

EDB Committee

From: Keani N. Rawlins
Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2019 4:03 PM
To: EDB Committee
Subject: FW: Wailuku Civic Complex EBD-76

From: Kristin Holmes <kristin@swaninteriorsmaui.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2019 6:51 PM
To: Keani N. Rawlins <Keani.Rawlins@mauicounty.us>; Kelly King <Kelly.King@mauicounty.us>; Tasha A. Kama <Tasha.Kama@mauicounty.us>; Shane M. Sinenci <Shane.Sinenci@mauicounty.us>; Alice L. Lee <Alice.Lee@mauicounty.us>; Tamara A. Paltin <Tamara.Paltin@mauicounty.us>; Mike J. Molina <Mike.Molina@mauicounty.us>
Subject: Wailuku Civic Complex EBD-76

Kristin M. Holmes

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Kihei, HI 96753-9203

Date: March 27, 2019
To: County Council Members
From: Kristin Holmes
Re: Wailuku Civic Complex EBD-76

Aloha Council Members,

I am a multi-generational co-property owner for the commercial buildings on the corner of Church and Vineyard Streets and the owner of Swan Interiors located in one of the buildings on our property. I also serve as President of Wailuku Community Association. The testimony I am presenting is my voice on the topic.

It is my understanding that the Maui Redevelopment Agency was established in 1964 because the county recognized the deterioration of the town and the need to revitalize it to draw patrons to the area. The MRA didn't get active until 2000 so work on making effective changes has been going on for nearly 20 years.

Wailuku needs a reason for people come here and a reason for them to stay. There needs to be an economic base that supports the town after the 9-5 work force leaves. I am committed to the idea that an arts and cultural district can be that identity for Wailuku. Rehearsals, classes and performances, restaurants; combine all this and a district is developed. We already have a strong foothold on that market with five performing arts organizations based here.

To date, the County has spent several millions dollars and utilized many resources carrying out the charge of the MRA's purpose. Years of work by many has gone into planning a project that has been identified as a catalytic project that will be an anchor for a commitment to change to engage property owners to put in their own funds. Several have already taken the financial risk with the Civic Hub at the heart of economical development opportunity. The Wailuku Opportunity Zone is another indication of support for growth and change.

Since the last round of funding commitments was announced, there has been a flurry of activity and engagement by folks that are suddenly paying attention despite a wide range of outreach and county sponsored public meetings over the past 5+ years starting with the *reWailuku* initiative. Instead of encouraging conversations about being pro or con, let's take advantage of the

voices that want to be heard and refine the project. Keep the funding for the parking structure to solve one major problem. With the civic participation, refine the plaza and multi-use building and defer funding for this fiscal year but don't defund. Based on feedback I have received by way of WCA, more work needs to be done on construction term parking solutions and communication. This can still be accomplished without killing the project. Proper planning needs to prevail to not drag out the project over many years for the survival of ongoing business concerns.

Defunding the project will leave us nowhere discounting the extensive time and money spent so far. There are many key issues that won't be solved if the project is defunded. Adequate parking will still be an unresolved issue. Blight will continue to happen if spaces aren't rented and owners don't have the funds to reinvest in property improvements that can generate higher tax revenue for the county. New businesses won't come to town if revitalization and vibrancy doesn't exist. Reverting backward to reverse this funding is a setback the town cannot afford to risk.

Progress starts with ideas. We need progress and we can build the ideas with more community engagement. Economic development is at the heart of the project and we cannot lose sight of that objective.

In closing, a Chinese Proverb comes to mind. "The right time to plant a tree was 20 years ago." We can't afford another 20 years to pass with no outcome. Thank you.

Kristin Holmes