

Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee (2023-2025) on 2024-04-04 9:00 AM

Meeting Time: 04-04-24 09:00

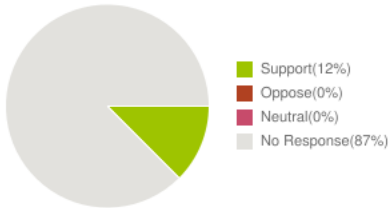
eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee (2023-2025) on 2024-04-04 9:00 AM	04-04-24 09:00	2	8	1	0	0

Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



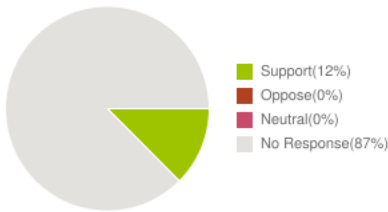
Budget, Finance, and Economic Development Committee (2023-2025) on 2024-04-04 9:00 AM
04-04-24 09:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
A G E N D A	2	0	0	0
BFED-1 Bill 60 (2024) PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY OF MAUI (BFED-1)	6	1	0	0

Sentiments for All Agenda Items

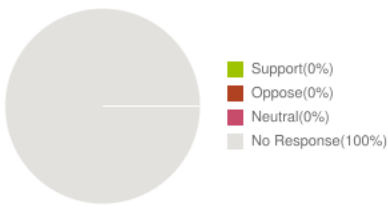
The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

Overall Sentiment



Agenda Item: eComments for A G E N D A

Overall Sentiment



Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 10:47am 04-04-24

From: Norman Stubbs <nstubbs@hawaii.rr.com>

Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 3:17 PM

To: Shane M. Sinenci <Shane.Sinenci@mauicounty.us>; Gabe Johnson <Gabe.Johnson@mauicounty.us>; Keani N. Rawlins <Keani.Rawlins@mauicounty.us>; Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>; Tasha A. Kama <Tasha.Kama@mauicounty.us>; Alice L. Lee <Alice.Lee@mauicounty.us>; Yukilei Sugimura <Yukilei.Sugimura@mauicounty.us>; Thomas M. Cook <Thomas.Cook@mauicounty.us>; Nohe M. Uu-Hodgins <Nohe.Uu-Hodgins@mauicounty.us>

Subject: Testimony, Budget Hearings

Aloha members of the Budget, Finance and Economic Development Committee

Mahalo to all of you for all that you do for our county.

I attended the hearing at the Paia Community Center and wanted to testify but I am not sure that what I want to talk about fits in with spirit of what the hearing is about. Never the less because the flyer advertising the meeting included the proposed property tax rates, I want to testify in that regard.

There are two parts to assigning how much property tax one has to pay. There are the rates and there is the assessed value of the property. I don't have much problem with the first part: the different rates between classes of property and the progression to higher rates for higher values. The rates seem to be something that has been worked out with a lot of thought and discussion by a lot of people.

Before you assume that this is just self-serving testimony, I want to show you unintended consequences of improper property value assessment that are very detrimental to the public interest, specifically to affordable housing and the cost of living on Maui.

I have a 2 acre lot that is raw agricultural land, land that I bought in 1969. At that time, 2 acre lots in Haiku were selling for \$8000. This year's Notice of Real Property Assessment puts the value of that land at \$976,600. What is disturbing is that last year's assessment put the value at \$569,700. That is a \$406,900 or 71% increase in one year! There has been NO improvements to the lot. I believe the value is about \$600,000 as does my neighbor who is an experienced real estate agent.

Mine is not an isolated case; I checked. The same thing happened to most of my neighbors and to the lot owners in the general area. The land value of 2 acre lots are being appraised at close to 1M.

How did this happen? There are two parts to a property appraisal, the value of the land and the value of buildings. The market determines on average for what price a property can be sold. Within that price an appraiser apportions some of the value to the land and some to the buildings. If the buildings are undervalued, then the land will be overvalued. For this appraisal year there were very few raw land comparables so the appraiser took comparables with buildings and subtracted the previous year's value of the buildings assuming that what remained would be the value of the land. Over the last 3 years, the cost of building has gone way up. I was building and thought that the minimum cost would be \$200/sqft. That was no longer true; the minimum cost I was told was at least \$400/sqft.

So here are the undesired consequences. Say I am considering selling my 2 acre lot with a 1200 sqft house on it. My Notice of Real Property Assessment has told me that my lot is worth 1M and my friend who is a general contractor tells me that it would cost at least \$500,000 to build a house like mine. So, of course, I set my sales price at \$1,500,000. Nobody grabs it right away because it is nearly \$400,000 overpriced in the market. I am not going to believe that so I hold on. More 2 acre lots come on the market at the higher price and a new price level is set. This scenario would not happen if the land assessment had been right.

Obviously this does not help with affordable housing. All boats are going to rise on the tide of the market. This aberration in 2 acre lot land value assessment will trickle out to raise land value and prices in all other kinds of housing.

Is our own county government going to be responsible for causing housing to become even less affordable? There is time to fix this before property tax bills come out.

Thank you for your time.
Sincerely,

Norman Stubbs
1 Uapoko Pl
Haiku, HI 96708
808 495 2107

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:42am 04-04-24

From: jody Singsank <psingsank@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 4:28 PM
To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>
Subject: New Pickleball Courts for Kula

Aloha,

I am part of the Tuesday/Thursday group that plays from 8am -12pm at the Kula Community Center and would like to recommend new pickleball courts for Kula.

Our group purchased our own nets and collect weekly donations to buy pickleballs and masking tape to line our courts.

We are currently able to set up 5 pickleball courts on the top section and sometimes set up one or two more on the bottom section. Sometimes we have more than 45 pickleball players who show up to play!

There are 2 regular groups of 4 tennis players who play doubles on the bottom section on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We have learned to get along and do our best not to disturb their play.

In my opinion, the current location is the best place for new pickleball courts. There is existing and adequate parking, a port-a-potty and ADA approved walkways leading to the courts.

The weather conditions are optimal for pickleball play at this location, with cooler temperatures and little to no wind.

If it is possible to cut into the hillside adjacent to the upper courts and duplicate the footprint and layout of the current upper two courts, we could have six new pickleball courts in this space.

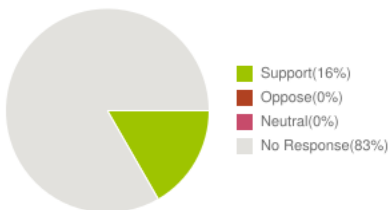
Pickleball brings people together from all walks and stages of life. The social and health benefits have been a blessing to the community of Kula pickleball players.

Please consider funding for new pickleball courts in Kula.

Thank you.

Agenda Item: eComments for BFED-1 Bill 60 (2024) PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY OF MAUI (BFED-1)

Overall Sentiment



BFED Committee

Location:

Submitted At: 5:21pm 04-04-24

Testimonies received from BFED Committee

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 2:46pm 04-04-24

From: Kelley Kuhlman <paperglyphs@hotmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 1:31 PM

To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>

Subject: HARF Funding

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing concerning HARF and needed funds for the future.

My husband and I donate a small amount monthly to HARF (we also do the same for Maui Humane Society and the East Maui Animal Refuge). We even have a dog who was in the care of HARF who has been a part of our family for more than 5 years now. We are so grateful for these three groups.

Maui is really lucky to have this service. Humans are the only ones who can care for innocent animals left on their own, homeless or neglected. What would our island look like if we didn't have this group? They make sure every animal is fixed and healthy and they rehome with great success. Their gift to the people of Maui is something that we cannot allow to go un-supported. Indifference to the situation won't go away. Low funds mean more babies and more sad stories.

Please set aside funds for HARF in your upcoming budget. Your support for them is support for our island home.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kelley Kuhlman

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 11:26am 04-04-24

From: Mesceille Ogata <mesceille@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 4, 2024 10:50 AM

To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>

Subject: Please Help Hawaii Animal Rescue Foundation

To the office of the County Clerk:

I am writing to request your support of the Maui Animal Rescue Foundation.

Please continue to help this wonderful group of people continue their very important and much needed work in their community.

As a recent visitor to Maui, my husband and I volunteered and met the amazing people who work and volunteer at the animal rescue. We were trained on how to care for the pets, walked and fed dogs and cats, helped maintain the dog kennels And gave lots of love to many dogs, cats and Bunnies. We learned that it takes a lot of work and dedication to make things run smoothly and successfully.

We met the Founder of HARF, Dawn Pfendler, during our volunteer shift. She explained the program they have and we were highly impressed by their services.

I have been posting on Maui Visitor pages for visitors to go volunteer and visit their center while on vacation and shared what a rewarding experience we had.

Thank you for considering additional support to Hawaii Animal Rescue Foundation to further enhance their program.

Kind regards,
Mesceille Ogata

305 Grand Street
Alameda, Ca 94501

mesceille@gmail.com

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:45am 04-04-24

From: deborah sitbon <alohacurly@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 4:47 PM
To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Hawaii Animal Rescue Foundation

Our island is suffering, our pets are suffering, we need your help.

Sadly, the fires compounded an already horrendous situation for our animal population on Maui. Prior to the fires, people who loved their pets and wanted their family held together had to deal with landlords that don't allow pets, and had to deal with elevated costs for all foods including pet food and medication.

The animals are innocent and are left to suffer and sometimes die alone. Post fire trauma does not need to be explained, does it?

As more and more rental owners are vacating their premises so that they can get Fema rates, they are leaving residents houseless and pets in shelters.

One of my clients, who is a firefighter in Lahaina, fought the blaze, watched his own house burn down and then was put in a hotel room to live with his wife, child and two dogs with no kitchen. He is facing the sadness of having to put his dogs into the shelter system. This is not fair.

HARF is a phenomenal organization. Talk about people who care. They have the space and the willingness to shelter animals while their families look for homes, what they don't have is enough money. I have volunteered for several years and if I didn't have to work so much I would happily do more.

The burden put on the Maui Humane Society can be reduced with HARF's help.

It is time to act for the residents and the pet population that call this island home.

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 9:43am 04-04-24

-----Original Message-----

From: Ane Takaha <bhaktirocks@earthlink.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 3, 2024 4:33 PM
To: County Clerk <County.Clerk@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Budget planning

Aloha

I am writing to encourage you to include HARF - animal rescue in your budget this year. They are wonderful, dedicated people who fill in the cracks where the Humane society doesn't or can't go. I support them and encourage you to also.

Thank you
Ane Takaha
Maui Meadows

Guest User

Location:

Submitted At: 12:17pm 04-03-24

Dear BFED Committee,

I would like to submit testimony relating to the operating budget for the County of Maui for the fiscal year July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024, for the Lanai Cat Sanctuary to receive a \$285,000 grant under budget line item 'Feral

Animal Control Lanai' for FY25 for the Lanai Feral Cat Management Program. The Lanai Cat Sanctuary (LCS) received funding from this line item in the past, and we are disappointed that the Lanai Feral Animal Control line item for FY25 is \$0, when both Maui and Molokai are slated to receive \$285,000 for Feral Animal Control (p. 587 of the budget). We humbly request your support in getting this funding back into the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

LCS has significantly impacted the feral cat population, which in turn protects the native and endangered birds on Lanai. Over the past decade, we have developed the most humane and comprehensive approach that has remarkably reduced the number of free-roaming cats on the island. Other islands and even states are working towards duplicating our model. Conservationists have not seen any cat-related bird deaths on Lanai in the past four years, and due to a focus on trapping feral cats in Lanai City 10 years ago, the only cats you will see are the occasional owned sterilized cats in someone's yard.

LCS currently has an operating budget of \$1.7mm per year, and aside from this one county grant, we are fully funded by visitors and off-island donations. As a secondary impact from the Lahaina Fires, our visitors (and therefore donors) are down by 40%, and we have taken on additional expenses due to taking in 220 traditionally unadoptable cats from Lahaina that survived the fires and were forced to fend for themselves in the toxic burn zone. The grant funding is now more crucial than ever for us to continue controlling the feral cat population on Lanai.

The need for feral cat management on Lanai is evident from the alarming statistics that in Hawaii, an unsterilized female cat that is six months or older can produce three litters a year with 3-5 kittens per litter. Without interference, cats will continue to reproduce at an alarming rate and pose a significant threat to Lanai's native and endangered birds.

Lanai is the only island that does not have a humane society or any county-funded animal care and control contracts, aside from a part-time dog warden that only handles dog-related calls. LCS is the only animal nonprofit on Lanai, and an open-admission shelter, accepting all cats, including feral, stray, and any owned but unwanted cats from the community, 365 days a year without a surrender fee. The mission of LCS is to humanely control the feral cat population on Lanai by relocating unwanted and homeless cats to a large, four acre open-aired sanctuary with predator-proof fencing.

Due to an agreement between LCS, DLNR, and Pulama Lanai, Lanai is the only island where feral cats that are trapped in protected areas are not instantly euthanized by gunshot. Lanai conservationists trap cats in protected areas where native and endangered ground-nesting birds such as the 'Ua'a, the Hawaiian Petrel, live. LCS has an agreement with these entities that every cat caught will be brought to LCS, where the cats will be sterilized, vaccinated, and kept at the sanctuary for the entirety of their lives or until they are adopted. Neither of these entities provide any funding for this agreement, and nowhere else (in Hawaii or nationwide to our knowledge) has this sort of humane approach to controlling cats in protected and sensitive areas.

The Lanai Feral Cat Management Program is a comprehensive program that ensures that cats at the sanctuary are given the medical care, food, and space they need to experience a good quality of life. It costs approximately \$2,000 per cat per year to meet these needs. LCS has a medical system in place to ensure the health and well-being of each cat; a high-tech mobile veterinary clinic is used for on-site care and services, and since there are no veterinarians on the island, veterinary teams with experience in shelter medicine are flown in weekly from neighboring islands or the mainland if a specialist is needed.

As mentioned previously, we began rescuing 220 cats from the Lahaina burn zone in November of last year. At the time, we had approximately 660 cats already in our care. With our new population at almost 900 cats, we are in the process of expanding our facility by 12,000 square feet (about a quarter of an acre) to ensure there is enough space for the Lanai cats, as well as those from Lahaina.

LCS received this county grant in FY23 (though we received the funding in FY24), and we met and surpassed the grant program goals and objectives by the second quarter of the fiscal year. If we receive this funding again, the specific outcomes and goals for FY25 include continuing to sterilize and intake 100 feral cats per year, re-homing at least 100 cats through the successful socialization of feral cats within the sanctuary, and caring for and housing over 800 cats. With 100 new feral cats coming in and 100 friendly and adoptable cats going out, the net gain is

zero cats. I genuinely believe LCS has a formula that is the most humane approach to controlling the free-roaming feral cat population.

LCS and the Feral Cat Management Program have the potential to make a lasting impact on the native habitat on the island of Lanai. Without this funding and given the impacts to the numbers of visitors and cats since the Lahaina fires, LCS may not be able to continue to accept new feral cats. This would be detrimental, forcing the Lanai community several steps backward in our attempts to control the feral cat population and conserve our native birds, and unfortunately undoing the impressive accomplishments LCS has achieved for the island of Lanai.

Thank you for your consideration.

Keoni Vaughn
Executive Director of the Lanai Cat Sanctuary