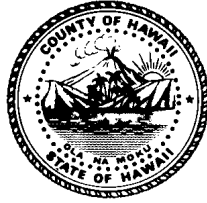


Harry Kim
Mayor



County of Hawaii

ARBORIST ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Aupuni Center • 101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3 • Hilo, Hawaii 96720
Phone (808) 961-8288 • Fax (808) 961-8742

Minutes

Meeting on September 22, 2005

Planning Department Conference Room – Aupuni Center – Hilo, Hawaii

Present: AAC members: Chairperson Leonard Bisel, Mike Kraus, Jan Anderson & Esther Imamura (Planning staff)

State and County Agency Representative:
Diane Noda, Corporation Counsel
Bruce McClure, Director of Department of Public Works
Ben Ishii, Department of Public Works
Pat Engelhard, Director of Parks & Recreation
Gordon Heit, DLNR

Public:
Rene Siracusa
Elfie Wilkins

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by L. Bisel, Chairperson.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Chair Bisel reported that the August 25, 2005 meeting was not held because of a lack of quorum.

J. Anderson moved and M. Kraus seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the June 16, 2005 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Change in agenda order to accommodate the public:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2. Signage for the Mango groves:

Chair Bisel stated that at the June 16, 2005 meeting, it was clarified that four signs were requested. B. Ishii of the Department of Public Works offered to construct the signs in-

house and he reported that the Traffic Division is working on the layout. On behalf of the Committee, Chair Bisel thanked Public Works for stepping in and helping with the signs.

R. Siracusa reiterated her concerns about homes being built with driveways punching through the Mango Groves to Pohoiki Road. Some trees were probably destroyed by bulldozers. There were also reports of people chain sawing the Mango trees who probably do not realize that the trees are in a grove that is on the Exceptional Tree list. The longer we delay, the more damage will be done.

Chair Bisel mentioned the lack of a detailed map in our files of the Mango Groves. R. Siracusa mentioned that the Hawaii Community College has a GPS class. The students are always looking for practical projects to do. Chair Bisel will follow up on this. He will also continue to work with B. Ishii.

NEW BUSINESS

5. The Quinine Tree at Kalakaua Park:

Parks & Recreation Director Engelhard circulated photographs of the tree. She recounted that a large portion of the tree fell on a Sunday night and the rest fell on Monday evening. Because it was an Exceptional Tree, they were hoping to get permission to trim it, but everyone was out of town. It was too late to contact anyone. The Department of Public Works was great in cleaning up the road and the Parks & Recreation crew cleaned up the park.

M. Kraus stated that the Quinine Tree suffered from bad pruning a long time ago. It was topped so decay ran through the trunk. There are no mechanisms for a tree to close a topping cut. It stays open. The fungus gets in and runs through the vascular system and can advance vertically very rapidly. Fungus follows bacteria normally. Bacteria are the first to go through and eat the living tissues primarily and then termites and fungus follows. That's what happened to that tree.

E. Wilkins mentioned that the tree was known about four years ago to be not healthy. M. Kraus remembered that it was previously brought up before this Committee. J. Anderson mentioned that she was responsible for finding a replacement tree, but couldn't locate one.

M. Kraus stated that there is a testing procedure using a resistograph to find out the extent of decay. He stated that if the tree is in bad shape, get it tested and have it removed before it falls in the street. It's a tool to avoid damage and a tool to preserve trees. In reference to the Quinine Tree, he remarked that (a) the tree should not have been topped; and (b) when it was known to be decaying, it should have been tested and removed before it fell over.

Chair Bisel stated that as far as Exceptional Trees go, we should look at the idea of paying closer attention to the health of our trees and if they're not, then it's our kuleana to identify them.

Corp. Counsel Noda stated that mapping of all the Exceptional Trees and filing the map with Planning and Public Works, Building and the County Clerk should be a primary goal because that's actually a County Code requirement for the Committee.

Chair Bisel will check with Roy Takemoto on the status of the mapping.

6. Procedure to remove a tree from the list of Exceptional Trees of the County of Hawaii:

Chair Bisel stated that since the Quinine Tree is no longer there, we need to look at removing it from the list. Also, we were asked to comment on the removal of one of the trees from the Mango Grove in Pohoiki that's in conjunction with the new bypass road proposed for that area.

R. Siracusa was concerned about the removal of that one tree and about not setting a precedent for the removal of other healthy, Exceptional Trees. She was concerned about the legal wording that goes with it and wanted to include "this shall not act as a precedent". Since the Ordinance does allow for removal of trees that are diseased or damaged and pose a threat to the public, she wanted it to be explicit and possibly word the removal recommendation in such a way that it especially refers to the public safety issue - that it's being removed in order to create a safe intersection for the general public and that it should not be taken as a precedent for the removal of other Exceptional Trees.

Corp. Counsel Noda will prepare the draft to remove the Quinine Tree and have Parks & Recreation Director Engelhard and Chair Bisel review it.

In reference to the Pohoiki mango tree, Chair Bisel announced that he was involved in the park project that's associated with the new bypass road so he was thinking of not participating in the vote or the recommendation. Corp. Counsel Noda suggested that he recuse himself.

An Environmental Assessment for the by-pass road was submitted by Ron Terry and E. Imamura had forwarded it to M. Kraus to review and prepare a recommendation on behalf of the Committee.

M. Kraus stated that he knows the tree and the Grove really well. He noted that most likely some other trees have been removed for driveways by people who didn't know they were Exceptional Trees or weren't notified of the Grove's status by the subdivider. The removal of this tree makes sense from the point of a safe intersection. It makes sense from the point of view that a lot of boats are going to be coming from Four Corners and are going to have to make that corner down there. If we did an island with the tree in the center of two lanes, that would probably kill the tree anyway. It would lose too much of its root system. The cutting of that road would not impact the other mangoes

significantly in the Grove as long as it's done carefully. Moving the tree would involve a lot of money. Going on either side of the tree won't work for the tree. It will kill the tree. To move the road 30 feet makai would put a zigzag in the road at a lot of extra cost. It is not worth it. The most practical thing is go straight through the intersection. This takes out one of the nicest trees in the grove. Move it out of the way but do it in a way so that it's not setting a precedent for the rest of the trees in this Grove to be taken out or in the other Mango Grove.

Corp. Counsel Noda stated that she would prepare a draft and it bring it back at the next meeting to see if the language sufficiently addresses those concerns. Once finalized, she will forward the recommendation to Public Works Director McClure.

Because the Committee was worried about setting a precedent, Public Works Director McClure remarked that the Council should be made aware of this concern.

J. Anderson suggested a newspaper article to inform the public about the removal of the one mango tree. M. Kraus concurred and said we should make an announcement to let people know that we have been consulted about it and had given it our best shot as far as preserving the tree, but found that it make sense to take it out. J. Anderson also suggested letting the different organizations have the facts so that they also have the information on hand when people call them.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Draft letter to Haili Church regarding the trimming of the False Kamani Tree:

J. Anderson reported that the letter is still in progress. The intention is to notify them that they didn't follow the proper procedure.

Chair Bisel stated that basically we want to let them know that they came to this Committee and asked for our advice. We gave them the advice of a professional arborist and they chose to ignore it. It should also be stated that in the opinion of the arborist, the aggressiveness of the pruning seriously set back that tree to the point that it's no longer what it was. Part of the reason that tree was exceptional was the overall character of the tree and now it has a hedge-like cut that goes straight up and down. They've also taken out some of the bigger limbs.

He will work with J. Anderson to complete the letter.

3. Logo Contest:

In attempting to conduct the contest for the third time, it was suggested to open it up to the general public. The cash prize for the winner will be from private donors. Chair Bisel reported that we will include the previous entries. The deadline for submittals will be November 10, the judging on November 12, and the recognition at the County Council in December. J. Anderson will check on locations to display the entries.

4. Hawaii County Planting Plan:

Chair Bisel stated that we have had to concentrate on the mapping of trees, the removal of trees and the Logo Contest. So at a minimum, we want to keep it the plan on the agenda so it doesn't disappear.

NEW BUSINESS

7. Budget for FY 2005-2006:

E. Imamura announced that we have \$400 for mileage and auto allowance, \$75 for miscellaneous supplies, and \$300 for meals. Last year the monies were spent on mileage for Kona and Waimea members and a luncheon for Mike Isanhart who resigned prior to moving out of state.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. G. Heit announced that they have a bid out to trim the Banyan Tree on Kilauea Avenue.
2. E. Wilkins announced that she would like to re-nominate the Alae Cemetery Monkey Pod tree.
3. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 20, 2005 in the Planning Department Conference Room at 10:00 am.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40 am.

APPROVED: April 13, 2006