

HAWAII COUNTY COUNCIL

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Pahoa Mauka, Kalapana

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Aloha Kakou,

These recent months have been a time of great change on a local and global level. I would first like to express how grateful that I am for the strength, resilience and awareness of our community. The ability for us to work together in times such as these, care for each other and malama 'aina is critical for our future and for the future of this planet. In my 3rd and 4th month in office I have been learning the ropes and have been very busy meeting with department heads, community groups, and residents. Please see below for a summary of what our office has been up to:

Legislation- On March 8th I introduced two resolutions, Resolution 81-17 and Resolution 82-17. The first one urged the state to pass two bills currently being heard, one allowing **Tiny Homes** for ag land, and the other stopping counties from requiring minimum house sizes. Resolution 82-17 urged the state to prioritize the release of \$15 million to the county previously authorized for the construction, repair, and maintenance of **feeder roads and alternative routes for Highway 130**. The council passed both resolutions.

- **Supporting local farmers-** On Feb 22nd. I was able to pass a resolution giving \$2,500 to the Food Basket that will double the SNAP-EBT benefits for certain days of shopping at the Maku'u market.
- **Styrofoam Ban-** While the council passed the styrofoam bill out of committee, Council Members Dru Kanuha, Tim Richards, and Eileen O'Hara (sponsor), all had amendments they wanted to discuss so Council member O'Hara opted to delay the

bill and create an ad-hoc committee to ensure the bill is foolproof. It should be heard again in June.

- County Composting Facility- As you may be aware the county had a contract for a full composting facility for Hilo and Kona which the [mayor recently terminated](#) based on a report by the Environmental Management Department, saying the county was paying too much and that it didn't meet the goals of our Zero Waste Implementation Plan. I will be reviewing the report this week and the council will be discussing next week in Kona. **In the meanwhile, if you have any thoughts please let me know at [808-961-8263](tel:808-961-8263) or email me back.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hawaiian Acres Farmers Market now open: Support your local farmers at the Hawaiian Acres Community Center on the corner of roads 8 and C, from 12- 3 pm. For more information call [808-966-9892](tel:808-966-9892) or email info@hawaiianacres.org

Puna Community Development Plan Action Committee upcoming

meeting: You are invited to attend the upcoming PCDP Action Committee meeting, where public comment is welcome at the beginning of each meeting. It will be held at the Pahoia Neighborhood Facility on 5/9 at 3pm. View the [development plan here](#) and contact Hans Santiago if you have any questions [808-961-8165](tel:808-961-8165).

Need extra money? Become a driver- Uber launching this Friday, 3/17: On March 15th I meet with Uber representatives to discuss how they can help transportation in Hawaii, (I convinced them that there is sufficient demand for jobs AND rides in Puna). With Uber, anyone with a smartphone can locate available drivers near them and get affordable rides. Anyone can apply to be a driver if they meet certain requirements, and can [apply here](#). I will be hosting a public meeting with a Uber representative on how you can participate in increasing transportation accessibility and our local economy next month, TBA.

Shuttle for the Disabled and Elderly- Beginning in May, there will be several vans funded by the State and County to provide free transportation to the disabled, (over

18 year old), and elderly, island wide. For more information call 961-8777.

East Hawai'i CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Basic Training

Course: Free Class: March 18th at Aupuni Conference Room from 8:30 – 4:30 For more information on CERT, visit <https://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/> To reserve a space contact Patti Pinto at hawaiicert@gmail.com or call Patti at [808-935-0031](tel:808-935-0031)

Connectivity and Emergency Response Subcommittee (CERS) upcoming

meeting: You are invited to attend the CERS monthly meeting held at the Kea'au Community Center on 03/28 at 2 pm. For more information please email Patti Pinto- pintonian@gmail.com

Free Hazardous Waste Disposal: The next will be a free Residential Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event will be at the Hilo Transfer Station on June 3rd between 8:30 am and 3:30 pm. They will be accepting automotive fluids, used batteries, fluorescent lights and pesticides, for a more complete list [click here](#). If you have any questions or comments contact Chris Chin-Chance, Recycling Specialist with the Department of Environmental Management at 961-8554 or email to recycle3@co.hawaii.hi.us.

Puna Neighborhood Watch Meetings:

Neighborhood watch groups are proven to make communities safer. Here is a list of our local groups and how to can get involved:

Ainaloa Neighborhood Watch: At the Ainaloa Longhouse on the first Tuesday of every month at 6 pm. For more information please contact Judy Haney at [808-966-8114](tel:808-966-8114) of haneypaws@aol.com

Fern Acres Neighborhood Watch: At the Fern Acres Community Association(FACA) Building, on the corner of Pole 7 and Lehua, on the last Tuesday of every month at 6 pm. For more information please call the FACA office at [808-968-6006](tel:808-968-6006)

Fern Forest Neighborhood Watch: At the Fern Forrest Community Lot, on the 3rd Saturday of every month at 10 am. For more information, please contact Ron Costa by phone at [469-471-4657](tel:469-471-4657) or by email at rcostamhs65@outlook.com

Leilani Neighborhood Watch: At the Leilani Community Center on the last Thursday of

every month at 7 pm. For more information please contact the Leilani Community Association office at [808-965-9555](tel:808-965-9555)

Orchidland Neighborhood Watch: At Blanes Drive-In in Orchidland on the 2nd Thursday of every month at 6 pm. For more information please contact Sharon by phone at [808-430-5048](tel:808-430-5048) or by email at sfmccar@earthlink.net

Abandoned Vehicles: For private roads that are publicly traveled, call police dept non-emergency line 935-3311 with the location, make, model, and any other information on the vehicle. Officer will tag it with a notice, after 24 hours s/he will make an abandoned vehicle report, and vehicle will be towed in a few days to a week.

Vice/Drug Tip Hotlines: There is a 24-hour anonymous vice/drug tip hotline for you to provide the Police department information on drug use and distribution, as well as vice issues like prostitution, gambling (cock and dog fighting), and other related crimes. Call 808-934-VICE (934-8423)

Student applications for Native Youth Congress being accepted:

The USGS National Climate Change and Wildlife Science Center is inviting native students apply for the [Native Youth Community Adaptation and Leadership Congress](#), July 9-15, 2017 in Shepherdstown, WV. Students will learn leadership skills for addressing conservation issues in their communities.

Highlights from 3/7 council presentation from the Hawaii Island Rat Lungworm Working group:

- Only diagnosis is spinal tap, they're currently working on a blood based diagnostic.
- Solutions: Best method to educate residents in rural communities is through the school system. 10,000 copies of "mystery of rat lung worm disease" booklet given has been effective for students to educate their families.
- Properly wash lettuce: take leaves apart, wash and inspect each stalk. Wash with potable water, commercial veggie wash, or baking soda water.
- Develop pest management methods for school gardens. The group identified 5

schools with diverse elevations and developed non-toxic, “shelters” for snails and slugs, removed more than 3,000 slugs and snails from each garden.

- Effective non-toxic slug reduction: catch slugs in a “Slug Shelter” 2ft by 2ft cardboard on slightly wet wood boards, or lightly folded up weedcloth or plastic, put in cleared grass area, in shade. Slugs will be drawn to the "shelter" where you can easily collect them, with gloves or chopsticks, and dispose of them in a "slug jug."
- The group is currently working on a study to find a catchment filter sufficient for filtering out the disease. Findings should be out by summer.

NACo- In the last week of February I went with 3 other council members to Washington DC, for the National Association of Counties (NACo) legislative conference and to meet with Hawaii's congress members. I met city and county representatives from all over the U.S. and got to talk about issues, ideas, and solutions. I was also able to talk to experts on homelessness and opioid addiction, all relevant to our district. I drafted reports on each which are available on my Facebook page. We also met with Brian Shatz, Tulsi Gabbard, Mazie Hirono, and a staff member of Colleen Hanabusa in which I advocated for Puna's need for help with our roads, internet and cell access, and invasive species, (including prevention).

Pahoa Community Meeting- Thank you to the more than 90 people attended the 2nd community meeting in Pahoa to expressed their concerns to the Chief of Police, community police officers, the fire department, and Director of Public Works, Frank Demarco and the Director of the Planning Department, Michael Yee who all listened intently.

The police department shared news of their increased presence in Pahoa since the fire, and a feeling of success in improving the level of public safety in Puna. The Fire Department, Battalion Chief shared that the

recent fire was confirmed to have been started in the pawn shop, and that the damage was too extensive to confirm the exact source of the fire.



With the help of Mr. Demarco and encouragement from community members, a crosswalk was placed near Pahoa Intermediate/High School.

Infrastructure for Pahoa- Public works assured me that the sidewalk in front of Luquin's will be re-opened in 3 weeks, if not sooner. On Feb. 9th I met with them and pushed for more street lamps and cross walks for the village, and improvement of the post office road for pedestrian use, (school children). On a side note, if you have any information on the young girl who was hit while crossing Highway 130 in front of HAAS school please call me at 961-8263.

Discussing Homelessness with Mathew Doherty-Executive Director of the US Inter-agency Council on Homelessness

Other Highlights of what I've been up to:

Regarding Connectivity:

- On Feb. 1st. my staff and I walked through the district delivering surveys to those living on streets approved for connectivity projects within our subdivisions.
- On Feb. 13th I met with members of the Fern Acres Community Association, the Connectivity and Emergency Response Subcommittee and the Department of Public Works to follow up on the progress of connectivity plans, especially in the area of S. Lauko road. Public works engineers confirmed the Puhala to S. Kopua connection will be their first project.
- On Feb. 16th members of the Fern Forrest Community Association met with our legislative assistant, Nelson Ho to discuss their desire to open up Kaleponi road for connectivity.
- On Feb. 28th our office aide, Amber Shouse attended the Connectivity and Emergency Response Subcommittee meeting, where she heard community concerns and shared information regarding connectivity, Puna roads, and upcoming legislation with community members.

Support for Community Associations

On Feb. 1st myself and District 4 Council Member Eileen O'Hara met with the Ku'ikahi Mediation Center and talked about funding a program for Ku'ikahi to provide tailored facilitation support to associations. The executive director will be bringing us a proposal in the next few months. She also sent me a list of resources for associations which our office will compile on a web platform to make available to the public.

Meeting with the Department of Water Supply: On Feb 2nd I met with the manager of the DWS to learn how the department works and discuss challenges that are facing Puna in regards to access to clean drinking water. They explained that most areas in Puna do meet the density requirements for water access, and they will be sending me those requirements. I urged them to consider Ainaloa subdivision to see if they meet the density requirements for county water hook up. They also pointed me to the correct authority to get lighting and ADA compliance at the Mt. View water spigot.

Meeting with the Corporation Counsel: On Feb. 2nd I met with newly appointed Corporation Counsel Joe Kamelamela. I informed him on the complex infrastructure challenges facing Puna and the federal complaint ruling in September of 2000 that found the County of Hawaii and the State DOT guilty of violating the civil rights of Puna residents, and delivered to him a follow up complaint being filed by residents alleging that the discrimination is ongoing. We are also discussing options private subdivision road improvement.

Pahoa Regional Town Plan Meeting: On Feb. 6th I met with Micheal Yee the Director of the Planning Department, Hans Santiago from the Planning Department, Roy Takemoto Assistant to the Mayor, and Council Member Eileen O'hara. at the meeting we discussed the proposed Master Plan for Pahoa and infrastructure challenges that are currently impeding economic development. Mr. Yee informed us the Pahoa Master Plan contract will start in 5 months.

Hawaiian Homelands: On Feb. 9th, hosted by former council member Aunty Emily Na'ole, I attended the Maku'u Homeowners Association Meeting where officials from the Department of Hawaiian Homelands to see how I can support the expedition of giving displaced Native Hawaiian beneficiaries their land that they've already waited too long for. I gave DHHL my formal commitment to introduce any legislation that may urge the state to fund this process.

Upcoming Legislation:

Every two weeks I will send you council agenda email keeping you posted on upcoming council items, separate from these office newsletters.

As always you may contact me at my Hilo office number: [808-961-8263](tel:808-961-8263), or by email at Jen.Ruggles@hawaiicounty.gov or follow me [on Facebook](#).

All my best,
Jen Ruggles