

LAND USE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING

July 7, 2006

Conference Room 405
Leiopapa A Kamehameha
235 So. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Thomas Contrades
Kyong-su Im
Lisa Judge
Duane Kanuha
Steven Montgomery
Nicholas Teves
Reuben Wong

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Michael Formby
Ransom Piltz

STAFF PRESENT: Anthony Ching, Executive Officer
Diane Erickson, Deputy Attorney General
Maxwell Rogers, Staff Planner
Bert Saruwatari, Staff Planner
Sandra Matsushima, Chief Clerk

GUEST SPEAKERS Duane Okamoto, Department of Agriculture
Laura Thielen, Office of Planning

Chair Judge called the meeting to order at 10:20 a.m.

STAFF REPORT AND WORKSHOP

Mr. Ching began a PowerPoint presentation and commented on the size of the four SLU districts. Mr. Ching discussed the four critical elements of reform: establish new rural district standards; implement IAL designation process; ensure clarity and consistency so that agricultural districts will be used for agriculture; and enact a quasi-legislative SLU boundary review process.

Mr. Ching also discussed the components of ACT 205, SLH 2005; the need to prevent rural sprawl; develop what the rural context is and a sense of place; and the need to distinguish the differences between rural from agricultural and urban lands. Mr. Ching then commented on the role of the state land use law and discussed the potential tools and specifications of the rural district.

Mr. Ching provided a handout and discussed the 10 typical amenities and characteristics of a rural community.

Vice Chair Montgomery posed a few questions relative to USDA funding for rural development.

Mr. Ching stated that there are some federal support and framework to embrace the notion of community, economic development, and preservation.

Chair Judge asked what is performance zoning.

Mr. Ching explained that it is a technique and the notion of performance zoning would be to go further than to just subdivide. The technique is applied with a clustering concept to preserve public use while still allowing open spaces.

Commissioner Kanuha commended Mr. Ching and the committee members in adding clarity to this process. Commissioner Kanuha commented that based on what he learned at the APA Conference, national level issues are of importance to us in Hawaii, and some of the solutions are much more technical. The economic cycle is much more difficult here because some of the islands have gotten to the point where the constituents are saying “enough already.” There are proposals being considered for moratoriums and the counties are initiating reviews of community development plans and/or general plans.

Commissioner Im commented that we are going through a huge change in international relations in reference to our dependence on fossil fuels and the development of agriculture for fuel programs (ethanol).

Mr. Okamoto provided a handout “Incentives for Important Agricultural Lands” and discussed the IAL guidelines and incentives.

Commissioners Kanuha and Contrades left the meeting at this time.

Mr. Okamoto described incentive programs involving: Land Tenure and Infrastructure; Agricultural Priority Permitting and Regulatory Relief; Agri-business Assistance and New Agri-Business Development; Agricultural Financing; and Purchase of Development Right Transfer of Development Rights.

Mr. Okamoto briefly summarized: the statutory requirements related to IAL; general directive to HDOA and DoTAX; meeting process and membership; goal of members; and work product due to the 2007 legislature.

Mr. Okamoto added that they have created a website (hawaiiagriculture.org) and have had many visitors and hits indicating much interest in this matter.

Chair Judge raised a few questions on the number of agricultural acreages on each island.

Commissioner Teves asked if they have identified all the IAL lands.

Mr. Okamoto replied that they have not identified all the IAL lands but criteria used to identify the IAL has been established.

Mr. Ching noted the number of parcels per island in the agriculture district. Oahu 4,806 parcels; Maui 231,478 acres in the agricultural, Big Island 1.12 million acres/82,000 parcels; Kauai 138,663 acres; Molokai 111,674; Lanai 86 parcels. Mr. Ching was not sure on the number of these parcels that are actively used in agriculture.

Mr. Okamoto added that they could not report land under cultivation as some lands could be fallow but may still be in production. It is part of an agricultural process to leave it fallow for a period of time. Mr. Okamoto noted

that their goal is to create viability. With the exception of Molokai, all of the island farmers have indicated the need for more laborers.

Commissioner Im commented that his concern was to help our agricultural industry to sustain the food sources with the costs of fuel prices going up.

Mr. Ching noted that there were 5,400 farmers in Hawaii as of 1997; 3052 were full time operations; 2400 part time farmers.

Ms. Thielen began her presentation and briefly summarized Act 183 and Act 205 and how the combined efforts may affect the LUC. Ms. Thielen discussed the balance of the LUC, the role of the state and the counties, and commented that the working groups are continuing to protect the remaining communities in the rural district so they are not subject to sprawl.

Commissioner Im commented that he clearly sees the state's interest in regulating classified lands.

After a brief discussion, the meeting adjourned at 12:05 p.m.