

PSLU Committee

From: Lynn Britton <blb@maui.net>
Sent: Tuesday, October 01, 2019 10:00 AM
To: PSLU Committee
Cc: Kelly King
Subject: MVA testimony on Maalaea Mauka
Attachments: MVA Testimony Council Planning & Sustainable Land Use Committee Maalaea Mauka Sept 30, 2019 .docx

Mahalo for including our testimony in tomorrow's discussion.

Lynn Britton,
President
Maalaea Village Assn. (MVA)

"The future depends on what we do in the present." Mahatma Gandhi

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"Ua Mau Ke Ea O Ka 'Aina I Ka Pono"
"The life of the land is perpetuated in righteousness."
Hawai'i State motto



September 30, 2019

Chairman Tamara Paltin and Members,
Maui County Council Planning and Sustainable Land Use Committee
200 S. High Street
Wailuku, HI 96793

RE: MVI LLC Proposal to Change Community Plan Land Use Designation - Maalaea Mauka

Aloha Chair and Members,

Ma'alaëa Village Association (MVA) supports the proposal before you to reclassify the Project District designation for the 257-acre parcel owned by MVI LLC (Spencer family).

In our September 2018 testimony before the Maui Planning Commission, we supported the reclassification of the parcel from project district to agriculture, but asked the Planning Commission to hold off on its decision as our ultimate goal was to attempt to keep the land in Open Space.

"Agriculture" is the proper classification for most of this land, which should *never* have been reclassified to "project district". Every Maui County Planning Director and Mayor were against the 'project district' designation since it was included at the last minute in the 1992 Kihei-Makena Community Plan process.

The windy, wildfire prone site on the side of the West Maui Mountains at the entrance to West Maui led government officials to rightly designate it outside of the Maui Island Plan Urban Growth Boundary. The purpose of the Urban Growth Boundary is to preserve open space. With the current request to change from 'project district' to 'ag residential', the wide-open 257-acre site could be taken up with luxury homes and estates. With current efforts to address this loss of Maui's remaining open spaces, this would be the wrong direction.

The Kihei-Makena Community Plan comes up for review next year. The fact that the site is still in open space provides the Council and future planners an opportunity to make decisions that will impact Maui for generations to come. Will Maui and the State ever be willing to create an alternate route to Lahaina? Other than building cantilevers over the ocean, this parcel provides the only opportunity for such a major improvement. Wouldn't it be wise to hold off until such important discussions can be held at all levels?

We note in the Planning Department recommendations for approval of the rezoning, that several important conditions were included, including the need for firebreaks, allowance for a future Transit hub, and access to the Lahaina Pali Trail. The Council in its wisdom could add a few more.

Options for this site are many:

- A "wayside park" would provide park and bathroom facilities and parking at the Lahaina Pali Trailhead. This would provide a safe turnaround for the frequent emergencies that close the

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Honoapiilani Highway between Ma`alaea and Lahaina. The location is conveniently located near the Ma`alaea Harbor Shops, a gas station/convenience store, and restaurants and the State Harbor Small Boat Harbor. The existing traffic light provides a safe pedestrian crossing.

- Although the site isn't listed as an official 'scenic resource', it overlooks the environmental corridor of Maalaea Bay and Kealia and is the entrance to West Maui, Preserving the site in open space meets the Maui Island Plan goals of preserving key environmental and scenic resources.

In the Planning Director's review of the project she notes the 'goal' of retaining some open space. We ask the Council to make that part of your approval on the project. At the time of the Planning Commission hearing last September, proposed amendments were pending to Maui County Code Chapter 19.30A, whose intention is specifically to prevent this type of subdivision. The legislation would encourage the clustering of smaller lots within a subdivision while preserving a larger, contiguous, "remnant" parcel dedicated to agricultural use in perpetuity. If it's relevant, we request that the Committee defer decision until the pending legislation is enacted, or alternatively require a development plan that is consistent with the intent of that legislation.

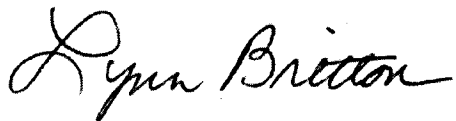
MVA acknowledges it is unfortunate that the Spencer family bought the property from the previous landowner, Mike Atherton, who was unsuccessful in his attempt to build housing on the site. Their original intent to provide much needed affordable housing was admirable. Unfortunately, it was just the wrong location! Atherton's 1400 unit housing and commercial development in Waikapu has now received all state and county approvals to move full steam ahead. The estimated two cars per unit will add almost an additional 3,000 cars to Honoapiilani Highway within less than five miles of Maalaea, further adding to the long lines of traffic held up at the Pali when fire or traffic accidents close the highway. The development of "Waikapu Country Town" will increase the value and importance of this site remaining in open space for the benefit of future Maui generations.

One additional request is to retain a greater portion of the land in "Conservation." Much of the parcel borders State Conservation lands. The South area has "conservation" vs 'project district' zoning because it is in the tsunami zone and requires an SMA. More of the parcel had conservation zoning until the mid-1990s when C. Brewer asked the LUC to change it to AG designation one year before the whole parcel was proposed as a project district in the Kihei Makena Community Plan. We ask the Council to consider retaining that portion in Conservation. MVA specifically opposes the proposed action of changing existing zoning in TMK (2) 3-6-001:018 from "Open Space" to "agricultural district".

The Pohakea Watershed Drainage Study funded by Maui Nui Marine Resource Council illustrates the effects of runoff from mauka lands on Maalaea Bay. This also should be considered in Council's deliberations on the site.

Thank you for your consideration.

MAALAEA VILLAGE ASSOCIATION



B. Lynn Britton, President