

Great Committee

From: Tamara A. Paltin
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 4:32 PM
To: Great Committee
Subject: Fwd: Testimony at Maui County Council Meeting - 09/27/23
Attachments: COM council meeting 9-27-23.pdf

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From: Mikey Burke <michaellyn.burke@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 3:52:41 PM
To: Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Testimony at Maui County Council Meeting - 09/27/23

You don't often get email from michaellyn.burke@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Aloha,

As requested, please see attached for the entirety of my testimony from this morning. I appreciate the opportunity to submit it. Please share it with the rest of the council. Mahalo nui loa for coming to Lahaina to hear from its people directly. It cannot be easy to sit there for hours and take it all in while not being able to respond, correct and/or defend. We hope you continue to return to Lahaina for more meetings like this. We are worth it.

Mahalo,
Mikey Burke

County Council Meeting, 09/27/23

Welina me ke aloha. My name is Mikey Burke. My 'ohana have been in Lahaina for four generations. My kūpuna came here from Moloka'i and Hawai'i island. It's hard to condense everything that needs to be said in the time allotted for testimonies so here's the cliff's notes version of what I believe Lahaina needs moving forward.

First of all, there are too many decisions being made about us, without us. Everyone loves to pimp out Lahaina, then sit back and collect the millions of dollars only to improve YOUR districts and make quality of life better for YOUR residents. Guess what? We're done. You want the money so badly, pimp out YOUR districts. Lahaina has been raped long enough. YOUR turns. Launch the illegal boat tours from YOUR non-commercial boat harbors. Approve permits for surf and snorkel lessons on YOUR beaches. Give short-term rental permits for every other zipcode besides 96761. Sound ridiculous? Exactly. If it's unimaginable in your districts then it absolutely should not be entertained in Lahaina. You wouldn't tell an abused wife to return home to her wife-beating husband because she's been with him for decades and she needs him, right? Exactly. Stop telling Lahaina to do the same. And if you haven't already noticed, STR's do not serve Maui any longer. End STR's for good.

When we do rebuild, it needs to be done with RESIDENTS being the PRIORITY. Everything else – like the correct businesses, will fall into place as the support needed FOR the residents. If you build with tourism as the priority, then we will face the same imbalance and abuse as before. We are done. And as we rebuild, we need to take into account all the cultures that make up this town, with Kanaka Maoli people and practices taking the lead in these efforts. Why? Because while everyone is concerned about the rebuild from the ground up, only the Kanaka Maoli of this place are envisioning the rebuild starting from the ground down. The 'ĀINA and the WAI need to come first.

After we take care of the 'āina and the wai, we can then focus on the physical structures and infrastructures. Some requirements should be:

Temporary emergency housing should be in north West Maui – from Ka‘anapali thru Kapalua. It should not be in fire prone areas south of Puamana like all these back-room conversations are insisting.

Front Street and all of the shoreline community should be turned into an open space park, with memorials and celebrations of what Lahaina once was – the capitol of the Hawaiian kingdom, the breadbasket of this Pae ‘Āina, the melting pot of all the wonderful cultures that make up this town. Build walking and bike paths. Restore Moku‘ūla and Mokuhinia. Make Front St. the biggest cultural center Hawaii has ever seen. Do not build the structures along the shoreline again as we’ve been discussing managed retreat for years. Fortunately and unfortunately, a large part of the managed retreat has already been completed.

Design the town and neighborhoods to have wider roads, sidewalks, and greenways – non-negotiable. Change the planning and building codes to require the planting of native trees or a fruit-bearing trees on each property being rebuilt. And just like all new builds are required to have solar hot water, you can require a minimum solar + battery too, which will be cheaper to include in the build than after-the-fact. Restore KA MALU ‘ULU O LELE and not just refer to it. Design better evacuations routes in these neighborhoods so there are 2 ways in and out minimum. And since infrastructure has to be redone, expand R1 water reuse to be able to supply all the new subdivisions and commercial areas and water the greenways and open spaces.

Mayor Bissen announced a new Emergency Permitting Office specific to the rebuild efforts. Site this office IN Lahaina and expedite development in areas that are approved in our very thorough and vetted West Maui Community plan. Focus on newer subdivisions that already meet updated county codes and get them going ASAP while you work on bringing the older neighborhoods up to code. Design, plan, and execute smarter – not from your offices clear across the island, but by walking this town with the very people that understand this place – MAUKA TO MAKAI.

There are going to be families who choose to not or simply cannot rebuild. But their only option shouldn’t be to sell to outsiders, greedy developers and speculators, or money hungry flippers. Explore a LAND TRUST to help keep these local properties in local hands. Want to learn more about this initiative?

Reach out because it's already being researched by community members with the vision to protect this place for its people.

And whatever you do – consult the West Maui Community Plan first. So many questions can be answered just by referring to that plan. Use it. We didn't spend 3 years working on it for you to ignore it. Then after you've consulted it, come talk to us again and again. This meeting should not be the one and only meeting you hold here. Keep coming back. We vote for ALL of you. Remember that.

Mahalo.