

Notes from Pahala Community Update Session
Pahala Community Center
Wednesday, July 12, 2023
5:00pm – 7:00pm

Number of Community Members Attending: 10

Attendees:

- Director Doug Adams, Research and Development (R&D)
- Council Member Michelle Galimba
- Deputy Director Brenda Iokepa-Moses, Department of Environmental Management (DEM)
- Deputy Director Michelle Hiraishi, Parks and Recreation (P&R)
- Representatives from Hawaiian Electric
- Representatives from Hawai'i Energy
- Glenn Sako, Economic Development Specialist – Agriculture Program, R&D
- Riley Saito, Economic Development Specialist – Energy and Infrastructure Program, R&D

Agenda and Notes:

- I. Introduction, Director Adams
- II. Welcome Remarks, Council Member Galimba
- III. Department of Environmental Management Updates
 - DEM working on sustainability initiatives (diverting rubbish, recycling, using sludge for energy, etc.)
 - Deputy Director Iokepa-Moses also holds volunteer leadership position with Agriculture Associations District Conservation
- IV. Department of Parks & Recreation Updates
 - P&R maintenance budget has grown to \$2.9 million.
 - Encountered difficulties with contractors, but will begin work at Pahala Pool within the month, to last 8 months.
 - P&R also prioritizing Na‘alehu Tennis, Punalu‘u Beach Park (with overnight security enforcing camping permits and open/close hours for the park), Yano Hall facilities.
 - P&R will host community session regarding Miloli‘i Beach Park on Sat. 7/15
- V. Hawaiian Electric Updates
 - Cost of oil has decreased, resulting in reduced electricity rate.
 - For delays in service or payment assistance plans, [contact Hawaiian Electric](#)
 - [Energy savings resources literature](#) is available online.
 - Renewable energy portfolio percentage is now calculated as energy generated, not sold, totaling roughly 50%; Waikoloa AES solar project is online effective 04/23

- Kalaoa Solar, Na‘alehu Solar completion dates in 2025; will operate with shares for LMI households.
- Beginning in 2018, wrote an Integrated Grid Plan to expand choices, stabilize rates, and engage communities .

VI. Hawai‘i Energy Updates

- Hawai‘i Energy is the efficiency and rebate program funded by electricity bills and overseen by PUC
- Offer [rebates](#) for energy-consuming lighting and appliances .
- Have point-of-purchase rebates available for water heaters and tune-ups; they will disclose the rebates at time of purchase.
- All Pahala residents (and most other Hawai‘i Island residents) are eligible to receive free energy-efficient lighting and showerhead replacements through [Energy Smart 4 Homes](#) program; additional information for cost-reduction tools is on the website’s [Hawai‘i Energy Marketplace](#).

VII. Agriculture Updates, Glenn Sako

- Big Island Feral Pig Control Project model initiated by Malama o Puna with R&D funding; first project-based plan that R&D received.
- Setting up website to inform hunters of sightings; creates hunter code of conduct, including a ban on snares; organizing workshops for education on hunting, butchering, and cooking to prevent disease transmission; promoting value-added products and creating system to distribute pigs for household consumption.
- Agricultural theft is a top concern of producers.
- R&D is generating a Self-Reporting Agricultural Theft/Trespass form, which will be on the website and distributed to police.
- Theft should be self-reported to save time, assist limited police resources, and collect statistics.

VIII. Broadband Updates, Riley Saito

- Lacking internet infrastructure throughout COH P&R facilities, which many residents with limited assets utilize for resources.
- R&D investing in digital equity (how to access and utilize the internet), with emphasis on underserved communities.
- Underwent a process of determining where internet access was lacking on the island, and will then focus on equity of delivery of broadband when new infrastructure is implemented; then created [ArcGIS Story Map](#) showing social vulnerability index and facilities that are social hubs.
- Service providers are claiming to the FCC that internet access exists throughout the island, so R&D challenged FCC-recorded download speeds; HOVE was assigned the Captain Cook zip code and data.
- HOVE will be a priority for expanding broadband with BEAD funding.

- Hawaiian Telcom is connecting rural areas in Kohala and Hana with high-speed internet access; Hawaiian Telcom and Spectrum have each completed fiber optic rings throughout the perimeter of the island.
- Households can receive digital services (WiFi expenses, one-time computer purchases, etc.) rebates through [Affordable Connectivity Program](#).

Comments:

- Council just voted to establish Office of Sustainability, Climate Change, Equity, and Resilience (OSCER).
- Council will soon discuss Integrated Climate Action Plan (ICAP).
- Concerns regarding the aluminum ramps not being installed at the Ocean View Transfer Station.
 - DEM response is they are waiting on parts.
 - DEM installed additional machinery at Wai‘ohinu, because establishing a comparable facility at HOVE is difficult and expensive.
- Desire for Miloli‘i Community Center renovations to be completed before the Miloli‘i Park
 - P&R response is they must undergo the renovations for ADA compliance.
- Desire for Hawaiian Electric to create its own infrastructure for alternative energy projects, instead of relying on investors.
 - Hawaiian Electric can actually bid in for any alternative energy developments after the Public Utilities Commission puts out an RFP for new projects.
- Concern that the Hawai‘i Energy rebates might not be reflected in purchases from supply houses or distributors who install products themselves.
- Preference for year-round pig hunting, though this would fall under DLNR jurisdiction.
- Can other facilities that aren’t run by P&R (perhaps FEMA-funded sites) receive expanded broadband?
- Concern that limited broadband will result in issues with emergency services, specifically in HOVE.
 - R&D is focusing on both expanding broadband access and cellular connectivity to respond to emergency situations.
- Mayor’s Town Hall in Pahala will occur 9/12/23.