

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**Bill for an ordinance amending Appendix A of the FY 2017 Budget for CoM as it pertains to Part II, Special Purpose Revenues, Schedule of Revolving/Special Funds for FY 2017; Affordable Housing Fund, Habitat for Humanity, Kahoma Project**

**Purpose is to amend budget by adding a \$1.5 million proviso in the Affordable Housing Fund for the Habitat of Humanity Maui, Inc, Kahoma Project in West Maui for the acquisition of 10 lots and the construction of 10 single family homes to be sold to families earning 80% and below area median income.**

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## **TESTIMONY**

### **Habitat for Humanity – Maui**

**Aloha – my name is Travis Thompson. I am the President of the Board of Directors of our Maui Habitat for Humanity. Six weeks ago, I provided you with background information on our Habitat for Humanity organization. This morning, I will let you know why I am excited about what we do at Habitat.**

**By way of background information, when Linda Lingle became Governor, I was appointed to the board of HHDCH – the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation – tasked with developing and financing low and moderate-**

**income housing projects. In July, 2005, this organization was split into HPHA – Hawaii Public Housing Authority and HHFDC – the Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation.**

**I was the chair of HPHA from May 2007 until August of 2011. I have been a member of the Habitat Board since 2011.**

**Therefore, I am in a unique position to contrast the differences between public housing and what we do at Habitat. So, let me share with you why Habitat is successful!**

**Both Habitat and HPHA provide housing. If you are a homeowner through Habitat – you have skin in the game. You have given at least 500 hours in sweat equity. In public housing – there is no ownership, just a landlord. If something needs repair – you ask maintenance to come fix.**

**With Habitat – the family has worked with Habitat specialists on how to strengthen their credit; how to pay bills and maintain their credit rating. We teach each family how to maintain their home. And, after they move into their home, we continue to work with each family. We believe in home ownership and the creation of equity. And we are successful. Each family who has participated in the Habitat program continues as a homeowner. This record includes more than 100 families over 13 years.**

**Just think of the change that would take place in public housing if, instead of rental housing, each tenant was given a**

chance to own their units – much like a condominium. Instead of public employees being landlords – we would have a Homeowners Association, with an appropriate set of rules and regulations. And, perhaps, instead of gangs, we would have the owners working together to jointly improve their properties – in their mutual interest. They would be developing equity, not just paying rent.

I applaud the County Council for the Affordable Housing Fund I am looking forward to the Kahoma project, and the opportunity for ten worthy families (out of 150 applications we have already received) to become home owners. We are ready to proceed with this project – I only wish we were able to meet the overall demand for housing that is so apparent in the West Maui area.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning.

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