

MINUTES
COMMISSION ON HEALING SOLUTIONS FOR HOMELESSNESS
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND HUMAN CONCERNS
COUNTY OF MAUI
ON-LINE VIA BLUEJEANS
THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hudson at 1:32 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present:

Wendy Hudson, Chair
George Kaimiola, Vice-Chair
Faith Chase
Lisa Darcy
John Decker
Donna Kawakami
Zhantell Lindo
John Tomoso
Mary Trotto

Excused:

Henry Costales

Present Staff:

Lori Tsuhako, Director
Mimi Desjardins, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Pili Nahooikaika, Secretary

III. AGENDA

Chair Hudson opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Darcy stated that the items she spoke of at the April 29, 2021 meeting was not included on the agenda and therefore will be abstaining to approving the agenda as posted.

Commissioner Tomoso moved and Commissioner Trotto seconded the motion to approve the agenda as posted. The motion carried with seven ayes (Vice-Chair Kaimiola, and Commissioners Tomoso, Trotto, Decker, Chase, Lindo, and Kawakami), zero opposed, and one abstain (Commissioner Darcy).

IV. PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Keisa Liu provided testimony to agenda items 6 and 9 expressing that she would like to see this Commission move current plans in place forward and look at other solutions and reach out to organizations and look at current resources and why the homeless are not getting into housing. Ms. Liu also expressed the difficulty of participation in meetings for the community due digital divide and access.

Monique Ibarra, Executive Director of Ka Hale A Ke Ola provided testimony on agenda item 6 explaining her organization's commitment to the homeless community. Commissioner Chase asked if Ms. Ibarra is able to provide reports on homelessness in Maui County. Ms. Ibarra explained that all data can be found through Bridging The Gap at btghawaii.org.

Chris Golding, Episcopal Priest and Chaplain at Seabury Hall provided testimony on agenda item 9 encouraging and affirming that the dignity of every human being and the voices of those without a stable home be heard first rather than the complaints of them.

Jessica Lau testified on agenda 9 and inquired about assistance and where to start the process for a pallet home. Chair Hudson informed Ms. Lau that Ms. Ibarra, Executive Director of Ka Hale A Ke Ola provided her contact information and to reach out to her at 808-446-8133 for assistance.

Commissioner Hudson moved and Commissioner Tomoso seconded the motion to close public testimony. The motion carried unanimously.

V. COMMISSIONER INTRODUCTIONS

The Commission members provided brief introductions.

Vice-Chair Kaimiola introduced himself as a Homeless Outreach Worker at the Family Life Center.

Commissioner Kawakami introduced herself as the Founder and President of Feed My Sheep.

Commissioner Lindo introduced herself as a Committee Outreach Specialist and Council Aide for Vice-Chair Keani Rawlins-Fernandez.

Commissioner Trotto introduced herself as a volunteer at Hale Kau Kau.

Commissioner Decker introduced himself as a retired Guitar Maker involved with Ka Hale A Ke Ola.

Commissioner Chase introduced herself as a Graphic Designer.

Commissioner Darcy introduced herself as the Founder of Share Your Mana.

Chair Hudson introduced herself as an Attorney.

Commissioner Tomoso introduced himself as a retired Social Worker and Episcopal Priest.

VI. COMMISSION POWERS AND DUTIES

The Commission may receive a brief overview of Maui County Code Chapter 2.31 by Corporation Counsel and discuss.

Deputy Desjardins provided an overview of the following:

2.31.010 Definitions

2.31.020 Establishment

2.31.030 Purpose

2.31.040 Terms and operation

2.31.050 Powers, duties, and functions

2.31.060 Meetings

2.31.070 Rules

2.31.080 Requirement for council review

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

- Article received from Commissioner Tomoso relating to “Solving Homelessness Begins With A Change Of Attitude & Perspective”

This item was deferred to the next Commission meeting.

VIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS PRIORITIES LIST

Commissioner Tomoso suggested that a “Compassionate Action Plan” be a standard agenda item.

Chair Hudson reminded the Commission to send all agenda items directly to her for review and placement on the next meeting agenda.

IX. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

- Proposed Rules of Practice and Procedure for the Commission.

This item was deferred to the next Commission meeting.

- The County's Compassionate Action Plan, including addressing public complaints about homeless encampments on County-owned parcels, the use of vehicles for habitation by the homeless

Director Tsuhako provided a brief presentation on the steps of the county's compassionate action plan:

Step 1: The Department of Housing and Human Concerns receives public complaints from the Mayor's Office about encampments on county owned property which then the department staff works to identify if it is a county parcel. If the parcel is identified as private property the department will contact the property owner and inform them of the processes that they will need to take such as connecting with the Maui Police Department to serve notices and reaching out to outreach workers for assistance. If the property is determined problematic depending on ownership, or if the encampments are situated on Parks property, State property, or near county facilities, etc. the department will work with those departments and the Maui Police Department to serve notices and will deploy county contract providers to offer services.

Step 2: Once a series of complaints are received the Department of Housing and Human Concerns move into an operation mode where the department convenes meetings with the varied departments to coordinate an intervention on the specific property, which could be the Parks department, State property, etc. whomever has jurisdiction of the property in question.

Step 3: Intervention will take place and is usually given a two weeks to a month's notice in advance. Notices that the county may soon remove a specific encampment is served to anyone in unsheltered conditions by outreach workers and they will work to provide resources to end their homelessness and have access to services.

Director Tsuhako clarified that the Department of Housing and Human Concerns does not spearhead the efforts. She explained that it's usually the department who can provide the most workforce. She added that and once the encampments have been cleared, a follow up is made by the outreach workers and the Maui Police Department ensures that the areas that have been cleaned remain clean and that no further encampments are built. Director Tsuhako reiterated that the action plan is generated either through the Mayor's Office or the Maui Police Department and is based on the number of complaints received about public health and safety issues and addressing those that are on county owned land.

Commissioner Chase moved to create an investigative group on compassionate responses. Deputy Desjardins advised that the item to create a Temporary Investigative Group (TIG) be placed on the next meeting agenda.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lindo moved and Commissioner Tomoso seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion carried with seven ayes (Vice-Chair Kaimiola, and Commissioners Tomoso, Trotto, Decker, Chase, Lindo, and Kawakami), one opposed (Commissioner Darcy).

The meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m.