

January 23rd 2019

Testimony in support of GET-1(8) Planning Director, Michele McClean

Aloha Chair Molina and Council Members,

My name is Noelani Sugata, and I am here testifying as an individual.

I'm here today in support of Mayor Victorino's selection of Michele McClean as the Planning Director.

I have known Ms. McClean since October 2015 in a professional capacity. I am the contracted Executive Director of the Paia Town Association also known as the PTA. Ms. McClean sits on the board. But to be clear, I am not speaking on behalf of the organization. It's kind of "gray" but this my truth and it was really important for me to be here to share my positive experience as an independent contractor.

Ms. McClean has helped me with many projects and meetings but the project that I am the most proud of is the Paia Mural. I had just gotten contracted by the PTA, and a couple months in a member of the community wanted to paint a mural on the wall in the public parking lot of off Hana Highway. I barely knew anyone at the County and I didn't even know where to start. Ms. Mclean helped connect me to the Department of Public Works. I was able to get the proper paperwork and permission from them. A few weeks later the community came together and the mural was completed in February of 2016. The following year, Alaska Airlines used it as a backdrop for their photo contest. They could've gone anywhere yet they chose the busiest parking lot on the island. The mural is meaningful to me because I tried to do a similar project when I worked for another nonprofit in Honolulu. I had been working there for almost a decade and it didn't happen. I've worked with many communities statewide and this was probably the fastest and easiest county project I've ever done (this is not just a little wall either). I have always been able to get an email and/or phone call returned by the Planning Department and at times Public Works. I value people who want to collaborate and make things happen in a timely manner.

There's a lot of not so fun stuff that gets brought to my attention, and I am grateful that I can rely on Ms. Mclean and her staff because often it's outside of my capacity, which is why I'm speaking for myself today. It's a lot for me to balance the needs of the community and the needs of the business district.

Before I end I want to thank Michele for all her years of service and support. Mahalo for always taking time out of your busy day to help me. I would not have been able to do any of this without you, that's my truth, and thank you for you time.

Aloha,

Noelani Sugata

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