

AH Committee

From: mark thompson <markalanthompson@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 19, 2019 4:53 AM
To: AH Committee
Subject: regarding Makila Rural East and Polanui Gardens housing developments....

Dear Committee Members,

We are writing to you to advocate for a decision against "fast-tracking" important land-use developments in Hawai'i. Our opposition to such "fast-tracking" is based on our concern that important water-use, fire safety, environmental, and traffic safety issues would not be adequately addressed through such an expedited process. We also have concerns that the stated objective of improving affordable housing via the Makila Rural East and Polanui Gardens housing developments has been poorly executed in its current guise, and could be better designed to assure that the final outcome actually addresses the dearth of affordable housing options in West Maui.

Regarding water availability, every year there are prolonged periods of time in Launiupoko where there is inadequate non-potable water for agricultural needs. We have been assured in the past that adequate measure were being taken to address this important concern, but just this past week the problem has appeared again - and it's still only June. Unless the developers are planning to put everyone in a box in their new development and allow for none of the landscaping that typically accompanies a picturesque community, such a development will put an (at times) critically stressed system under even more stress. It is difficult to see how the legitimate agricultural needs of the existing farm areas can be realistically met under the proposed scenario when we're scraping by from day-to-day right now, even with our drip irrigation system. The water report that accompanies this proposal is already out-dated. New water sources must be proven and part of the development plan; connection to municipal water and sewage systems would substantially improve the feasibility of this project for the Launiupoko area.

Regarding fire and traffic safety and also environmental concerns, a fast-track process runs the risk of helping to partially solve the housing problem now at risk of a disaster later on. A comprehensive analysis regarding mitigating the risk of loss of life and structures from fire, environmental risk to nearby beach and reef areas, and also putting another obstacle in the flow of traffic around the Pali highway are all themselves very important downstream consequences. Fast-tracking this project will not allow the time and the space to properly consider these risks and do our best to accommodate for them. It is naive to think we can prevent every future problem, but also naive to proceed with a project of such scale without a standard planning process. The usual planning process was developed in the past because people learned that without it a whole lot of unanticipated problems cropped up later - typically after the developers had already taken their money and washed their hands of things - leaving the communities to bear the costs and efforts of fixing the mess. If the developers want to fast-track this process, will they also post a bond of sufficient value that can be used to clean up such a mess later, or merely pass that cost off on the state of Hawai'i and its people?

Finally, regarding the poor execution of the currently proposed Makila Rural East and Polanui Gardens housing developments, our perception is that a hastily conceived smokescreen has been created to give the impression of helping to solve the crisis in affordable housing. In our opinion, this proposal dedicates too much of the proposed development to "market-rate" housing (do we really need more bigger homes?), and also there should be more commitment to maintaining affordability beyond a mere ten years. There are other issues with their proposal, but these are the main ones we object to.

Please consider these comments in your deliberations - "fast-tracking" seems both unsafe and unwise!

Mark Alan Thompson and Monique Gedenk
Launiupoko.