

AH Committee

From: P. Denise La Costa <pdenise@lacostarealtyhawaii.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 26, 2019 4:36 PM
To: AH Committee
Subject: Makila Rural-East and Polanui Gardens Testimony
Attachments: TESTIMONY for July 3-2019 AH committee meeting.docx

Importance: High

Dear Honorable Chair and Committee Members,

Attached is my written testimony. I implore you to look at the TOTAL effects on Maui both projects will have. Not just housing, but the entire effects on Maui. Many Mahalos.

With Warm Regards and Aloha,

P. Denise La Costa RB#17578

Principal Broker/Owner

La Costa Realty Hawai'i, LLC RB#18349

P. O. Box 12424

Lahaina, HI 98761

Office: (808) 667-7800

CELLULAR (808) 280-2132 Call or Text

pdenise@lacostarealtyhawaii.com

2018-2023 - Maui County Planning Commissioner

2018 Dame of Honor-Orthodox Order of St. John Priory of Russia - Hawai'i Priory

2017-2018 President - Maui Commercial Round Table

2015 through 2016 State Chair - Realtor Political Action Committee

2013 President - Realtors Association of Maui

2004 through Present - Member West Maui Community Task Force

ABR-Accredited Buyers' Representative

SFR-Short Sale and Foreclosure Resource

DR-Designated Realtor

RENE-Real Estate Negotiations Expert

www.LaCostaRealtyHawaii.com



“Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position, or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character.”

—William Arthur Ward

TESTIMONY AGAINST MAKILA RURAL-EAST AND POLANUI GARDENS

In full disclosure, I am a current member of the Planning Commission. I do not have the authority, nor am I speaking on behalf of the Commission, or any members who currently serve thereon. I am speaking as a member of the West Maui Community.

After living on the West Side for 22.5 years, I have seen it change tremendously. There have been good improvements and not-so-good improvements. **Everyone is in agreement that the housing crisis is real and needs immediate attention!** Not only for workforce/affordable residences but for the homeless population as well, which is growing larger by the day.

For years, citizen groups have done a tremendous amount of work individually and by getting community feedback to establish land classifications and what is the best use³ for each community and the island of Maui as a whole. Changing the zoning that has been determined by this citizen group and approved by the Council is basically saying that neither the hours of work nor review and approval by the county's governing body is correct. The community and county plans designate the land that the proposed development is on-and there are 3 'planned' developments, not 2 developments –from Ag to urban will cause irreparable damage to the land, ocean and water infrastructure. The proposed zoning change to URBAN will increase the density of land that is currently zoned for Agriculture and put more stress on every aspect of the aina. This is not the solution to the housing crisis. If the developer is being truly altruistic as he purports, then he and his associates would realize that placing new developments away from transportation lines, schools, restaurants and other services is not doing anyone a favor. Surely there are land swaps that can be done to make sure the housing that is so desperately needed is built where it makes the most sense for the people living there and not just using the land they speculatively purchased several years ago hoping to make a huge gain. I fully understand that we live in a capitalist society and everyone is entitled to make a profit. However, these Developers, in fact all developers, should look not only at their proforma for a project and how much they will enrich themselves, but at what the actual citizens of West Maui and all of Maui need and how will our beautiful island be best served and the aina survive the onslaught of more and more homes using more and more resources.

Everyone in this room agrees on one thing: Maui needs Affordable Rentals and Affordable housing.

Again, if altruism **were** the driving force for the building of 'affordable homes' albeit not all of the homes will be 'affordable', then Developers need to work with the county in a public-private partnership. Make them all affordable in perpetuity, as Hale O' Maui does. Rather than look at 'not in our neighborhood', we all should look at it is where can we, the county, the community house the citizens of Maui comfortably, affordably and not put a financial burden by not having access to their jobs, schools, stores, etc. nearby.

Lastly, and perhaps what should have been my first comment:

- 1) Why is the developer trying to bypass the Planning Commission when the size of the lot (14.4 acres-less than the 15 acres that automatically goes to the LUC) and the type of project **mandate** that the jurisdiction is with the Planning Commission? **In a word: Scrutiny.** The developer knows that The Planning commission looks at what the Community dictates; What is BEST for Maui County as a whole; what makes the most sense for each city/area and even each neighborhood. Everything from cultural aspects, to density, to special uses and shoreline management are dissected and looked at carefully to determine would be best for the area as a whole and in the long term. Everything is analyzed as well as personal, public testimony and written testimony to see what the community wants. This is imperative.

Pursuant to the LUC letter page 217 of the packet, the LUC believes that *the applicant is purposefully circumventing of the process*. Why would the County of Maui turn a blind eye to this and allow this sham to happen?

- 2) **WATER:** The county has a “Show me the Water” bill. As a resident of Launiupoko I pay for an therefore expect to have water when I turn on my spigot. We have not had any non-potable water for a week. Yes there is potable water and with much expense, you can convert to that system. However, if the already built properties don’t have sufficient water, will building dozens of new homes have the same? Using potable water for landscaping and household use will diminish the amount of water that is available for everyone.
- 3) **NATURAL RESOURCES:** All you have to do is look at what is happening to the ocean and reef in Kihei at the old Maui Lu site to understand that this will happen on an even larger scale to the ocean from Puamana to Launiupoko, and possibly beyond. Additionally, the beach park and the parking for it is inadequate now. When the waves are up, you cannot find a place to park for a quarter of a mile. Add dozens and dozens more people using their neighborhood beach park and it will look like Waikiki. The reef and water will suffer even more than they are now.
- 4) **WASTEWATER/SEPTIC TANKS:** How many dozens and dozens of septic tanks and leech fields would be installed with the project? With the ocean directly below and the water table close to the proposed subdivisions what kind of irreversible damage will be done to the reefs and ocean?
- 5) **INFASTRUCTURE:** Traffic: Everyone complained about traffic leaving West Maui on the old highway. It is no better with the bypass because people do not know how to merge. Add to this dozens and dozens and dozens of additional cars going up Haniu street, past the round about and lining up to get onto the highway at Kai Hele Ku or going down Punakea and lining up at Hokiokoi.
- 6) **FIRE:** Dry grass, hotter temperatures, less water, formula for disaster. Where are the water hydrants to help extinguish another fire? Where is the water in those hydrants? It is terrible and heartbreaking that my friends and our neighbors lost their homes, thankfully no one lost their life. And, thank the good Lord that the winds shifted last August or more of West Maui would have been destroyed. Add how many more homes, more strain on resources and this is a disaster waiting to happen.

Affordable Housing is crucial to the stability of an economy and city. *Sensible, truly affordable, in perpetuity, rental units and homes* are crucial for affordable housing units to be always available and affordable. These are the projects that need to be built.

I have watched Na Hale O'Maui build homes and lease them to families for years. This is the same model the county should use. Also, might it make sense for Maui county to look at duplex and fourplex options for housing? Our families need housing. Perhaps a private/public partnership to get these homes built is the way to go? Tax credits and incentives for developers to build truly affordable units that have decent construction and be available in perpetuity. If developers are truly interested in helping the people of Maui and not the lure of putting millions in their bank accounts-they could build homes and apartments on county owned land or use the land that is on bus lines, and within walking distance to schools and shops and stores that already has access to water and sewer laterals.

The Committee would be making a **grave, irreversible mistake** to rezone the property from Agriculture to Urban. It is a dangerous precedent to not only ignore the county rules that state this project should go to the Planning Commission but to rezone from Agriculture to Urban? Not even Ag to Rural so that the density is maintained? ‘Rural’ is in the name of one of the subdivisions...did they change their original plan to change from Ag to Rural **to** Ag to Urban so that they could increase the density and add commercial development?) This will open the doors for commercial development in the subdivision and along the highway and bypass. Gas stations, convenience stores, coffee shops, etc. This has been the plan all along. Please don’t buy into their rubbish and lies. The traffic is so bad now, that this zoning will add a tremendous burden to the county’s roads and the citizens who sit or crawl in their cars on the highway and bypass for 30+ minutes to get from Kai Hele Ku to the transfer station at Olowalu.

I BEG YOU...PLEASE LOOK AT ALL OF THE ISSUES. LOOK AT THE TOTAL PICTURE NOT JUST THE HOMES THAT THESE PROJECTS ARE SUPPOSED TO BUILD....PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE!

Consider the precedent for other developers to go around the LUC and Planning Commission and try to circumvent the laws and rules of Maui County and the State of Hawai'i. This is impudence!

Consider the water issue; At some point the water will be gone.

Consider what those who participated in the Community Plan suggested;

Consider the permanent damage to the aina for profit;

Consider the additional stress on the kai for profit-the reef is already injured; hundreds of septic tanks just above the water table is unconscionable. Why tempt disaster?

Consider the additional number of cars on the road because there is no public transportation to or from the area;

Consider that children cannot walk to school, or ride their bikes. Parents will have to make arrangements to drop off and pick up (more traffic).

Consider the iwi kapuna that could well be interred on this land;

Consider the riparian water rights that the Native Hawaiians have and are not being acknowledged or provided.

Consider all of the citizens of Maui who testified (51 at last count) that yes we need affordable housing but not where there are all complex and water issues to mitigate.

AND PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE,

Consider the irreparable damage these subdivisions will cause and how few will be truly served but the land will be permanently injured.

Don't be fooled by the 'affordable housing projects' that the developers say they want to build. If they truly wanted affordable housing, then the entire project would be affordable and the homes and rental units would be affordable in perpetuity. Please don't turn the West Maui Mountains into a place like Mariner's Ridge on O'ahu. We live on Maui because we want the peace, beauty and open space of Maui. We live on Maui because it is No Ka Oi. We live on Maui because we don't want the crowds. We are different from O'ahu, thankfully so. We need to keep Maui, Maui. Projects like these are so much better suited as infill areas where all the transportation, schools, utilities, etc are readily accessible. Easier for children to get around, less driving for parents, fewer expenses because there are alternatives for transportation.

PLEASE LOCATE THESE PROJECTS IN TOWN, MAINTAIN AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN AG AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, PLEASE SAVE WHAT WATER WE HAVE LEFT.

Mahalo nui for your time and consideration.

P. Denise La Costa

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pdenise@lacostarealtyhawaii.com
(808) 280-2132**