

HUMAN CONCERNS AND PARKS COMMITTEE

Council of the County of Maui

M I N U T E S

Online Only via BlueJeans

August 2, 2021

CONVENE: 9:01 a.m.

PRESENT: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Yuki Lei K. Sugimura, Vice-Chair
Councilmember Alice L. Lee, Member
Councilmember Tamara Paltin, Member
Councilmember Shane M. Sinenci, Member (arrived at 9:03 a.m.)

EXCUSED: VOTING MEMBERS:

Councilmember Tasha Kama, Chair

STAFF:

Wilton Leauanae, Legislative Analyst
Laksmi Abraham, Legislative Analyst
Richard Mitchell, Legislative Attorney
David Raatz, Deputy Director
Jean Pokipala, Committee Secretary
Pauline Martins, Committee Secretary
Kristeena Locke, Council Services Assistant Clerk

Evan Dust, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Lois Whitney, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Kama
Ellen McKinley, Executive Assistant to Councilmember King
Jordan Helle, Executive Assistant to Councilmember Sugimura
Sarah Pajimola, Executive Assistant to Councilmember
Rawlins-Fernandez

ADMIN.: Mimi DesJardins, Deputy Corporation Counsel, Department of the
Corporation Counsel

Karla Peters, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation

OTHERS:

Cody Pueo Pata
Ann Emmsley
Kaiea Medeiros
Hokuao Pellegrino
Jordan Tabura
Tamara Sherrill, Executive Director, Maui Nui Botanical Gardens
Plus (1) other person

PRESS: *Akaku Maui Community Television, Inc.*

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VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: . . . (*gavel*) . . . Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the Human Concerns and Parks Committee. I'm your Vice-Chair Yuki Lei Sugimura, and filling in for Chair Tasha Kama who's excused. Thank you very much, Members for being here. This morning it is now, oh what time is it...9:01 a.m. and today is August the 2nd. And we have...we are convened for the Human Concerns and Parks Committee. Member Lee is here and Tamara Paltin. Ms. Lee, good morning.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Okay. I'm going to try this, Madam Chair. The regular Bonjour.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Bonjour C'est bon de te voir.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh wow.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: C'est bon de te voir.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: And that means.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: And that means good morning; it's great to see you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Say that again.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: C'est bon de.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: C'est bon.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: de te voir.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: C'est bon de te voir.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah, more or less.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. More or less, good morning to you, Ms. Lee, Chair Lee. Tamara Paltin, we're doing this because of you.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Aloha Kakahiaka bonjour te bon de te voir ka ko.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: She's getting good.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. Thank you very much, Tamara Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Chair.

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VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Members, Shane Sinenci is having connectivity problems from Hana, so he'll be joining us on his phone.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: I'm on my phone. I'm on my phone.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh you are...

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: I'm on my phone.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I can't see you. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Te voir from East Maui. Yeah, I'm on my phone. We have some connectivity...our internet has been down for the last 24 hours. So, but I'm on via phone. Thank you, Chair.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you for joining us. Ms. Lee, you have a question?

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Yeah. I don't have a question. I just have a comment. Tasha, the Chair, Tash Kama, I spoke with her this morning. So I'll be sending everybody a memo updating when she will be returning, which she'll be returning in two weeks. And I'll share with you a little bit more information. But she's fine. Everything is fine. So don't have to worry about her. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, very good. Thank you for that update. I know we're, we are, and the community is concerned. Thank you, Chair Lee. That's why you're the Chair. I also wanted to let everybody know that today we have one item on the agenda, which is a Grant of a Lease Extension to Maui Nui Botanical Garden, HCP-24. And before we proceed with that item, I just wanted to invite all the other Members who may not be present to join the meeting. They're not, Committee Members, which is Gabe Johnson, Kelly King, Mike Molina, and Keani Rawlins-Fernandez. Although I see their loyal staff are listening in on the meeting. So thank you very much for keeping your Members informed. Corporation Counsel, Mimi Desjardin, is here. I see her on the call.

MS. DESJARDINS: Good morning.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning, Mimi. Thank you. Karla Peters, who's the Director of Parks and Recreation, is here. This is...thank you, Karla.

MS. PETERS: Good morning, Vice-Chair and Committee Members.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Good morning. Committee Staff, Wilton Leauanae, who's a Legislative Analyst. Thank you, Wilton. I already spoke to him early this morning because we needed to make sure everything with this meeting goes smoothly. So Wilton, thank you. Laks Abraham, Legislative Analyst; Jean Pokipala, Committee Secretary; Pauline Martins, also Committee Secretary; Richard Mitchell,

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Legislative Attorney; and Kristeena Locke is OCS Assistant Clerk. Members, the meeting is being conducted with the Governor's most recent message on emergency proclamation and please see the last page of the agenda for information on meeting connectivity. We have one item on our agenda. Wilton, do we have testifiers?

MR. LEAUANAE: Yes. We have six, five currently signed up.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay, very good. So testifiers, we welcome everyone for joining. As you know, we are on BlueJeans and the BlueJeans connectivity link is bluejeans.com/221418021 as noted on today's agenda. Testifiers wanting to provide audio testimony should dial (408) 915-6290 and enter meeting code 221 418 021, also noted on today's agenda. Written testimony is highly encouraged and just so you know, there is so much support for this item that when I checked like ten to nine, there were 42 testifiers supporting this item. Is there 43 now, Tamara? There might be 43. It is fast.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: There was 17 under the agenda, and then 42 on the item, so it's like 59 or something.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wow, and all support, yeah. So we don't have to explain to them how to submit testimony, written testimony, because they've been doing a great job. Moving to oral testimony. People who are here to testify, thank you very much for making the time. You will have three minutes. And if you need to go beyond that time, the buzzer will go off, and you'll be asked to complete your train of thought. When testifying, please state your name. And if you are testifying on behalf of an organization or are a paid lobbyist, please inform the Committee. Please be mindful of the use of chat during the Committee. Chat should not be used to provide testimony or chat with other testifiers. If you are here to provide testimony, please be courteous to others by turning off your video and muting your microphone while waiting for your turn to testify. Once you are done testifying, you will be asked to disconnect from the call; however, you are welcome to continue to view this meeting on Akaku Channel 53, Facebook Live, or on mauicounty.us. At this time, Wilton, Wilton, you'll do the timing also for the three minutes?

MR. LEAUANAE: Yes, Vice-Chair.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. And then please call the testifiers.

MR. LEAUANAE: First testifier is Cody Pueo Pata, followed by Ann Emmsley.

MR. PATA: Hi guys.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Hi Cody. Nice to see you.

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. . . BEGIN PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

MR. PATA: Aloha. Aloha Kakahiaka i ka hanohano. My name is Cody Pueo Pata. I'm the Kumu Hula of Ka Malama Mahilani, located in Kahului, Maui. I'm a Hawaiian Music Entertainer, a private Hawaiian language and cultural consultant. I've been a formal teacher of Hawaiian language and culture on Maui since 1993. I was also trained by my masters in La au Lapa au, which is native plant healing, and I have extensively trained in a variety of Hana no eau, traditional skills and crafts. I wholeheartedly support the lease extension to Maui Nui Botanical Gardens. I began accessing what is now the gardens in 1991, when I was a student of our late teacher, Mr. Don Guard, of Environmental Sciences at Baldwin Highschool, who would make monthly treks down the road to study the plants that his mentor, the late renowned Rene Souza, or excuse me, Rene Sylva, planted there. And since '91, I've visited the gardens regularly every year since for its plant resources as a presenter, as a workshop participant, and even as an entertainer. In my teens, I began to learn from masters, most of whom never graduated from a university but who upheld traditions that are actively studied in universities. I learned that every naturally occurring phenomenon in our Hawaiian universe is uncompromisingly to be considered an ancestor and relative. Our narratives and _____ about these beings allow us to know exactly how they interact, not only in their natural environments, but even with the chemistry in our own bodies. My traditional education regarding plants taught me about just how integral they are, not only to our environment, but to our people, our communities, our spirituality, our mentality, and our physical health and wellbeing. Many of the plants I gathered growing up are now rare in the wild due to increased traffic, environmental degradation, invasive species, and climate change. The Maui Nui Botanical Gardens is pretty much the only place upon which I can depend when I need to gather some of the more rare species that my practices require. Be they for medicine, ceremony, my halau, my personal crops, for teaching, or for any of the Hana no eau, of which I'm an active practitioner, and I can do all of this without depleting our precious natural stocks. Through their regular plant giveaways, sales and events, Maui Nui Botanical Gardens plays an integral role in indigenous and endemic plant education and dissemination back into the Maui communities. Drought resistant plants and crops, plants for native birds and pollinators, plants that contribute to the places in which they replanted instead of detracting from them, and the garden's central and entirely familiar location is key for the widest access possible for the communities of Maui. Again, I wholly support the lease extension to Maui Nui Botanical Gardens. Mahalo a nui.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Well said. And I read your testimony too, so I was glad that you are also here. I was going to mention it when I talked about this item. So thank you very much, Pueo. You're amazing. Any questions for him? Seeing none, well said. Thank you very much for making the time.

MR. PATA: My pleasure.

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VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

MR. PATA: Aloha nui.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha. Next testifier.

MR. LEAUANAE: Next testifier is Ann Emmsely, followed by Kaeia Medeiros.

MS. EMMSELY: Hi. My name's Ann Emmsley, and I'm the professor and program coordinator at UH Maui College in the Agriculture and Natural Resources Department. I'd like to say that the garden is a tremendous educational asset that we are so lucky to have right next door. Both, myself for various classes like Horticulture of Hawaiian plants, Hawaiian food plants, horticulture. As well as my fellows that teach ethnobotany, and ethnobotany is taught multiple sections every semester, utilize the garden regularly to help teach our students. I take my students on fieldtrips and I know ethnobotany does too, multiple times a year. Sometimes we utilize the staff as docents to explain things. For instance, I had the seedbank operator take a class, explain how they preserve seeds, and sometimes we'd just pop in over there and we're always welcome to go in there and look at the plants or even take samples. And that also introduces our students to that resource, and I know they access it later. It helps our students connect to both their Hawaiian roots and also the environment and see rare plants as well as Polynesian introductions. We use the garden a lot to get plant material. I'm always needing, I've lost a certain plant, either for our landscape or to propagate. And then the seedbank, I've been able to utilize the seedbank several times. That they didn't have the plant available, but they had the seedbank and that's such a great resource that we're lucky to have here on Maui. I've had several students do internships. They...some of them need internships to complete their degree and so I've had multiple students do internships over there. And several who've gotten a job over there eventually, which is always great. It also provides volunteer opportunities for our students. I know for ethnobotany they need to have some volunteer time and that's a great asset. And in addition, kind of as an enrichment, they offer workshops that I send out to my students and sometimes it dovetails with what we're doing or it's an interest of a student, and so that's a great asset that they reach out and educate our community. And then they actually have a great newsletter and I've used the articles in their newsletter as like a resource, like hey, look at this or it's taught me something that I didn't know that I use in my classes. So, you know, the Maui Nui Botanical Garden is just a gem for Maui County, and so I support their lease renewal. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right. Thank you very much. So we call you Dr. Emmsley. Thank you very much.

MS. EMMSELY: No, no. I'm not a doctor.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

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MS. EMMSELY: Still a Masters.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for what you do. Anyone have questions for her? Seeing none, good job. Thank you very much. It's meaningful, your testimony to see how higher ed and the community comes together also, so appreciate your work. Thank you. Next testifier, Wilton.

MR. LEAUANAE: Next testifier is Kaiea Medeiros, followed by Hokuao.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Kaiea, we cannot hear...oh, there you are.

MR. MEDEIROS: Aloha.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aloha.

MR. MEDEIROS: Aloha everyone. So my name is Kaiea Medeiros and I'm a mahi ai kalo here on Maui, mostly utilizing regenerative practices. And the Maui Nui Botanical Garden has been an amazing support system for my practice and I'm just very grateful today to speak out about the support that we have to extend the lease for Maui Nui Botanical Garden. You know, we have been blessed with the 'ike and the resources and the knowledge that the entire Maui Nui Botanical Garden ohana provides from Maui...from Tamara to Namea to the countless other individuals that we've been fortunate enough to come in to contact with and build relationships with and we've been very, very fortunate during this time to be able to volunteer on their weed-and-pot clubs on Wednesday. Where we're able to, you know, get dirty with the community from their plant giveaways. Which a lot of those plants today have become core regenerative plants from our natives to the kaddu plants within our mahi'ai kalo practice as well as our workshops that they also host. For example, the imu workshop with Ikaika Nakahashi this weekend was an amazing experience and the Maui Nui Botanical Garden is just an amazing special place where I think is invaluable because it's a place where Hawaiians can be Hawaiians as well as encouraging and inspiring others to be Hawaiian as well, not necessarily through blood of course but, you know, through actions, behaviors, and values, and for that, that is why I wholeheartedly believe and support the lease extension for Maui Nui Botanical Garden.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Any questions, Members? Oh, Tamara Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you Kaiea for your testimony. I just had a question. How do you join the club?

MR. MEDEIROS: The weed-and-pot club?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yeah.

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MR. MEDEIROS: Yeah. That's so you can usually just contact Alexa, who is one of the managers there, and she gets you lined up. And it's pretty awesome. You get to do everything from weeding, to harvesting native plants, to propagation, and it has activities for everyone, from children who want to just maybe work with seeds, and help grow seedlings, to harvesting ko, which can be a fun task with all their little fibers and, you know, using sort of harder tools but yeah. Definitely highly recommended if you're interested. It's every Wednesday. It's for three hours. There's a little potluck at the end where everyone wala'au and talk story after they put in the ma ka hana ka ike right, the work to learn from each other and from the plants and from the aina.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. Thank you so much.

MR. MEDEIROS: Mahalo. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, thank you. Any other questions Members? Seeing none, thank you very much Kaiea. That was very interesting. Thank you.

MR. MEDEIROS: Mahalo. Thank you. Thank you for having me. Aloha.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for promoting their good work. Thank you. Next testifier, it looks like it's Hokuao Pellegrino.

MR. PELLEGRINO: Bonjour no. Good morning. I love your guys opening in different languages. I'll do mine in Italian today. But my name is Hokuao Pellegrino. And I'm a kalo farmer from the Iliaina Noho ana in Waikapu. I'm also at Kamehameha Schools as the aina and sustainability learning designer. And, you know, I, you know, want to, first off, mahalo, you know, Councilmember Chair Lee, Tamara, and Yuki Lei for, as well as Director Karla Peters for bringing this to their attention. And I absolutely wholeheartedly support that...the grant of lease extension for Maui Nui Botanical Gardens. Rene Sylva had a vision, you know, many years ago before his passing. An evolution of native endemic, indigenous, and canoe crops to really thrive and be a true repository for our Maui community. And, you know, fast forward, you know, two plus decades later, you can see that this has, this commitment has been...has been set forth. And I think the leadership that Tamara, her entire staff, have been doing and her predecessors have really aligned this vision and this place has become, you know, truly a...an amazing resource for the Maui community. I myself both, you know, personally as well as the work that I do at Kamehameha Schools, utilizes like just as an educational resource, but as a way to collaborate, to bring about really rare species, cultivars of plants to ensure that, you know, there are other extensions of repositories out there. Whether it's, you know, the rare varieties of ko, sugar cane, kalo, uala, ulu, you know, so on and so on. You know, Maui Nui Botanical Gardens, which I'm sure you're already aware of, is one of only two sites in Hawaii that house the rare Kanaloa species which once was found on the island of Kahoolawe, now is extinct there. There's one there, and there's one Hoolawa Farms, and so, you know. I just want to reiterate what everybody else had shared

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and just thank all of you for, you know, just your support as Councilmembers because I don't think we'd be having these conversations and, you've seen the growth that this organization has had if you folks weren't committed. So I think it's kind of a no brainer, but I know that this is a formality and completely understand it and just really appreciate your time, your support, your commitment. I know I've seen pretty much all of you and then some down there at different events and just again just thank you for your support and, you know, mahalo to Maui Nui Botanical Gardens for really being an important resource for, not just Maui but, you know, all throughout Hawaii. You know there are scientists and experts that come from abroad to look at cultivars and native species there that they house. So Mahalo...(speaking Hawaiian)... Gratcia! Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good, Hokuao. So before I turn over to the Members, you said something that I think you would be able to explain. As part of their mission, one of the things that the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens says is that they are...they help with canoe crops, and that's actually the boat canoe? Sorry, if I don't understand it, but can you explain that.

MR. PELLEGRINO: Yeah. I mean, you know, canoe crops, otherwise known as Polynesian-introduced plants. Those are, you know, the 20-plus plants that our Kupuna brought on the waa with them, you know, such as kalo, uala, ulu, breadfruit, sugarcane, you know, ko, pia and a plethora of other plants. And so, yeah, so typically, they are called canoe plants, sometimes known as Polynesian-introduced cultivars or plants. And I think what I love most about what you see happening at Maui Nui Botanical Garden is the integration of both canoe crops and our endemic and indigenous species. You don't really see that a lot too many places, you know. A lot of farms might have canoe crops. Some places might, you know, re-forestry projects are all, you know, focused on endemic and indigenous species. But Maui Nui, it's like a plethora of all three classifications put together and really living and growing symbiotically.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thanks for explaining that. I looked it up definition wise, and I couldn't find that. It doesn't say what you said, so thank you very much.

MR. PELLEGRINO: No worries. All right.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Appreciate it.

MR. PELLEGRINO: Mahalo.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Members, any other questions? Seeing none, thank you very much, Hokuao, for making the time. Oh, is that Shane, trying to ask a question?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: No questions.

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VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Okay. Sorry, Shane. You have to speak up. There's no visual on you, but thanks for being there. Next testifier.

MR. LEAUANAE: Next testifier and currently the last testifier signed up is Jordan Tabura.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Jordan, oh there.

MR. TABURA: Aloha mai ka ko. I just want to say aloha everyone for having me here today. But my name is Jordan Tabura. I'm a lifelong resident born and raised on Maui, from Makawao. I'm testifying in support of the Grant of lease extension for Maui Nui Botanical Gardens. I have recently just completed my first term as a Kupu member, Kupu service member at MNBG, and I believe the lease extension should be granted for the following reasons. One, MNBG is a safehouse for many of our endangered native plant species, some of which are facing extinction today. Two, MNBG is a hub for networking with many other agencies such as Maui Nui SeaBird Recovery project, PEP, the nature conservancy, DLNR, and DOLFA, all of which help protect are entire native ecosystems from the watersheds, the dryland forest, all the way down to our coastlines. Number three, is the native Hawaiian culture education center for our keiki, kupuna, and our visitors. A safe place where they can learn about how our ancestors connected to our native plants and animals for everyday life. Four, I'm a proud makua of my keiki that have attended and are currently attending Punana Leo O Maui and MNBG has served as a location for our yearly school benefit fundraiser known as Hoomau. This event attracts, you know, malihini and kamaaina alike. This event is...supports all our local craft vendors and businesses in cooperation of the hard working staff at MNBG. Five, MNBG hosts our weed-and-pot club weekly. Our volunteers...where volunteers from the community, mostly Kupuna, but there are students as well, can come to kokua. And six, MNBG also has weekly native plant giveaways that help encourage and educate our community on the importance of growing native plant species. And in closing, during my Kupu service term at MNBG, I gained new skills and acquired certifications that I needed to advance into a conservation career that I could only otherwise dream of. And, you know, with the grant of the lease extension, MNBG can continue to serve as a platform for many more future conservationist like myself to gain a professional career and I just want to mahalo the hard working staff that are more like ohana to me, and aloha. Thank you guys.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very impressive. Thank you very much for bringing it all together and bringing in Punana Leo, because that's a big way that the community gets to see the amphitheater and the work which we walkthrough when we go to that concert. But thank you very much, Jordan. Anybody else want to ask him questions? Seeing none, thank you very much for making the time. Continue on with good work.

MR. TABURA: Mahalo nui.

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VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MR. TABURA: Ela mai kai.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. So Wilton, do we have any other testifiers?

MR. LEAUANAE: There are no other testifiers signed up on the list.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Last call for testifiers. Community, anybody who wants to testify, please make yourself known. Okay. Seeing none, I'm going to close...oh yes, Tamara.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Oh. I wanted to make a disclosure. I've gotten some pohuehue and the kalo in my front yard, the huli came from MNBG. I did purchase an ohia lehua. It was given to anybody, not specially me, not to influence my vote, but if you folks feel that I should recuse myself, I would. But just wanted to make that disclosure that I've gotten some free plants as well.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh my God. So I don't think so, but here's Chair Lee.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Member Paltin, I have no problem with the gifts you've received as long as you share them with the rest of us, just kidding. When it's time to eat.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: They're still in the ground. I didn't have a time to get a Board of Ethics opinion on it, but I just wanted to let you folks know.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: All right, thank you. Then at the appropriate time, please share with us the whatever you end up with, you know. I love your honesty. Thank you very much. I don't see any objections. Thank you very much for bringing that forward. So at this time, on the agenda, we have a Grant of a Lease extension to Maui Nui Botanical Garden, Kahului, which is County Communication 20-614. HCP item is 24 and.

MR. LEAUANAE: Vice-Chair.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, I'm sorry. I need to close public testimony and receive written testimony.

MR. LEAUANAE: Thank you.

. . . END OF PUBLIC TESTIMONY . . .

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you, Mister...

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No objections.

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HCP-24 GRANT OF A LEASE EXTENSION TO MAUI NUI BOTANICAL GARDENS (KAHULUI) (CC 20-614)

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah, thank you. Please, and I just want to say, in terms of written testimony on eComments, we keep on getting more. So I think we're up to 61 total and it must be rising, and thank you to testifiers who did testify, were all supportive, every single one of them. So what I'm going to do today is I scheduled this because of the lease for Maui Nui Botanical Garden. It was requested by Tasha Kama, the Chair, so I'm fulfilling her request. And we will take up this one item, have Director Peters speak first, and then we'll hear from Tamara Sherrill from Maui Nui Botanical Gardens. And so at this time, I want to ask the Members to allow me to designate Ms. Sherrill as a resource under Rule 18(A) of the Rules of the Council, and then I'll introduce her formally. I don't see any objections. Thank you. Thank you. So at this time, Karla Peters take it away. You can tell us about this Maui Nui Botanical Garden, introduce to us about the lease, and what is required of Maui Nui Botanical Garden. Thank you.

MS. PETERS: Good morning, Vice-Chair Sugimura and Committee Members. Thank you for having us here today along with the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens. The Department transmitted the proposed resolution for the Grant of Lease of Recreational Space to the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens Incorporated for the following proposed changes to be incorporated into the current lease. A 15-year extension of the current lease. The current lease agreement commenced on October 19, 2011 through June 30, 2026. The proposed extension is through June 30, 2041. The second change is a revision in the premises to remove the playground area from the excluded areas in the current lease. There was a playground site within the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens. That has since been removed due to it was detireated and not safe. The Department then removed it in 2017 and therefore would like to include that area into the definition of premises in the lease. Those are the two changes that are being proposed and like Member, Vice-Chair Sugimura mentions, we do have Ms. Tamara Sherrill, Executive Director, of the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens, on the meeting and will be providing the Committee with a short presentation. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you very much, Ms. Peters. So next, we have the Executive Director, and I will tell you that she walks the talk. We put it simply. Thank you very much for all that you do. Ms. Sherrill is a graduate of UH Manoa and earned a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resource and Environmental Management. She was Maui Nui Botanical Gardens Nursery Manager and the Curator for three years, and helped collect and establish the garden's current collection of plants. She is active in many organizations that promote and care for our local plants, so I'm going to. I designated you as being a resource for us. Thank you very much. And for making the time to talk to me before the meeting too, I appreciate that. So I would, we've designated you to be a resource in under Rule 18(A) of the Rules of the Council. And I wonder if you could give us an overview of what your organization does, and then we will take

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questions from the Members before we vote on the resolution. Thank you. Thank you Ms. Sherrill. Take it away.

MS. SHERRILL: Okay. Mahalo, Vice-Chair Sugimura, and aloha kakahiaka. I'm going to attempt to share my screen here...and the screen disappeared. There we go. Okay. Sorry, I have not done this on. I think you all have a copy of my pdf presentation. But I have not done this before. I'm looking. Let's see here.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Wilton, you're gonna help her?

MS. SHERRILL: I have it up...very quick.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, there. Oh, no.

MS. SHERRILL: Let me try again. No. Share screen. Click here to start sharing this screen. Oh, I'm so sorry.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: That's the War Memorial gym, or stadium.

MS. SHERRILL: Okay. That's just my...yeah, yeah. We're going to stop that, okay. Yeah, let's see here. I do click and application off, Acrobat.

MR. LEAUANAE: Ms. Sherrill, if you prefer, we can share the screen for you?

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh.

MS. SHERRILL: Yes. Do you not, do you see my screen?

MR. LEAUANAE: We see it now.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

MS. SHERRILL: Okay. Thank you for your patience. I've got this set to take about seven minutes and so I will, I would just going to go quickly, a quick overview of the lease extension, and how it came about. Director Peters did already share that to you. I'm going to just show you some pictures of that. This picture shows our location in Keopuolani Park, and two things about this location which have already brought up. One is, this is a coastal dune system. And so, we're one of the few conservation organizations that specializes in coastal native plants, and that's really important for both restoration but also urban landscaping. And of course, as Hokuao mentioned, the central location means it's really easy to access, and that's, you know, definitely one of the strengths of this place. And those Hawaiian canoe crops that Hokuao was defining, I just want to add one thing, the 26 Polynesian-introduced species that first came actually developed into more than what's, what remains is about a 166 variety. So we're talking about ko, and kalo, and wala, ava, maya. There used to be more than 800 varieties of kalo that were unique to Hawaii and those developed, you know, in

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place over thousands of years of agriculture. So native Hawaiians are the most active stewards of this agricultural resource and that's really important to us, even though it's sandy soil. We don't grow crops for farming, but we're here to distribute those crops to people who do, and make sure that they're labeled correctly. So the lease extension before you today, as Director Peters explained, these are some pictures of the former zoo playground. And it did deteriorate to the point where it had to be removed in 2017, when the equipment was no longer repairable. It had been excluded from the lease because of liability issues and we're not professional playground maintainers. Now we've established a lawn, so this bottom picture as it's just a grassy area and its used, at the moment for, you know, when we have events and things like that. We would like in the new lease for that to be included, just so it can be part of the surrounding botanical garden. This is about what it looks like in terms of where it's located. The excluded area, it's about 1,200 square feet, and this new lease would begin, if and when you approve it, as soon as you approve it and go until 2041. So this is a bit about what we do. When I started in 2001, Rene Sylva, who was a groundskeeper when it was the zoo. He was still alive, and he used to stop by to see how the plants were doing, scold me for planting things in the wrong place. Once...one time, he saw me planting an ekaha fern in the ground, which it grows in the trees. So he helped me learn, but this public landscape, I really hope, you know, it has about a 126 species now, and I really hope it would make him proud. It's because of his vision and also the efforts of Lisa Schattenburg-Raymond, who formed the nonprofit Maui Nui Botanical Gardens, that our mission is here and, you know. Our mission being to foster appreciation and understanding of Maui Nui's plants, meaning the native and canoe plants of Maui County and their role in Hawaiian cultural expression by providing a gathering place for discovery, education, conservation. So our programs include those weekly volunteers, the weed-and-pot club that has been mentioned. I have a letter. There are a lot of kupuna, so some of them did not quite understand the eComment, but Aunt Gloria says, "I've been there since 2006." She's been coming every year. She's a docent, a lot of long-term volunteers. Even during the pandemic, we were able to do some mask distancing and we had about 4,000 hours donated. We also have the service learning and the Kupu members, like Jordan's testimony. And that's a really big part for people who are going to do long-term projects, come in almost like a staff member. Jordan and another Kupu member, Malia Rege[sic] are serving, served 900 hundred hours, and the school fieldtrip activities in 2020, they dropped off. Which we were having about historically about 50 school-group visits annually with about 1,400 participants. Everything from ethnobotany tours, to making kaula, to whatever's appropriate for the age group. That demand is starting to go back up again. And so we used 2020 to, on the bottom left, you see docent-led tours. I was a little overwhelmed with leading those myself. So we have about seven new volunteer docents who were trained throughout 2020 when we had that little break. We do offer the school activities for either free or \$2 per student, and then we also offer, you can reserve online, if you are a tourist visitor, you can do these ethnobotany tours. Those do cost \$20 per person by appointment. So we also have lots of walk-in visitors, which are starting to come back as well. And the audio tours, these little audio wands

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that we have. We don't have very many. We're working on turning this into an app. And its free admission for residents and free use of the audio tours for all residents, and \$10 for tourist visitors. And then we've also had paid cultural workshops, usually about 10 annually. Our most recent ones have been a kulolo-making workshop, using different Hawaiian varieties of Kalo, so they taste different. And the two-day imu workshop that just happened, this, last weekend, and I want to that Kaiea especially, because I know he's very tired. He was at that workshop, and then our upcoming Kapa dyes with native plants. So that's going to led by Lisa. We also do the plant giveaways and weekly plant sales that were mentioned. That started, the weekly part of that started during the pandemic and we, there's a slight correction to our application that was submitted pre-pandemic. We actually are only open five days a week, but on the sixth day, which is Monday, today, we are closed so that staff can do work without visitors and we do a weekly plant giveaway instead. So we put the plants out at our front entrance. It's first come first serve, we just say, you know, one or two per person depending on what it is. And so it's mostly central Maui residents that are getting those because you got to get there to get 'em, but then we do a weekly plant sale as well. And in 2020, we donated more than 4,000 native plants and heritage crop varieties, including 84 kalo varieties, 13 ava varieties, 36 ko, 11 maya, and 22 oala cultivars. That's what we have in our collection. We did not donate the maya, because their spongy top, but the others did get donated. And then our annual events are starting to come back. Hoomau, we hope they can do that next year. We love having that event. Loulu, I'm waiting to hear from the Mayor, whether an in-person version will be allowed with some COVID restrictions, and there will be workshops leading up to that event. So that celebrates breadfruit and breadfruit cooking and all things breadfruit. And then our Arbor Day garden expo and tree giveaway has been happening for the last 19 years. So historically, we're hosting about 11,000 visitors, 90 percent of which are residents. And the event surveys say that about 25 percent of these event attendees are native Hawaiian. And then last but not least, you heard, mention of a seedbank and that is something that we been doing since 2015. So Cathy Davenport, up on the left here is, on the top, she's our staff person for this project. She's a former ethnobotany teacher, and worked for the State quarantine division. So our organization has grants that are not County grants, that provide money for her and for interns to go out into naturals areas that are managed by conservation partners, such as watershed partnerships, to collect seeds for specific projects and then she brings those seeds back and there's kind of a lot labor involved in cleaning them, and drying them, and packaging them in these foil envelopes, and then they are kept for those conservation organizations. And they can last for 10 years or more in the refrigerator or the freezer, depending on the species. And we have a lot of support statewide. There wasn't a Maui seedbank before we started it. There are plenty of people and organizations that store seeds but they mostly do it for themselves and for their own projects, and this is more of a community and conservation organization support. So on the bottom you can see some of our interns doing some of that work, and the very middle is actually a County project at the Waiehu Golf Course, which is where the last population of our logo plant exists, so we go out and maintain with our

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volunteers, try to maintain that plant population. So this seedbank is secured for the next three years. We got a U.S. Forest Service grant to help it. It's going to be focused mostly on ohia, lots of other stuff I could talk about. We're doing some improvements, but I want to respect your time. So mahalo. If you have any other questions, I've been with the garden for 17 years and I'd be happy to answer them, so.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, thank you. Thank you very much. Can you briefly say what kind of improvements you are doing, since you mentioned that you are.

MS. SHERRILL: Yes, absolutely. So we are working on an improvement project on an acre of this property that was previously where the water buffalo used to live. And it had become sort of our green waste area and it was all, you know, weed, plants, and kiawe. And so, we have selectively forestry mulched all the kiawe, although we've left five really beautiful oak trees for shade and we're planting new trees for shade. We're working on putting in a driveway and doing some grading so that that can be the area for all of our storage and a volunteer work area as well as the new nursey. We want to move the nursery from its current position to this new area, partly because we'd like to have a different water source for our nursey to try to use the Parks Department's well water rather than potable water for the nursey.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, very good. That is impressive, well water instead of, yeah.

MS. SHERRILL: Well, you know. I know Director Peters is very concerned with the water and we are trying to make those changes, so that, yes, so that we're not using as much potable water. And we do a lot of drip irrigation, mulching, you know, we're considered a zero-scaping demonstration garden, but we have to really pay attention to what's going to happen with water. We have enough funding right now to get to the point where the storage areas are made, and then we're going to be raising money for the nursey to be reconstructed down there.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you. Thank you very much. Members, anybody have any more questions? Let's start off with Shane Sinenci. Are you still on, Shane? I can't...are you there, Shane? I can't see him. Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: Mahalo.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, there. Do you have any questions?

COUNCILMEMBER SINENCI: I'm here. Yeah. None. Unfortunately, I can't see the presentation, but I'm listening in. Thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Thank you for being here. Ms. Lee, do you have any questions?

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COUNCILMEMBER LEE: No. Thank you. Thank you for the presentation. I'm very familiar with this nonprofit, and very supportive. So, thank you very much.

MS. SHERRILL: Mahalo, Councilmember Lee.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Very good. Tamara Paltin.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you. I'm not sure if my question is for Ms. Sherrill or for Director Peters. I just was wondering we're renewing the lease five years early because we're adding on the former playground area? Is that correct?

MS. PETERS: Yes.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And besides the 15-year extension and the addition of the former playground area, that's the only change from the old lease to the new lease.

MS. PETERS: Thank you, Chair. Chair, yes. Member Paltin, that's correct.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: And then I guess my last question is why was it chosen to last to 2041? I saw some other leases that we did with various, more amounts of time, or what, was there any significance with the 2041 date?

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Karla.

MS. PETERS: Vice-Chair, I think it's, so that was the request of the lessee. So maybe Tamara did you want to share?

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, okay. Tamara, do you have a comment?

MS. SHERRILL: Yes. I actually in my application, I just requested the same lease term as before. Our lease started in 2011 and it ends in 2026. So you're right it is 5 years early to try to include this play ground section. So if there was any chance to get more, a longer lease, of course that would help us with funding and, you know, people giving longer term grants. But I want to work with the Parks Department in whatever way they want and just, you know, just trying to keep the status quo at this point and not make, you know, crazy demands so, that's why I put 15 years in the application, and then, because there was already five years left, that's why it goes to 2041.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So, Director Peters, would there be a problem with 2050? A nice round number.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Director Peters.

MS. PETERS: No. You know, I just want to echo. Thank you, Vice-Chair Sugimura, and thank you, Member Paltin. I want to echo also that all of the written and

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oral testimony. Ms. Sherrill and the organization has been a very cooperative and valuable partner. And she's always willing to communicate as far as the lease is concerned. Any type of activity and it's always, you know, and requesting our Department's approval for those items outside of what is described in the activity of the lease so, we would have no problem with that. And, you know, I again echo the support of the testifiers.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Thank you, Director Peters. Ms. Sherrill, does 2050 sound good, or do you think longer would be better?

MS. SHERRILL: I'm just, thank you. I'm just really touched. And I mean I, yes 2050 is wonderful. I'm...what helps us is, you know, just knowing that when we're approaching donors, that they know that we're going to be there. That's the main thing, yeah. So what I, we don't want anything other than what's reasonable for other organizations and however the Parks Department works with those organizations, but, yes it's very touching. Thank you, so much.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay. Chair, Vice-Chair, at the appropriate time, I'd like you to amend to 2050.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Yeah.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Okay, thank you.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: That's all my questions. Sorry to monopolize a little.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Oh, no, that's good. So Members, no one else has questions. I just want to also state that, all the testimony that came in. And as I said, as we were starting our meeting, more positive testimony came in. And I was glad to see Hokuao Pellegrino. His voice is always very well rounded in terms of education, understanding the aina, and definitely understanding the importance of this organization. And for me, I was glad to also see, Lisa Schattenburg-Raymond who was the former Executive Director that I knew. I'm sure there were others. Pueo Pata always speaks loudly to me. And I learned today about Rene Sylva. Was he just, was he a community member that loved the culture and the aina? Or how does he fit into this picture? He's a new name to me, but several people mentioned him. Tamara, you can answer.

MS. SHERRILL: Thank you. Yes. So Uncle Rene Sylva, is a native Hawaiian, and he was actually. He was a turtle fisherman and had, his family still has land on Paia Bay. He helped to, this was back in the 1970's, when he put away his nets and helped to list the both species of honu as endangered. So he got interested in endangered species. He was interested in native Hawaiian rights. He was an activist with Kahoolawe, and he was a grounds, the groundskeeper at the County zoo. So he is the reason why Maui Nui Botanical Gardens started landscaping

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with native plants. He lived on Paia Bay. He hiked all along that coast. This was a coastal area and he was bringing all these little, as I've heard people say little schmucky [sic] plants, that nobody was paying attention to, and then establishing them as part of landscape and then labeling them and doing tours with high school students and he attracted botanists from all over. So it was his work and then from that formed the native Hawaiian plant society, and they used to meet at the Botanical Gardens. And so, when the zoo did close down in '97, it was Lisa Schattenburg-Raymond who was promoting the nonprofit Maui Nui Botanical Gardens to take over stewardship of that plant collection and develop the garden as a botanical garden.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Interesting.

MS. SHERRILL: So he passed in 2008. But I mean, but yeah, he was a very influential in lots of ways, not just with the botanical garden, but he was one of the first people in the state to landscape with native plants. So he was really quite a leader.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you for sharing that. I really appreciate it. I hope you have some kind of plaque about him or something at the Maui Nui Botanical Gardens to honor him and his, you know, beginning work. I never heard this story before, so thank you for sharing it.

MS. SHERRILL: Oh, you're welcome. Yes, we do.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: And so, Members, if there are no other questions, or Karla Peters, you want to say anything else, Director?

MS. PETERS: Thank you, Vice-Chair. No. We're ready, whenever you folks are. I just actually, I did want to share that Mr. Sylva. There were old trees, right Ms. Sherrill, that were onsite that may still be there, that he planted. And our staff all know that as well.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Aww.

MS. SHERRILL: Thank you. Yes. I just heard a story of that. I think the same as the amphitheater trees. They were all planted by him at the same time, so.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Amazing people, right. I, that's very interesting. I will say that as part of this lease, the organization is required to submit an annual report, and I'm going to, just by talking to Tamara, and listening to the community speak so strongly about your work. That I am going to assume that any Member who wants to see it, can ask the Parks Department for a copy of the report that you file annually. So thank you very much for doing that. Also, the lease requires insurance. And all the standard things which I think they have complied with. And so at this time them, I'm going to, oh and the lease is a \$100. The cost is a \$100 per year, and for 6,367 acres for the annual rent of a \$100 and the lease

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then. At this time, I'm going to request for a motion. They're going to put a motion on floor and then Tamara you can make your amendment. I'm going to request for a proposed, approval of a proposed resolution, entitled "Authorizing a Grant of a Lease of County Recreational Space, Maui Nui Botanical Gardens, Inc.," and the purpose of the resolution is to authorize an extension to the grant of a lease of County Recreational Space located at tax map key (2) 3-8-007:001 portion, which is approximately 6,367 acres for an annual rent of \$100. I need a motion.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: So moved.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Thank you.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Second.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Second by Ms. Lee. So moved by Tamara Paltin, seconded by Ms. Lee. Tamara, you want to make your amendment?

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: Yes. I'd like to amend the end date from 2041 to 2050.

COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Second.

COUNCILMEMBER PALTIN: I move to amend, sorry.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. So moved by Tamara Paltin, seconded by Member Lee to the lease, for the lease expiration date to be amended, to be June 30, 2050 instead of 2041. Corporation Counsel, do you see anything that we need to do to make sure that we are in compliance?

MS. DESJARDINS: No. That sounds great.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. Thank you. So at this time, Members, you want to take a vote on the amendment? All in favor say "aye", raise your hand.

COUNCILMEMBERS VOICED AYE.

VICE-CHAIR SUGIMURA: Okay. That's four of us, unanimous *[sic]*.

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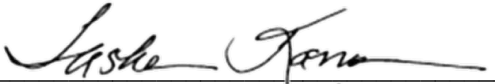
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the university also, I think, and the kids. Thank you. Karla Peters, you always do a good job. Thank you very much. I like working with you. And Members, at this time, if there's no other business, this meeting is now adjourned. . . . (gavel) . . .

ADJOURN: 10:00 a.m.

APPROVED BY:



TASHA KAMA, Chair
Human Concerns and Parks Committee

hcp:min:210802

Transcribed by: Jean Pokipala