

LAND USE COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 7, 2011

Leiopapa A Kamehameha  
Conference Room 406, 4th Floor  
235 S. Beretania St.  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vladimir Devens  
Duane Kanuha  
Ronald Heller  
Normand Lezy (arrived at 10:30 a.m.)  
Charles Jencks  
Kyle Chock  
Lisa Judge (arrived at 9:22 a.m.)  
Nicholas Teves, Jr.  
Thomas Contrades

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: None

STAFF PRESENT: Orlando Davidson, Executive Officer  
Diane Erickson, Deputy Attorney  
General  
Bert Saruwatari, Staff Planner  
Riley Hakoda, Staff Planner/Acting  
Chief Clerk

COURT REPORTER: Holly Hackett

AUDIO TECHNICIANS: Walter Mensching

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Devens called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

**ACTION (continued)**

## A09-782 Tropic Land LLC

Chair Devens announced that this was a continued hearing on Docket No.A09-782 TROPIC LAND LLC to amend the Agricultural Land Use District Boundaries into the Urban Land Use District for approximately 96.0 acres in Lualualei, Wai`anae District, O`ahu, Hawai`i, Tax Map Key No. (1) 8-7-09:02 (por.)

## APPEARANCES

William Yuen, Esq., represented Tropic Land LLC

Arick Yanagihara, Tropic Land LLC

Dawn Takeuchi-Apuna, Esq., represented City and County of Honolulu,  
Department of Planning and Permitting

Mike Watkins, City and County of Honolulu, Department of Planning and  
Permitting

Bryan Yee, Esq., represented State Office of Planning

Ruby Edwards, State Office of Planning

Martha Townsend, Esq., Intervenor- Concerned Elders of Wai`anae

Alice Greenwood, Concerned Elders of Wai`anae

Mr. Yuen stated that his planned witness Mr. Aipolani had a medical emergency and requested a deferral in his testimony appearance till February 2, 2011. Discussion ensued to make the adjustment in the hearing schedule. Ms. Townsend and Mr. Yee requested the right to recall witnesses if necessary after Mr. Aipolani's testimony. Chair Devens granted their requests.

## INTERVENOR WITNESSES (continued)

### 7. Dr. Jonathan Deenik- Soil Fertility Specialist

There were no objections to Dr. Deenik's appearance as an expert witness.

Dr. Deenik provided his assessment of the soil fertility of the Petition Area and described the potential crops that could be raised on it.

Mr. Yuen requested clarification on Dr. Deenik's familiarity with the Petition Area and how his conclusions for the Petition Area had been determined. Dr. Deenik described his knowledge of the soils in the area and explained the resources he had used to arrive at his conclusions.

City and OP had no questions.

Commissioner Teves inquired why the Petition Area might not be used as a farm. Dr. Deenik shared his opinion of why the area was not being farmed.

Chair Devens inquired if the soil composition was the same throughout the Petition Area and Lualualei Valley since there were building structures that had been constructed in the area. Dr. Deenik described the soil types in the area and the considerations that he felt needed to be made when building structures upon it.

There were no further questions for Dr. Deenik.

#### 8. Gary Maunakea-Forth- Farming Expert

There were no objections to Mr. Maunakea-Forth's appearance as a farming expert.

Mr. Maunakea-Forth described his farming and business efforts in the region; and his concerns about allowing the development of an industrial park in the valley.

The Commission went into recess at 10:10 a.m. and reconvened at 10:27 a.m. (Commissioner Lezy arrived at 10:30 a.m.)

Mr. Yuen requested clarification on how Mr. Maunakea-Forth operated his non-profit, tax-exempt organic farm. Mr. Maunakea-Forth described how he obtained his funding and trained and employed students and workers in his agricultural operation; and opined how he could take in more revenue if he were a "for profit" business; and described details of the soils and activities involved in his farming in the area.

Mr. Yee requested clarification on how long it would take to have a farm produce crops, what the financial benefits and challenges of farming were, and whether imposing agricultural easements were worthwhile. Mr. Maunakea-Forth responded that depending on the crop, farms could be productive in 3 or more years, and described his perception of what benefits/challenges were involved with farming; and stated that agricultural easements were not as helpful as preserving agricultural land outright.

Ms. Townsend requested clarification on jobs created by farming. Mr. Maunakea-Forth provided his perception of the variety of jobs that could be spawned from farming and its associated activities with support from the State.

Commissioner Teves requested clarification on how many employees and what the farm acreage was needed to be considered “normal”, what similar neighboring farming costs might be, and what a response to residents who wanted an industrial area to be developed might be. Mr. Maunakea-Forth provided his estimates based on his operation of a net 3 acres and gave his opinion on how his neighboring farmers conducted operations and how farm employment could be competitive with other jobs in the community; and that land use changes needed to consider the vital importance of food security. Mr. Maunakea-Forth noted that Campbell Industrial Park was a few minutes away and could accommodate an industrial use.

Commissioner Chock requested clarification on community farming support programs and their impact, replicating similar operations in a for-profit operation and food security issues. Mr. Maunakea-Forth described his success in gaining community support for his business and provided his opinion on how a for-profit operation might fare and how food security for Oahu was a challenge due to limited farm space and high costs.

Commissioner Judge inquired what the State might do to encourage more farming/agriculture. Mr. Maunakea-Forth shared his opinion of what he felt the State could do.

There were no further questions for Mr. Maunakea-Forth.

*(Please refer to LUC Transcript for more details on this matter.)*

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9. Lori Nordlum

Ms. Nordlum stated that she was a Lualualei Valley resident and described the quality of life issues and traffic problems with heavy trucks that were occurring in her neighborhood and the concerns that her neighborhood association had with the additional traffic that was anticipated if the Petition were granted.

Mr. Yuen requested clarification on the specific incidents and areas where Ms. Nordlum was experiencing traffic problems. Ms. Nordlum described the traffic incidents that she was familiar with and the streets and intersections that she felt were affected by heavy truck traffic.

Commissioner Teves requested clarification on what the source of truck traffic on Hakimo Road might be. Ms. Nordlum provided her perception of what was generating the truck traffic.

Ms. Townsend inquired if Ms. Nordlum was aware of quarry operations on Hakimo Road. Ms. Nordlum recollected that there was a quarry in her area.

The City, OP and Commissioners had no further questions for Ms. Nordlum.

There being no further business to discuss, Chair Devens adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.