committee so they could attend the meeting if possible.
7. Chairman's report
 - a. Kimberly reported that there seems to be an epidemic of over pruning throughout Maui County. She is considering doing a Viewpoint which would be acceptable as Chair as long as the Committee has formally reviewed the information. Jeannie pointed out that for it to be a Viewpoint, it needs to state an opinion and be more than just educational. Bill suggested a "tree of the month" as newsworthy.
8. Committees Reports

- a. Exceptional trees—William will provide the evaluation forms to standardize the Committee’s annual assessment of the Exceptional Trees.
 - b. Planting plan—Jeff felt that both of these topics would be better served as agenda items when the need arises as the Sunshine Law prefers business to be handled in that form rather than by subcommittee.
9. Arborist report—No report was given due to the absence of the Arborist. Since he has not been present for several meetings, it was suggested that a request for information on specific items be forwarded to him ahead of each meeting. In general, the Committee is interested in the removal of trees, the planting of new trees, the pruning of exceptional trees, and the number of calls from the public. Jeff advised that since the Arborist does not work for the Committee, that the questions to the Arborist be specific to a particular site or concern. Some of the sites of interest are the trees on Olinda Road, the Baldwin Avenue shower trees, the replacement of trees near the Kihei roundabout, and the replacement of trees at the Kihei Community Center.
 10. Agenda development—election of officers, assign exceptional tree evaluations, removal of the tree at the Waipuilani Park tennis courts in front of Maui Sunset in Kihei, and the parking lot ordinance from Bob Carroll’s office which was distributed at the end of the meeting.
 11. Announcements—next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 8 at 1:30 pm in the Parks Conference Room at the War Memorial complex.**

Those present: Kimberly Thayer, Chair; Jeannie Pezzoli, William Jacintho, Harlan Hughes, Bill Myrter, Heather Heath, Dennis Morihiro; excused Richie Campas and Chris Reynolds, members of the committee; Jeff Ueoka, Corp. Counsel, Sue Kiang, staff support; Elaine Malina, Cheryl McGrath, Marilyn Colvin, members of the public; Sydney Smith, Sunny Jordan, Eve Hogan, Samantha Mart, Nakisha Mart, Kaluanui Road tree advocates.

Respectfully submitted: Sue Kiang 4/7/15