

Great Committee

From: Maui_County Council_mailbox
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 7:47 AM
To: Great Committee
Cc: lincolnmichele@yahoo.com
Subject: FW: Testimony from September "voices of Lahaina"

Aloha GREAT Committee,

The following testimony is being forwarded to you from the county.council@mauicounty.us inbox.

Mahalo,



Support Section

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From: Michele Lincoln <lincolnmichele@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 5:13 PM
To: Maui_County Council_mailbox <county.council@mauicounty.us>; Mayors Office <mayors.office@co.maui.hi.us>
Subject: Testimony from September "voices of Lahaina"

As you requested, the following is the testimony given at the county council meeting Wednesday, September 27, 2023. Thank you for giving the community a chance to have a voice in this process.

I sometimes tell people, I can kind of relate to how North Korean's must feel:) If after losing everything in the Lahaina fire wasn't enough, being denied access by the government to our properties is infuriating and disheartening.

Diagnosed with cancer in 2021, I learned sugar and stress are major contributing factors. Consuming sweets is my "drug of choice" and has been a bit out of control since August 8. Also, the stress from being banned from going to our properties is probably as bad as the toxins the EPA is looking for. I hope the process to sift through the ashes of what remains of our homes is accelerated along with everything else.

The following is my testimony:

"My name is Michele Lincoln. I am speaking for myself as someone who lost my home, neighborhood of 40-years, and two long-term rental dwellings as a source of income.

We want to rebuild as owner-builder. We have the crew and tools to start building now. What is stopping us is the roadblock and government bureaucracy.

If people want assistance for re-entry, they can wait until it's their turn. If the neighborhood has been inspected by the EPA, then immediate access could be allowed, to enter-at-own-risk. Still issue vehicle passes and protective gear with instructions and have the national guard or police strategically located throughout the accessible areas.

At the rate we are going, two-years to start rebuilding doesn't pencil out. Informed last Friday (September 22 at the Civic Center), American Red Cross housing assistance can last up to 18-months. Insured housing allowances are 24-months, but most policy amounts are not enough to last the 2-year allowance.

Insured rental properties cover 12 months of lost revenue. That means 10 months to go before the stipend runs out. This means we need to start building now!

Translation, the USACE's cleanup of debris and final EPA clearance needs to be completed by February 8, 2024. The cleanup from start to finish needs to be six-months to qualify for full federal funding. Hire local, inter-island, and continental United States debris removal crews and equipment to accomplish that goal!

While the cleanup takes place, assist the building back of Lahaina so each zone can begin construction as it is cleared of debris and deemed free of toxins. This enables the building process to start sooner than 4 months from now.

Continue using conveniently located venues for services at places like this (Westin Resort and Spa), the Civic Center, and locations in Kahului. At these locations, make available draftsmen with county code knowledge to draw up plans. Make available engineers and/or architects to stamp and submit draft plans for immediate permit approval at fair market fees.

Insurance, FEMA for the uninsured, or find other sources of funding to keep costs affordable. Hire retired, off-island, or anyone qualified as draftsmen, architects, and engineers to expedite this part of the process. If necessary, provide housing for them like FEMA and National Guard personnel. The same goes for inspectors, hiring qualified individuals for a temporary assignment, to rebuild Lahaina quickly and safely.

Provide inspectors for each zone, assigned to a certain number of dwellings and businesses. May need 40 to 50 personnel, or more including electrical and plumbing inspectors. Whatever is necessary to get the job done.

Builders would submit requests for inspections 24 hours in advance. The inspections are done within 48 hours. Inspectors would be available ongoing for monitoring the construction to make sure things are compliant with code.

Houses and businesses in the SMA still have the scrutiny required by law but expedite plans and approvals of other agencies and departments.

Follow the community plan!!!

A 1,200 square foot single-story house would take approximately 3 months from start to finish but the same crew can continue to the next home to create a snowball effect.

The Maui Planning Department would take care of business as usual for the rest of the island, but a special team would take care of the rebuilding of Lahaina.

Solicit more federal funds to provide qualified draftsmen, architects, engineers, and inspectors at reasonable rates to get the job done quickly and safely."

My testimony was followed up with a couple of questions from council members. Please forgive me if I don't remember exactly the questions or my answers.

I remember saying I had lived in a house built in 1932 from lumber repurposed from the Olowalu Sugar Mill dating back to the 1800s. We would like to build another post and pier house with board and batten siding and a tin roof like our former sugarcane house.

The accessory dwelling regulations from 2019 would allow on our size lots, a main single-family dwelling along with two smaller ohanas. So, on our two properties, we would like to rebuild our home and have 5 long-term rentals to provide much needed housing.

Our properties are located in “9D”, and initial access was allowed in “1C”. If the USACE started immediate debris removal after families have gone through their properties, we could help people rebuild there. We know people on that street and could be working on their houses until our properties have been cleared of debris and gotten clearance from the EPA.

Also, having inspectors on hand during the construction phase would ensure dwellings are a proper distance from property lines and everything is built to code.

Even without infrastructure replaced or repaired, building can be done simultaneously. Sewer lines, waterlines, and electrical infrastructure are under or over roadways or have established easements. That kind of information would be available to draftsmen and architects. Whether a house is built on a slab or post and pier foundation, the plumbing, sewer lines, and electrical can be installed ready for hook up when the infrastructure is completed. Hopefully, by the time the infrastructure is done, so will the dwellings, which would allow for immediate occupancy.

Please keep in mind, FEMA, the American Red Cross, and other emergency agencies set time limits with expectations. That same mindset is necessary moving forward to rebuild Lahaina in a timely manner.

I would like to close with a scripture I was unable to share during the 3-minute time restriction. “The LORD says... ‘People will live here again!’ and to the towns (Lahaina) ‘You will be rebuilt; I will restore all your ruins!’” (Isaiah 44:26)

Thank you for listening,
Michele Lincoln:)
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