

KULA AGRICULTURAL PARK COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, August 12, 2021
1:00pm – 2:00pm
Online via BlueJeans

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, protecting the health and welfare of the Committee Members and the community is a priority. The meeting was held remotely, with Committee members and staff participating via an online meeting venue.

Meeting Minutes

Record of Attendance Committee Members:

Barbara Barry, General Public
Jamie Davidson, Agricultural Trade Organization
JoAnn Inamasu, OED Director, Office of the Mayor
Jimmy Jones, Kula Agricultural Park Tenant
Bryan Otani, Maui County Farm Bureau
Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura, Maui County Council
Curtis Tom, Bank Community
Kyle Caires, UHMC-CTAHR

Excused:

Isla Young, General Public

Staff:

Stephanie Chen, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Ka'eo Ornellas, OED-Ag, Committee Staff

Guests:

Ipo Mossman
Gina Young-Flammer
Autumn Ness
Ellen McKinley
Christian Rili
Fernando Traje

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Kyle Caires at 1:02 p.m.

B. Public Testimony:

Call for public testimony. Discussions on Proposed Bill No. 72 (2021) for an Ordinance Establishing Chapter 2.50 Maui County Code, Relating to Pesticide and Fertilizer Use on County Property.

Public testimony on the pesticide bill was made by Gina Young-Flammer (EA to Shane Sinenci), Autumn Ness (Beyond Pesticides), Fernando Traje (KAP tenant) and Christian Rili (KAP tenant). A healthy discussion of views and concerns regarding both adoption and non-adoption of the bill occurred amongst KAP committee members, Dr. Kyle Caires, Bryan Otani, Barbara Barry and Jimmy Jones. The potential for agricultural exemptions to be made following implementation of the bill was also addressed. The majority of the KAP committee shared concerns that the proposed bill could produce unintended consequences, such as contributing to the propagation of novel invasive weed species on county lands/property, therefore developing seed-banks with the potential to spread and wreak havoc on agricultural lands island wide, outcomes detrimental to the to the short-term and long-term viability of farmers and ranchers.

Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura briefly discussed the Pesticide bill and provided a timeline for upcoming meetings by County Council for further discussion. She encouraged members and testifiers to provide testimony at the next Council meeting being held on August 8, 2021.

Vice Chair Caires called for any further discussion. None heard. A call for the motion to close public testimony. Motion made by Councilmember Sugimura. Seconded by Director Inamasu. Motion approved unanimously.

Public testimony closed.

A. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2021:

Members given an opportunity to review the minutes from the August 12, 2021 meeting. Vice Chair Caires called for any further discussion. None heard. A call for the motion to approve the minutes. Motion made by Councilmember Sugimura. Seconded by Member Tom. Motion approved unanimously.

B. New Business:

1. Position of Chair and Vice Chair, Bryan Otani and Kyle Caires:

Vice Chair Caires deferred item to November 10, 2021 meeting. More information to be provided.

2. Maui County Council Update

- a.** Proposed Bill for an Ordinance Established Chapter 2.50 Maui County Code, Relating to Pesticide and Fertilizer Use on County Property.

Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura provided updates and will prepare further discussion for next meeting in November. Director Inamasu

requested that Councilmember Sugimura obtain the updated document from Council Services to share with Committee Members. Upon receipt, OED staff will share with KAP Members.

Councilmember Sugimura did not get document, but will forward to Ag Coordinator Ornellas once received to share with Committee Members (as advised by Director Inamasu).

Director Inamasu that this was intended to be informational to the agricultural community in general. This Bill will not affect the tenants of the Kula Ag Park farmers. Deputy Corporation Council Chen agreed and suggested to have the topic put on the November agenda for further Committee discussion.

Councilmember Sugimura provided the Maui Axis Deer Task Force project to the Kula Hunting Club control and management team of the Kula Ag Park. The Maui Axis Deer Task Force Committee launch is slated for August 31, 2021. The Kula Ag Park will be included in the Maui Axis Deer Task Force project. The axis deer problems are growing as heard from resident complaints and accidents with deer, occurring seen or unseen.

Councilmember Sugimura added that the Maui Axis Deer Task Force Committee will be made up of government officials, Ag organizations, ranchers, farmers and residence. In addition to seek management control funding, the goals are to control, manage and find resources to mitigate the growing problem of Axis deer population. The project will include future fencing. Kula Ag Park farmers are currently experiencing the negative impact of Axis deer damage in the County's Ag Parks as a result of the deer population not being under control.

Vice Chair Caires added that the Ag Working Group Deer Committee is working with the Farm Bureau to not duplicate efforts.

3. Kula Agricultural Park updates given by Agricultural Coordinator Ka'eo Ornellas:

Ag Coordinator Ka'eo Ornellas provided an overview of Kula Agricultural Park followed by the current impulse of the County's Ag Parks:

- Provided a general overview of the KAP along with the various crops that are currently being grown.
- Ongoing success for Kula Ag Park farmers is the County's Farm Produce Purchase Program project that runs through September 2021. Program has been coordinated by the MCFB and HFUU.
- Trash cleanup: Explained history of Kula Ag Park junked debris left in the Ag Park over the years and has provided cleanup resources. Most

recent, a four-day free service of metal removal and disposal by D&D Towing Services.

- Purpose of weeds by the farmers as a deterrent used for cover-crop rotation; infusing nutrients; and used to deter thieves and animals from entering the Kula Ag Park to stop farm damage of crops and equipment.
- Confirmed that KAP farmers are storing chemical, fuel, fertilizers, its liquids & solids in proper storage and locked units.
- Update on the Kula Hunting Club management control policies, procedures and communications under the leadership of Jef Fry. Reiterated the Clubs control work communications with Kula Ag Park farm tenants and neighbor residence outside the Ag Park. Coordinator Ornellas further mentioned that private residence & neighboring farms alongside of the County's Ag Parks are putting up fencing that forces the surrounding Axis deer (& feral hogs) population into the County's unfenced Kula Ag Park.

Open Questions on the floor to Ag Coordinator Ka'eo Ornellas:

Member Barry inquired if a barrier be added at the top and bottom of the gulch to prevent deer access into the Ag Park?

Ag Coordinator Ornellas responded that the Pohakuokala gulch is owned by both the county and "across" the gulch residence. The parcel TMK line is the middle of the mentioned gulch. Preventative fencing to stop Axis deer access into the Ag Park can be a challenge at these two gulch entry and exist points due to potential rain-flood fence-blockage and limited available funds for fencing.

Councilmember Sugimura requested that the fencing issue with the new funds being made available via House Bill 200 via the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) be put on the November agenda.

Councilmember Sugimura also requested that the Maui Axis Deer Task Force Committee project be added to the November meeting agenda. Councilmember Sugimura will provide more specific information on the Maui Axis Deer Task Force Committee project as it relates to the impact of the Kula Ag Park.

Vice Chair Caires inquired about the amount of rainfall at the KAP over the last few months? Ag Coordinator Ornellas responded, zero rainfall. This was confirmed by KAP Vice Chair Otani and KAP Member Jones, as current tenants of the KAP.

Ag Coordinator Ornellas added, fortunate that the Department of Water Supply has a good pulse in providing sufficient water supply from the

Hamakua ditch and County reservoirs B & C to accommodate the Ag Park farmers water usage demand in the Ag Park.

Ag Coordinator Ornellas advised that the Kula Hunting Club (via Lokahi Pacific) was awarded a grant through the County's Department of Housing and Human Concerns through their Wildlife Management Grant Program. This funding enabled them to purchase an EV-Polaris vehicle to assist the Club's deer management control. The electric EV-Polaris is noise-less vehicle that will not provide advance warning sounds for Axis deer to run; won't scare away the Axis deer while implementing control work in the County's two Ag Parks: Kula Agricultural Park and Upcountry Maui Agricultural Park.

Member Barry inquired regarding a follow-up possibility to do a survey of all farms in Kula Ag Park. What's going on in the Ag Park? What's the farmer's needs? How much food production is currently being produced in the Ag Park? How can the Kula Ag Park Committee Members support the farmers of the Ag Park?

In Response, Ag Coordinator Ornellas responded that a survey of the Ag Park was completed recently between March-June 2021. Results of the survey has been reported and shared at the August 10, 2021 Kula Ag Park Committee meeting. In conducting the surveys the farmers shared their hesitation and concern about having their crop information made public which posed the potential of becoming a victim of theft on their property. A Kula Ag Park summary overview was verbally presented to Committee Members by Ag Coordinator Ornellas at the start of today's Kula Ag Park update presentation. The County of Maui's Office of Economic Development does have on file, history and recent records of each tenant in the Kula Ag Park and their respective farm produce production(s).

Member Jones confirmed the concern and added that he does not want his farm in the Kula Ag Park to be exposed and does not want to share information to the public. He wants to keep his farm business in the Kula Ag Park on a low business profile.

Councilmember Sugimura inquired about any additional ideas from tenants on cleanup, towing, any other assistance that the Kula Ag Park farmers may need.

In response, Ag Coordinator Ornellas mentioned several opportunities that the County and KAP Committee could advocate to assist.

1. Waiving of County tipping fees at the County dump to dispose plastics and trash would be a plus. Establish a week or month for tenants to dispose of trash.

2. Organizing huge trash bin roll-off to leave in park for tenants to dispose of trash. Time allotment, allow for a week or month intervals.

Vice Chair Caires recommended not to involve County with trash bin roll-off due to high cost and suggest that individual farmers coordinate amongst themselves to implement such a project.

Director Inamasu requested assistance from Deputy Corporation Counsel Chen with regards to the liability of trash bin roll-off. Deputy Corporation Counsel Chen suggested adding trash bin roll-off topics to next November meeting agenda.

Vice Chair Caires again suggested to deal with trash bin roll-off topic on an individual basis versus County full support and further Committee discussions.

Member Barry mentioned to schedule an organized event for pesticide, chemical, hazardous waste disposal for tenants of the Kula Ag Park. Vice Chair Caires suggested the possibility of an amnesty day.

Councilmember Sugimura inquired about the status of the Kula Ag Park signage project being done by OED. Per Director Inamasu the signs have been ordered through the Public Works Department and that the manufacturer is a little behind. Public Works Department is working along-side with the OED and will assist with installation.

Christian Rili (KAP lot #6) suggested that the main gate entrance into the Kula Ag Park be on an open and close gate policy every time a farmer enters and exists the Kula Ag Park to avoid entry from the public at all times of the day. He did not believe new signs will remedy, prevent trespassers. FYI: The main gate is locked sunset to sunrise (4:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.).

Director Inamasu shared that it is the responsibility of the Kula Ag Park tenants to work together in keeping the main gate open and closed morning and at night.

Ag Coordinator Ornellas advised Committee Members that the Kula Ag Park open and close hours and policies are posted on a separate sign outside the main entrance of the Kula Ag Park. Also, suggested considerations for future purchase of a solar-powered system to allow auto gate open and close access.

C. Announcements:

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. via BlueJeans (*rescheduled from Thursday, November 11, 2021 – Veterans Day Holiday*)

D. Adjournments:

All business completed. Vice Chair Caires called for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Councilmember Sugimura. Seconded by Member Jones. Motion to adjourn approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.