

COMMISSION ON HEALING SOLUTIONS FOR HOMELESSNESS
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND HUMAN CONCERNS
COUNTY OF MAUI
ON-LINE VIA BLUEJEANS
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2022

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lindo at 12:30 p.m. A quorum was present as noted below:

Present:

Zhantell Lindo, Chair
John Tomoso
Lisa Darcy
Lisa Kahaleauki
Faith Chase
Charleen Naomi Crozier
Saul Kahihikolo

Excused:

Rochelle Kim Tempo, Vice Chair

Present Staff:

Lori Tshako, Director of Housing & Human Concerns
Christie Trenholme, Deputy Corporation Counsel (DCC)
Kimberly Ferguson, Secretary

1. PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON ALL ITEMS

Napua Hueo testified on agenda item 2a in her capacity as a Hawaiian national who has experienced homelessness and continues to struggle to find housing and safe sleeping spaces. Ms. Hueo noted Hawaiians as being among the largest demographic of people experiencing houselessness in Hawaii and thought it was necessary that the commission establish a temporary investigative group (TIG) to look into the subject of the continued military occupation of Hawaii and how it affects the Hawaiian people and their ability to find safe refuge.

Testimony was followed by questions from Commissioners.

Prior to moving on to new business, Chair Lindo informed the members of the rules and procedures that would be implemented. (Copy attached)

2. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Presentation by Commissioner Faith Chase – “Insight on being unsheltered, from a member of the Commission on Healing Solutions for Homelessness, that is houseless and struggling with finding safe sleeping spaces on Maui”

Commissioner Chase shared her personal experiences as a homeless Hawaiian with the Commission.

Discussion:

Commissioner Tomoso commented that the presentation was compelling and understands where Commissioner Chase is coming from. Suggested inter-governmental processes with County and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) may be able to address the matter in a healing way. OHA needs to be involved and suggested requesting representation from OHA and DHHL in commission meetings and discussions.

Commissioner Kahaleauki commented that recorded data would be the best way to record houselessness in the native Hawaiian population as that’s what drives funding sources.

Commissioner Crozier thanked testifier Hueu and Commissioner Chase for sharing their story.

Commissioner Kahihikolo also thanked Commissioner Chase for sharing her story and stated that stories like hers help to touch the commission and give them the reason to help and understand why they do what they do. He also stated that houselessness on Lanai s has a different dynamic since the island is privately owned.

Commissioner Darcy expressed gratitude to Commissioner Chase and asked her to name some of the processes that helped her to heal or what she witnessed in order to heal. Commissioner Chase responded that the aina helped her to heal and enabled her to put things into perspective.

Chair Lindo commented that she was touched by the presentation and credited Commissioner Chase for her tenacity. Based on Commissioner Chase’s presentation, Chair Lindo proposed that the commission consider recommending that the Council put funding towards a mass ID/SS card/birth certificate drive to enable agencies doing the work to assist more folks with documentation needed to secure housing. Chair also suggested commission reach out and start a conversation with DHHL. Commissioner Chase requested that assistance with documentation not be limited to US citizens.

Commissioner Tomoso also suggested that perhaps the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement could also be a partner to help coordinate and serve as the “boots on the ground” since they are already communicating with OHA and DHHL to qualify native Hawaiians for programs.

Commissioner Darcy requested a follow up question related to the healing factor of Commissioner Chase’s presentation. Commissioner Chase was asked to provide insights and/or recommendations to share with those who might feel excluded from participating in solutions due to their financial struggles which have led to a shift in their personal status. Commissioner Chase joked that the State needs “TMK therapy” and it all comes back to creating a space for folks to feel acknowledged and let healing begin.

Prior to moving on to the next agenda item, Chair Lindo called for a brief recess at 1:37 p.m. The meeting was resumed at 1:39 p.m.

3. DHHC Updates

A. Update on Safe Sleep Zone Pilot Project

Director Tsuhako reported that the department was finalizing the Request for Proposals (RFP) and the formal solicitation would be issued shortly. An announcement was previously made that the project would be conducted at the Cameron Center in their parking lot. However, the department was advised by Corporation Counsel that the outreach work that was done with Cameron Center to secure use of their site did not meet the letter of the law in terms of a solicitation.

Discussion:

Commissioner Chase asked if amnesty for expired vehicle registrations and outstanding fines, which were discussed earlier by Chair, would be addressed in the RFP. Director responded that it is not because the provisions of the budget allocation were very clear, including the proviso language. As such, the department is maintaining consistency with the intent, as explained by the council, and issuing the RFP with that in mind. Director Tsuhako noted that the issue of amnesty for fines, etc., might be worked out later with the Prosecutor who has started a community court in Kihei, where fines would be forgiven in exchange for community service.

Commissioner Darcy asked if the previous agency, Cameron Center, would need to reapply. Director affirmed that Cameron Center would need to apply via the procurement if they chose to offer their services.

B. Update on RFP for the County’s Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness

Director informed the Commission that the award for RFP was just posted on the county's website. There was a total of 8 proposals received, which were evaluated and scored, and a proposal from EcoNorthwest was selected. The department will

work with the selected vendor to execute the contract for the creation of the comprehensive plan to end homelessness.

Discussion:

Commissioner Darcy asked what made the selected application stand out. Director responded that the evaluation team conducted the review on their own without any feedback from her.

Commissioner Tomoso asked for the name of the chosen entity. Director responded EcoNorthwest, who is from the northwest but they have local partners that are going to be participating in the work.

Chair Lindo asked DCC Trenholme to share the provision on the commission's involvement with administrative processes. DCC Trenholme stated that no commission shall interfere with the administrative, administrative duties of the Department.

Chair Lindo disclosed that she emailed the Director to ask how the commission could become involved as far as input, although she wasn't thinking of the RFP. Chair also stated that after reading through the rules of the commission, she wanted to make it very clear that now that it has become public knowledge that EcoNorthwest has been selected, if anyone reaches out to talk with the vendor, that they disclose that they are reaching out as a private citizen, and that no member of the commission is authorized to have a conversation or discuss this matter, or interfere, or make suggestions as an official commissioner of the Commission until such time as it's discussed amongst the members, and by due process have some kind of agreement with the vendor that the commission is able to be involved as an advisor in an advisory capacity. She stated that first, it's against the rules, and secondly, she does not want the department or the administration or members as taxpayers, to incur any kind of fees because the vendor spent time with us as commissioners or as private citizens having conversations when they should be doing so with the community as whole.

For reference, DCC Trenholme informed the Commission that the rules could be found in Maui County Code section 2.31.040.I

Commissioner Chase commented that because the commission had a prior discussion at the same meeting since this was on the agenda, she would think or hope that EcoNorthwest would review the commission meetings, the Commission on Government, who made the recommendation, affordable housing committee meetings, and all these things in their due diligence. In addition, she commented that she hopes the vendor also considers the conversations related to intergovernmental solutions for dealing with the strange state that we are in as an occupied country and stated she wanted that on the record.

Commissioner Darcy asked if the Department had a timeline of when the project would begin and a completion date. Director Tsuhako responded the details would be worked out once the department speaks with the vendor about the contract. However, based on the projections made in the RFP, the Department is hoping that the vendor would be able to start in December and would wrap up work within six or seven months. Director noted that the proposal included a schedule but based on how quickly the award can be formalized and the conversations can move forward about creating some measurable objectives for the report, it may start in January. Meanwhile, it will be left to the new administration to follow up, get the contract executed, and the work started.

Commissioner Tomoso stated for the record that he hopes as soon as the vendor is up and running, that they will meet with the commission and possibly do a presentation.

C. Update on the conclusion of the temporary pallets at Waiale

Director Tsuhako reported that the temporary pallet homes have been closed and residents have exited the facility. She explained that the contractor, Family Life Center, was given less than 10 days of notice by the contracted security company, that they would no longer be providing services. Accommodations were made at the shelter until permanent housing could be made. Based on the data in HMIS, the folks exiting the pallet home project in Waiale into permanent housing is about 84 percent. Director explained that 84 percent of the people who entered, exited from there into permanent housing situations and that she thought it served a good purpose. Once the all units are either removed or dismantled for whatever reason, the closure will return that park to the community who's gone without having that playground for children who live close by for almost two and a half years.

Discussion:

Commissioner Tomoso commented that 84% was really good and commended the department and its vendor, Family Life Center, for their hard work. Commissioner Tomoso asked if the remaining percentage of residents found home or were homeless again. Director responded that the outcomes indicated that 2 residents passed away, several were incarcerated, and she believes 3 unfortunately became homeless.

Commissioner Tomoso stated that tells him that the system does work through the hard work and persistence of a network, that he wants to be a part of the healing aspect so that people do become successfully housed and not return to the homeless state. Commissioner Tomoso also stated that from a layman's perspective, it sounds like a successful project, even though the closure had to happen a lot quicker and wanted to say on the record that he commends the network, the department, and its vendor for working so hard.

Commissioner Chase asked where to find information if any other agency or project program wanted to purchase the pallet homes and if there was a timeline involved. Commissioner Chase also commented that it's not realistic to have a perfect score, and that she's said to others who asked her about this new-found space, that "nobody slips through the crack" would be a great slogan, as there are many people who have fallen back into houselessness due to lack of a safe space or pu'uhonua. Commissioner Chase stated she needed to share her comments but she appreciates the hard work no matter what.

Chair Lindo asked Commissioner Chase to clarify her comment about a perfect score. Commissioner Chase responded that people are being lost since there is no safe space and they are not able to be located as a result of that.

Commissioner Tomoso stated he agreed that 84% out of 100% is still a concern but the healing conversations and solutions would actually reside with the remaining percentage of folks who were lost.

Director Tsuhako responded to Commissioner Chase's inquiry by stating that pallet homes that were salvageable were offered through an RFP through the managing director's office, that procurement is closed, and that the managing director's office is prepared to issue an award very shortly. Director reported that some of the twenty-three units at Waiale are not in habitable condition because of the wear and tear over the past two and half years, and some were considered bio-hazards due to the condition that they were left in by the previous residents. Some of the units that are salvageable and some that were in storage were offered for that procurement.

Commissioner Darcy asked how many additional units were in storage and if the commission could request a report on the evolution of the pallet community, including successes and hinderances so it would be applied to future projects.

Director Tsuhako asked if the request for a report was directed toward the department. Chair Lindo also asked Commissioner Darcy for clarification. Commissioner Darcy responded that she would like the report to include feedback from both the vendor and the department. Director stated there was no formal report, however the department could share outcomes reported from Family Life Center and via HMIS. Director also offered to provide a summation of the county's responsibility for managing that property for the first six months of its existence until Family Life Center was secured as a contractor. Director also reported there were 40 units in storage.

Commissioner Tomoso commented that the report would be useful for the commission and he sees it as a learning opportunity.

Commissioner Chase asked for the original cost of the 40 pallets, which was unknown by the Director as the department did not purchase them.

4. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is set for December 22, 2022 and Chair asked members to confirm their attendance. Chair Lindo also asked that everyone try their best to attend the January 26, 2023 meeting as there would be a training by Corporation Counsel and she would like to work on setting priorities as well. In addition, Chair also asked members to read through and familiarize themselves with the rules of the commission and frame their topic requests accordingly. DCC Trenholme shared the respective section of the code with the commissioners (MCC 2.31.050).

5. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Lindo adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m. No motions were made and no votes were taken.

Attachment

DRAFT

Procedure for Business of the Commission (Purpose and Background)

In response to several comments, I received, regarding efficiency and fairness of this commission, and to put to rest concerns that this commission is not inclusive or has certain biases to individuals and associations, your chair has decided to implement a standardized procedure regarding commissioner comments and input on agenda items and presentations to this commission.

For Presentations/Agenda Items

- Each presenter or commissioner who requested the agenda item, will have a total of 5 minutes to give a presentation or make opening comments. (3 additional minutes can be given upon request)
- Following the opening comments of the Agenda item being discussed, each commissioner will be afforded a (3) minute round to make statements, comments, ask questions, etc. as it pertains to that agenda item. The timer will start when a commissioner is recognized and an alarm will sound to signify the end of their (3) minutes.
- An additional round of discussion may be requested after every commissioner has had a chance to comment. The follow up round will also be limited to (3) minutes per commissioner.

Action or No Action by the commission

- On each agenda and at the end of the discussion period on each item, the chair will notify the commission IF any ACTION is Needed or NOT. Should the item need action by the commission, the chair will entertain a motion, and the commission can decide to approve, deny, or defer the motion(s) on the floor.

Effective 11/30/2022