



## DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 13

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### **DRAFT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES** **THURSDAY, May 6, 2010** **PAUAAH COMMUNITY CENTER**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Frank Lavoie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. **with a quorum of seven (7) members present.** Note – This nine (9) member Board requires five (5) members for a quorum and to take official Board action.

**Members Present:** Alvin Au (arrived at 7:10 p.m.), Anthony Chang (arrived at 7:10 p.m.), Frank Lavoie, Lynne Matusow, Carlton N. Middleton, Dolores Mollring, T.A. Ruby, Tom Smyth and Stanford Yuen.

**Members Absent:** None.

**Vacancies:** None

**Guests:** Tyler Burner, Officer Aaron Agmata and Officer Mark Boyce (Honolulu Police Department), Fire Fighter Ken Kahahawai (Honolulu Fire Department), Gwen Abella, Ed Korybski (Arts District Merchants Association), Chu Lan Kwok (Chinatown Business and Community Association), Alfonso and Diana Renquilio, Ruth Layton (Safe Haven), Richard Doolin (Safe Haven), AL Canopin (Councilmember Rod Tam's Representative), Connie G. Meisler, Bill Brennan (Mayors representative), Rep. Karl Rhoads (State House 28), Phil McInnis (Senator Chun Oakland's Office) and Kazu McArthur (Neighborhood Commission Office Staff).

**INTRODUCTION OF BOARD MEMBERS:** Those present introduced themselves.

#### **CITY MONTHLY REPORTS:**

**Honolulu Fire Department (HFD):** Fire Fighter Ken Kahahawai reported;

- **April 2010 Statistics:** 4 structure fires, 5 rubbish fires, 99 medical emergencies, and 21 miscellaneous calls.
- **Fire Safety Tip:** The upcoming school intercession ushers in summer, which usually accompanies hot weather and dry vegetation conditions. The risk of wildland fires increases as summer approaches. The following are helpful safety precautions: 1.) Prepare and practice a fire escape plan. 2.) Make a 10 to 30 foot wide fire break by clearing vegetation and clutter around all structures. This break is known and referred to as survivable space.

At the first sighting of a wildland fire: 1.) Call 911 immediately. 2.) Be alert and watchful of the fire's progress, and prepare to evacuate. 3.) Close all entrance doors, windows and other openings that would allow embers to access a building's interior and thoroughly water down the structure's roof. Embers are smoldering remains of a fire that can be carried by the wind and can start other fires with proper conditions.

Questions, comments and concerns:

1. **Kinau Villa:** It was questioned and clarified regarding the fire at Kinau Villa, that the fire did not occur within the fire company's district therefore, a report was not filed.
2. **Kamalii Rubbish Bin Fires:** An individual was identified as the culprit for fires being set to the Kamalii rubbish bins.

**Honolulu Police Department (HPD):** Officer Aaron Agmata reported;

**April 2010 Statistics:** 12 assaults, 1 burglary, 5 drug offenses, 9 driving under the influence (D.U.I.), 5 family offenses, 5 graffiti offenses, 82 motor vehicle collisions, 3 motor vehicle thefts, 12 property damages, 2 robberies, 4 prostitution arrests, 12 unauthorized entry into a motor vehicle (UEMV) and 198 miscellaneous calls.



Board members Au and Chang arrived at 7:10 p.m.; **9 members now present.**

Questions, comments and concerns followed:

1. Camera Status Update: It was reported that cameras 19 -27 are out and repairs are being scheduled.
2. Prostitution Arrests: Matusow said she was interviewed by a television reporter concerning the number of islandwide arrests of Johns (prostitution customers) on O'ahu last year. Matusow believed that more than that number was in the board's area. It was asked why there were only a reported 34 arrests of Johns (prostitution customers) last year. HPD replied that the narcotics vice unit is responsible for arrests of Johns and responsible for reporting on those statistics.
3. Police Statistics: Smyth stated that year - to - year statistics are more accurate than month - to - month statistics in identifying crime trends in an area.
4. Smith Street: Concerns were raised about the homeless crowding the sidewalk, vendors not obeying space limitations and graffiti on the police substation. It was stated that officers have been instructed to patrol the area to identify vendors violating space limitations. It was also suggested that the Board look at the possibility of increasing fines to vendors exceeding allotted space limitations.
5. Graffiti: HPD was thanked for the enforcement of graffiti laws.
6. Fort Street Mall: It was reported that students are feeling intimidated by panhandling activities along Fort Street Mall. It was stated that the students need to notify HPD when incidents occur.
7. Police Walk: There will be an HPD memorial walk on Monday, May 10, 2010 to honor fallen officers. Participants will meet at the Alapai police station at 5:00 p.m., proceed along Beretania Street and end at the State Capitol.
8. Homeless on Sidewalks: Clarification was requested about the law concerning the homeless sleeping on sidewalks. It was stated that as long as the sidewalk is passable, the homeless cannot be cited.
9. Drug Activity: It was questioned what should be done if drug activity is suspected in an area. It was answered that persons should call the narcotics hotline.

Neighborhood Citizens' Patrol: Mollring reported that no prostitution activities have been noticed for the last two months.

Questions, comments and concerns followed:

Vendor Trash: Concern was raised that vendors situated near Maunakea Street and Hotel Street are leaving their trash on the sidewalk and not allowing sufficient sidewalk space for pedestrians.

#### COMMUNITY CONCERNS:

Hawaii Pacific University (HPU): There was no representative present. No report was given.

Honolulu Culture and Arts District: Ed Korybski gave a review of the recent Cinco De Mayo festival and presented an idea to start a mini street festival every third Friday of the month which would include activities aimed towards attracting an older crowd. The public was also invited to the small business resource center for a presentation by the University of Hawaii School of Architecture.

Questions, comments and concerns followed;

Chinatown Gateway Plaza: Lavoie asked if anything is being done to remedy noise and street urination problems during festivals near Chinatown Gateway Plaza. Korbyski stated that guards have been placed at noted problem areas to prevent trash and street urination. Korbyski stated that crews are trying to work quietly and noise will always be an issue no matter the location. An offer was made to meet with the Tenants Association to resolve any concerns.

Safe Haven: Richard Doolin reported that three (3) residents have moved out and three (3) tenants have moved in. It was also reported that a resident at Safe Haven won an art contest and his piece will be displayed at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. The front glass has been tinted for privacy and confidentiality purposes. There are currently part time and relief employment opportunities being offered. Several donations have been received to support the program.

Honolulu Rail Transit: No representative was present; no report was given.

Chinatown Business and Community Association (CBCA): Chu Lan Kwok reported that a trilingual pamphlet from CBCA and the City Environmental Services has been created and circulated to Chinatown merchants to educate them about proper garbage disposal. It was reported that the request to place a crosswalk on Pauahi Street is now in the bidding process. The plaque at the police substation is being prepared for rededication. CBCA will participate in Project Clean on Saturday, June 5, 2010.

Questions, Comments and Concerns:

Thank You: Gratitude was expressed to CBCA for their contributions to the community.

Public Concerns:

1. Human Feces: A concern was raised about human feces along the sidewalk of Pauahi Street.
2. Drug Dealers: It was reported that drug dealers are congregating at the bus stop on Pauahi Street when police aren't patrolling.
3. Legalized Graffiti: It was asked if it would be possible to seek permission to allow legalized graffiti on boards that cover shops along King Street. It was stated that it is less likely for graffiti artists to tag on another artists' work if they have put serious effort into a piece.

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Mayor Mufi Hannemann's Representative - Bill Brennan reported:

- Alapai Transit Center: It was reported that the Department of Transportation Services (DTS) requested the assistance of the Department of Facility Maintenance (DFM) to fix potholes near the entrance of the Alapai transit center. Repairs were scheduled for the week of April 26, 2010.
- Motor Scooters on City Buses: It was reported that personalized training is available by calling Oahu Transit Services (OTS) customer service at 848-4500 or OTS training at 848-4550 or by visiting TheBus website at <http://www.thebus.org/howtoride/TransitMobilityPreparation.asp>.
- Smith/Beretania Water Spout: It was reported that the maintenance staff was not able to find the water spout. It was requested that persons with knowledge of the location of the water spout contact Ms. Marie Flores, Maintenance Section Supervisor at 522-7044 or Charles Allen, District Maintenance Superintendent at 522-7073.
- Permit to Paint Pillars: The Department of Design and Construction (DCS) is the lead for this community project. Because it is in the Chinatown Special District, once the artwork is determined, The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) requests that the committee submit a letter to the Director for review and comment. It should include a description of the arts program, proposed art columns or prototypes, and site plan showing the columns, tables, benches, sidewalk, and abutting structures.

Questions, comments and concerns followed;

1. Alapai Transit Center: It was stated that as of May 6, 2010, the potholes near the entrance of the Alapai transit center has not been repaired. It was stated that DFM will be contacted for a follow up.
2. Smith/Beretania Water Spout: Ruby stated that the reason the spout was not found was because it was on the ground.

3. Meters on Pauahi Street: Middleton asked if the meters on Pauahi Street would be replaced.
4. Public Restroom: It was requested that more restrooms be available to the public. It was also requested if a public restroom attendant could be hired to monitor and prevent any illegal activities.
5. Bike Racks: It was asked if bike racks could be installed on Pauahi and Maunakea Street.
6. Kukui Plaza: It was stated that people are digging into trash left out by Kukui Plaza and leaving a mess. It was questioned if something could be done to resolve the issue.
7. Traffic Signs: Mollring stated that four (4) of five (5) "Right Turn On Green Only" signs situated at the intersection of Nuuanu and Beretania have been removed and it was requested that they be reinstalled. It was expressed that it is a safety issue for drivers at that intersection. Matusow stated that the board fought to get the signs.
8. Chinatown Gateway Park: It was requested that the Chinatown Gateway Park be cleaned due to the usual heavy use of the area.
9. Police Substation: It was requested that the police substation be cleaned as it is the only public restroom in the area. It was also requested that a sign be erected to notify the public of the public restroom at the substation.

**With no objection, the meeting was moved out of order to allow the mayor's representative to report on the Crosswalk Signal Lights, Fort Street Benches and Smith Beretania Parking agenda items.**

Crosswalk Signal Lights: It was reported that DTS have brought in specialists and that they will be synchronizing traffic signal lights around the island.

Questions, comments and concerns followed;

1. Public Transit: Ruby and Matusow expressed dissatisfaction that the changes made to lights on Hotel Street forces buses to take a long time to travel the street. Ruby stated that it now takes 15 minutes to traverse Hotel Street from River to Richards. Matusow stated that priority seems to be given to moving traffic mauka/makai and people will be deterred from riding the bus if it takes too long. She requested that the synchronization be returned to what it was formerly.
2. Inconsistent Timing: Smyth questioned why streets with the same width have different times allotted to cross the street. It was also stated that the red flashing hand appears too fast and does not allow pedestrians ample time to enter the crosswalk without breaking the law.
3. Decline in Visitors: It was stated that current signal synchronizations cater to cars rather than pedestrians and that visitors that may be walking through Chinatown may feel uncomfortable for fear of a collision.
4. Unnecessary Crosswalk Buttons: It was requested that crosswalk buttons be removed if they are situated at a crosswalk where the light automatically changes on its own.
5. Report: It was asked what kind of information would be included in the crosswalk signal report.

Fort Street Benches: Maps identifying seating areas at Fort Street were presented to the board for review and comment.

Questions, comments and concerns followed.

Benches Wanted: Matusow said the City admits that there are no benches between King Street and Beretania Street. Matusow pointed out that elderly residents traverse the mall to conduct business, and they need to be able to sit and rest. The chairs and tables by the eating establishments are privately owned and reserved for restaurant patrons only. It was stated that planters are not a sufficient substitute for actual benches. Matusow

requested that the benches removed by the Harris administration be returned to the area before the next meeting.

Smith Beretania Parking: It was reported that a change to the ordinance is required for the hours to be extended.

**The meeting resumed order of the agenda.**

Councilmember Rod Tam: Al Canopin circulated a report and highlighted the following:

- Resolution 10-13: Resolution to urge the Hawaii State Legislature to enact legislation to authorize the county police to impound vehicles used to patronize prostitutes.
- Resolution 10-57: Resolution to urge the City Department of Customer Services to establish an online bicycle registration system.
- Resolution 10-99: Resolution to name a portion of College Walk Mall to Dr. Jose Rizal Square.

Question, comments and concerns followed:

Bill 59: Middleton requested that an action be taken on Bill 59. It was answered that it is the Committee Chair's decision to do so.

State Senator Suzanne Chun Oakland: Phil McInnis circulated a report that highlighted a bill that would take money from the emergency and budget reserves and reallocate it to maintain programs for education, human services and health. It was also reported that stats were compiled from a survey that was taken.

Middleton left the meeting at 8:40; **8 members now present.**

Questions, comments and concerns followed:

Middleton returned to the meeting at 8:42; **9 members now present.**

Maintaining Budget: Lavoie asked if the money being reallocated would be used to fund new programs or to maintain the programs currently in place. It was answered that the money is to maintain current programs. It was also clarified that if current programs are cut, there would also be less federal funding received due to the discontinuation of those programs.

State Senator Brickwood Galuteria: No representative was present; a report was circulated to the board.

State Representative Karl Rhoads: Karl Rhoads reported;

- Bills and Resolutions: Bills and resolutions relating to the lowering of unemployment insurance rates, anti-prostitution, the setup of an anti-noise task force, anti-leaf blower use during morning hours and taxes on condo maintenance fees were passed.
- Honolulu Park Place: A letter was written to Honolulu Park Place requesting that trash be collected at a later time. It was agreed to change collection time from 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.
- Toilet Issues: Negotiations have restarted with River of Life to place signs to direct the public to restrooms.
- Hawaii Visitor and Convention Bureau (HVCB): HVCB has added content about Chinatown to their literature.
- Street Light Brightness: The City was contacted about the dim street lights but responded that they are up to standard and would not be changed.
- Methadone Clinic: The director at the clinic was contacted and stated that security would be present before the clinic opens to control noise in the area.

Questions, comments and concerns followed:

1. House Bill 2318: The status on House Bill 2318 would mandate Housing First at the state level. Rhoads voted to support the Bill. It was stated that the real issue is the location of the housing.
2. Safe Zones: It was asked if there is any information on safe zones for the homeless. It was expressed that it is unfair to target particular areas as safe zones.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Chinese New Years Street Closures Review: Stanford Yuen reported that some members of the Chinese community are upset about a neighborhood board motion to send a letter to the City stating that the Lion Dance event be held on a different night from the First Friday events in the future. It was expressed that by adopting the motion, the board favors First Fridays over Choy Chang.

**Yuen moved, Au seconded to replace last month's motion with a motion to support both First Friday and Choy Chang and to encourage all parties to work with the city to address traffic, noise and economic concerns.** Discussion followed:

1. Economic Impact: Matusow stated that many merchants rely on First Friday events to generate money for their monthly rent and that Choy Chang draws the crowd away from merchants trying to earn money.
2. Moving First Friday: It was asked if First Friday events could be moved to the second Friday for the years that Choy Chang falls on a first Friday.
3. Planning: It was stated that when First Friday was being planned, the City, First Friday planners and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce agreed that the first Friday of each month would be the ideal day each month to hold the event. It was pointed out that the two events were not pitted against each other. It was proposed that the Board be more active in the planning and coordinating of First Friday and Chinese New Year to prevent problems in the future.
4. Rare Occasion: It was stated that Choy Chang occurs on a first Friday only once every 3 to 5 years. It was expressed that the public can enjoy both events.
5. Change of Community: Matusow stated that the community is changing and that there were many traffic and noise complaints the last time Choy Chang and First Friday coincided on the same date. Matusow pointed out that at the time, First Friday drew only 1,000 to 2,000 participants and has since grown to 6,000 attendees.
6. One Time Event: Mollring expressed that Chinatown and the Chinese community has been around before many of the current businesses and that they should be allowed to celebrate their culture once a year.
7. Negative Perception: It was stated that there is a negative perception of the Board because of a motion adopted in April by the Board to support First Fridays over Choy Chang. A number of Board members took offense to the statement. Smyth cited examples of his contributions to the Chinatown community and resented the notion that he is anti-Chinese. It was clarified that nobody is accusing anyone of being anti-Chinese but stated that the motion adopted in April gives the community the impression that the Board favors First Friday over Chinese cultural events.

**The motion was ADOPTED, 7-2-0, (Aye: Au, Chang, Lavoie, Middleton, Mollring, Ruby and Yuen; No: Matusow and Smyth).**

A heated discussion followed the adopted motion.

Yuen requested for the record that Matusow stated: "I think this was a sneaky trick tonight."

Matusow stated for the record: "A person of Mr. Yuen's stature should know better than to be representing another group. He should let the group come and speak for themselves."

Fort Street Benches: Item was covered during the Mayor's Report.

Smith Beretania Parking: Item was covered during the Mayor's Report.

### NEW BUSINESS

Crosswalk Signal Lights: Item covered during the Mayor's Report.

Terry's Place: There was no representative present. No report was given.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The April 1, 2010 Downtown Neighborhood Board No. 13 regular meeting minutes were UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED AS CORRECTED, 8-0-0 (Aye: Au, Chang, Lavoie, Matusow, Middleton, Mollring, Ruby and Smyth).** Corrections included the following:

- Page 1 – Community Relations Fire Safety Tip should read...“The time for picnics and outdoor events is arriving.”
- Page 6 – The last sentence under “This Week” Publication should read...“Many of the *State's* businesses...”
- Page 6 – The last sentence under Legislative Update should read...“Monitoring *the* ambient noise level.”
- Page 7 – Bullet 6 under corrections should read...“Hawaii Capital *Heritage* Area...”
- Page 8 – Under Executive Secretary should include the phrase...“She has long been the City's Chinatown liaison.”

### BOARD REPORTS

Chairs Report: Chair Frank Lavoie reported;

- Elected Public Office: An article was circulated highlighting political activities Board members can and cannot do during election years. All Board members were in compliance.
- Conference of Chairs: The Conference of Chairs will be held Saturday, June 5, 2010. It was decided that Chair Lavoie and Secretary Smyth will attend, as Vice - Chair Au could not attend.
- River Street Residences: A new City fact sheet regarding the River Street Residences was circulated. Yuen's request to stay on the Board was accepted by Chair Lavoie on behalf of the Board.
- Future Agenda Items:
  - Three Absences: It was stated that Board Member Yuen has accrued 3 absences. Yuen has expressed his desire to remain on the board.
  - Merchants Hanging Products Over Sidewalks: It was requested that more specifics be given before it is added as an agenda item.
  - Additional Bike/Moped Racks For The Neighborhood: It was requested that more specifics be given before it is added as an agenda item.
  - Speaking Limits For Board Members: After learning that a board member spoke more than the rest combined, it was suggested that the Board discuss speaking limits.
  - Noise Task Force: The Board is to select a delegate and an alternate for the Noise Task force.
- Neighborhood Commission: Simplifications to the new plan were highlighted.

- Queen's Medical Center Plan Review Use: The Mobilization to start road modification was expected to start April 26 and last for 12 months. There would be no night work. Residents in the area were notified.
- Office of Information Practice Reports: No report was given.

Treasurer's Report: Mollring reported a balance of \$2,812.21.

City and County Affairs: Smyth reported that Bills restricting tents and shopping carts in parks were passed and Bills concerning the use of email and video conferencing for meetings were not passed.

Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OMPO): Smyth reported that legislation was passed last year that mandates that the Department of Transportation take pedestrians, bikes and mopeds into account before doing any major road work. It was reported that there is a group called Complete Streets that monitors any road work that is happening.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday June 3, 2010 at the Pauahi Community Center; 171 North Pauahi Street at 7:00 p.m.
- The Neighborhood Citizen's Patrol meets each Tuesday on the Diamondhead side of Kukui Plaza at 8:00 p.m. Please consider joining the patrol and supporting its efforts as they express their service and pride in our Downtown/Chinatown community.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Submitted by Kazuaki McArthur, Neighborhood Assistant.

Reviewed by Frank Lavoie, Chair