



CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

MINUTES

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2008

The Agricultural Development Task Force held a meeting on Wednesday, August 13, 2008 at 6:35 p.m. at the Pearl City Urban Garden Center, 955 Kamehameha Highway, Pearl City, 96702.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Yuki Kitagawa (Chair)
Dean Okimoto (Vice Chair)
Charley Ice
Cal Lum
Richard McCormack
Jimmy Nakatani
Kapu Smith

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None.

ADMINISTRATION/OTHERS PRESENT:

Kimberly Ribellia	Councilmember Dela Cruz's staff
Al and Joan Santoro	Poamoho Organic Produce
Gil Riveire	
Monique Van Der Stroom	MV Farms, Inc.
Brenda Kochi	South County Farm Bureau
Walter and Frances Nitta	
Sey K	
Alec Sou	Aloun Farms, Inc.
Doug Luka	Nalo Farm
Dan Nellis	Dole Hawaii
Mark Takemoto	Dole/Castle & Cooke
Carolyn Bailey	APAC
John McHugh	Crop Care Hawaii, LLC
Cindy Goldstein	
Grant Hamachi	East County Farm Bureau
Fred Mencher	East County Farm Bureau
Earl Yamamoto	State Department of Agriculture (DOA)
Gilbert Araki	South Country Farm Bureau

Ernest Tottori	
Mary Lily	
Kuulei Lipton	
See Ba Thee	Alii Turf U.S.
Albert Yamamoto	West County Farm Bureau
Jari Sugano	University of Hawaii
Myron Murakami	East County Farm Bureau
Juanita and Robert Brown	
Edith Ho	
Cecilio E. Domingo	D-E & Associates
Paul Kaneshiro	
Stephanie Whalen	HARC
Susan Matsushima	
Wu Ching Ho	
Mike Sou	Aloun Farms, Inc.
Dan Nellis	
David Arakawa	Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF)

AGENDA ITEMS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the July 7, 2008, meeting were approved as circulated.

Chair Kitagawa explained the purpose of the meeting was to acquire feedback and ideas from the farming community on curtailing the abuse of Agricultural Subdivisions.

The Task Force members identified themselves and proceeded to hear testimony.

ITEM 2 SUBDIVISION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS

The following individuals provided testimony:

1. Al Santoro
2. Carolyn Bailey
3. Fred Mencher
4. Juanita Kawamoto, HFB
5. Ernest Totori
6. Wallace Nitta

7. Frances Nitta
8. Myron Murakami
9. Stephanie Whalen
10. David Arakawa, LURF
11. Albert Yamamoto
12. Joan Santoro
13. See Ba Thee
14. Alex Sou, Aloun Farms
15. Susan Matsushima
16. Cindy Goldstein
17. Earl Yamamoto, DOA
18. Dan Nellis

Mr. Al Santoro of Poamoho Organic Produce made the following comments and suggestions:

- There are existing zoning and Ag use laws that lead to abuse.
- Rezone 2 and 5-acre lots that are marginally productive into country or other designation.
- Increase parcels to 10 or 20-acre lots and increments above to discourage Gentlemen Estates.
- Eliminate the hobbyist and grandfather in the real farmers.
- Eliminate horses from Ag use.
- Provide tax exemption to those that meet zoning and full Ag use requirements.
- There is a lack of enforcement.
- Review and redefine Ag use by establishing economic limits, gross income limits and commercial standards.
- Create a peer review board.
- Reducing the high standards of infrastructure required by the City and County for an Ag subdivision would: 1) decrease the cost of

land, 2) make it more affordable to farmers, and 3) make it more difficult for development into Gentlemen Estates.

At this juncture, Task Force members made the following comments:

- The meeting was called to develop criteria to create rules to support and ensure Ag for the long term.
- Members in the Ag community objected to raising the acreages to 5, 10 or higher.
- Establishing a peer review board and monitoring procedures may be cost prohibitive.
- To control Gentlemen Estates it would be better to approach the problem before the subdivision plan is approved.

Fred Mencher of East County Farm Bureau made the following suggestions:

- Eliminate the current required infrastructure and allow just a single paved access road to the subdivision that would effectively reduce the value of the land for luxury housing.
- Infrastructure requirements should be consistent with Ag use.
- The developer should not be allowed to remove pre-existing agricultural or aqua-cultural infrastructure within the subdivision except for improvements.
- All agricultural activities that are consistent with the parcels Ag 1 or Ag 2 Zoning should be permitted on all lots in Ag subdivisions.
- As a condition of subdivision approval, all lands within the subdivision should be registered as Important Ag Lands (IAL) with the State.
- Establish land value based on a percentage of the expected value of future crops by the City or State. Any subdivision whose lot

sales prices are higher than this value should be considered non-agricultural.

- Enforcement is essential and inspectors should have the authority to review and reject subdivision applications based on established criteria.

Member Okimoto expressed concern about Mr. Mencher's suggestion of land value based on crop value calculation because income would vary widely depending on the type of crop grown.

Ernest Tottori of HPC Foods provided the following comments:

- Zoning of agricultural lands in increments is a bad idea.
- Laws have been circumvented and created today's Ag problems.
- Cutting up the land into smaller parcels limits the farmers' ability to make a living.
- The State should be more proactive in protecting, preserving and identifying important Ag lands.

Juanita Kawamoto suggested that:

- A City or State appointed Ag Design Review Board should be created.
- The Board would recognize Hawaii's unique economic, agricultural and environmental state and help direct the future of agriculture.
- Require developers or individuals to appear before the Board to explain and show what will be done on the land before any change in the use and any development of an agricultural property be allowed.

Wallace Nitta related his views:

- There is a need to identify and set aside prime Ag land and water for farming.

- Agriculture will not survive by placing farmers on marginal lands.
- The Clean Air and Water Act is impacting farmers.

At this juncture, Chair Kitagawa requested input from the audience regarding a Resolution setting minimum lot sizes of 10 and 25 acres for Ag subdivisions.

1. Mr. Mencher commented that existing farmers with smaller lots would be zoned out of their lots because the Resolution did not address grand fathering existing smaller lots.
2. Mr. Murakami commented that increasing lot sizes would encourage Ag activity but costs associated with infrastructure would increase unless an exemption from infrastructure requirements is considered.
3. Ms. Whalen commented that infrastructure cost would be overwhelming because the Ag subdivision needs to meet urban subdivision standards.

Earl Yamamoto, State DOA explained House Bill 3032:

- It will be re-introduced at the 2009 Legislative session.
- The purpose of the Bill is to establish procedures to ensure that Ag use is in place before a farm dwelling is allowed on a subdivided lot.
- A definition for allowable uses on Ag lands is also included.
- There are two categories under the Bill, 1) agribusiness which deal with the production and sale of Ag products and 2) subsistence Ag.
- The Bill will apply to all new subdivisions and the existing subdivisions will be grand fathered in.

Member Nakatani asked for feedback on whether the farmers agreed with increasing the Ag 1 and Ag 2 lot sizes to 20-acre minimums. There was no consensus from the audience on this topic.

Other related discussion:

- By setting the minimum of 20-acre lots, it may encourage the urbanization of property since farmers may not be able to sell their substandard size lots to other farmers.
- With the identification of IAL some of the concerns that have been brought up may be resolved.
- The farming community needs to be more proactive and show up in force, as a group, to voice their concerns at the Legislature.
- Abolish Ag subdivisions unless it is in dedicated IAL.
- Require a certain percentage of income be derived from the Ag operation.
- A 20-acre minimum may be cost prohibitive to a new farmer.
- Set a 10-acre minimum as opposed to 20.
- Use GPS and satellite technology to monitor compliance of Ag plan.
- Defining agriculture, establishing Ag values and parameters are essential in dealing with the issue of Ag subdivisions.
- The lack of definition for the term Agriculture makes it difficult for enforcement.
- Incremental review of the implementation of Ag plans in place to insure compliance.
- Review Resolution 08-08, which limits the size of the home. Limiting the size of the floor space limits the size and value of the home.

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Chair Kitagawa thanked everyone for coming out to the meeting and for an informative session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 8, 2008, 1:00 P.M., back to City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.