



## WAIKIKI NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 9

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 530 SOUTH KING STREET ROOM 400 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96813  
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### MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OCTOBER 9, 2007 WAIKIKI COMMUNITY CENTER

**CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Finley at 7:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jo-Ann Adams, Les Among, Helen Carroll, Ray Gruntz, Jim Poole, Mary Simpson, Jeff Apaka, Louis Erteschik, Bob Finley, Walt Flood, Robert Martin, Richard Personius, Bert Benevento, David Chen, Jeff Merz, Mike Peters, Mark Smith.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**MEMBERS' SEATS VACANT:** None.

**GUESTS:** Chaplin Dennis Yakota (Good News Jail and Prison Ministry – Hawaii), Stefan, Corey Dillman; Major Randy Macadangdang, Lt. Mel Aiona, Sgt. Darren Nihei (HPD), Carl Middleton (Downtown Neighborhood Board), Capt. Ryan Young (HFD-Waikiki Station), Bill and Helen Sweatt, Jim A., Judy D., Joan Naguwa (Waikiki Community Center), C. Van Buren (Representative Scott Nishimoto's Office), Daisy Murai, Representative Tom Brower, Emily Reed, Laura M., Bob Marchant, I. Voas, Kristi Sue Ako (Senator Gordon Trimble's Office), Karl Kim (University of Hawaii), Ivonne Cardenas (makakilo.com), Diane Hein and Michelle Sojna (Waikiki Health Center), Randy Wong (Department of Community Services), Dean Chu (Neighborhood Commission Office staff).

**ESTABLISH A QUORUM:** A quorum was present.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Deferred.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 11, 2007 REGULAR MEETING** - The following corrections were made:

Page 3, under Traffic Concerns for Area Bounded by Ala Moana Boulevard, Ena Road, and Hobron Lane, add a new last sentence to read "Chair Finley asked the District 1 Board members if they wanted a letter drafted expressing the Board's reaction which was agreed to."

Page 6, under Senator Gordon Trimble, question number 1 should read "...Ako noted the sound levels..."

Page 8, question number 11, should read "...noted some jurisdictions have regulations that require company logo signs be muted/revise to comply with local color regulations."

**.Flood moved and Carroll seconded that the minutes be approved as corrected. The motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Finley reviewed the format for the meeting will be for the speakers to make their presentations, followed by a question and answer session.

**HOMELESS PERMITTED INTERACTION GROUP REPORT** – Benevento reported the Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) was established several months ago with himself, Peters, Erteschik and Flood as members. They met with community members and summarized their input into a report which was submitted to members. The report's topics include: 1) Homeless People Defined, 2) Areas of Impact, 3) Nature of Impact to Residents and Tourists, 4) Current Laws Being Violated, 5) Contributing Factors of Problem and Escalation, and 6) Solutions. The report notes that the current plan of doing nothing is helping no one and that the street people deserve to receive the care and help they need or want.

Dr. Karl Kim, from the University of Hawaii, Department of Urban Planning, reported on a study which his department did for the Waikiki Business Improvement District Association (WBIDA), which is not a homeless or social service agency, on the homeless situation in Waikiki. This study was part of larger study on the urban



environment and how to make improvements. The WBIDA provides resources to assist the students involved in the study which benefits it and the department. The study area consisted of the Waikiki Improvement District area, including Waikiki, the Ala Wai Golf Course and Kapiolani Park. The work involved graduate students collecting data on everything they could for analysis to enable tracking changes to be compared. Counts and interviews of homeless persons were done in the early morning hours by the students with police assistance. Other work included surveying other cities on their approaches in addressing homeless problems. Two counts were made, one in September 2006 found 243 persons, the other in April 2007 found 261 persons. The study does take uncounted persons into account. Copies of the report which have previously been made available to various government officials was provided to the Board and interested persons for their information.

Kim reported that some of the causes of homelessness include shortages of housing, social services, and infrastructure such as emergency shelters. The WBIDA continues to assist in addressing homelessness and has provided funding for hiring a part time social worker. Some other cities' efforts being studied in addressing homelessness includes San Francisco's program that reunites homeless persons with family members, a worker housing program for homeless in low wage jobs, and efforts in eliminating panhandling while still allowing donations. It was stressed that the problem is complicated and multi-faceted, and the community can assist by participating in future counts and collecting data.

Darleen Hein, from the Waikiki Health Center, reported on some of programs, including the Care-A-Van, social services for the Next Step shelter, the center offers. Hein reported some of the causes of homelessness include: lack of affordable rental housing, shortage of substance abuse treatment facilities, lack of resources such as emergency housing for seniors - especially those with medical problems, red tape in getting people the assistance they need; and lack of space in emergency shelters – all are full. Hein noted families with children are a priority in getting into housing, and no emergency housing exists for seniors.

Hein reported the homeless problem is widespread, and communities express similar concerns about adverse impacts, such as sanitation and crime problems and noted that homeless persons are not responsible for a disproportionate of crimes such as thefts. She also noted that everyone pays a cost for homelessness, approximately \$40,000 - \$50,000 per homeless person for services such as police, emergency medical services, social services, prison, etc. She reported programs such as Shelter Plus Care, which provides housing with social services case workers, costs about as much per person as the cost of someone being homeless. However, such funding is not readily available from a central source. There are challenges in getting homeless persons into programs, such as some who are mentally ill with cognitive problems or may be developmentally disabled, etc, and diagnosed developmentally disable persons are not eligible for certain social services. She noted seeing improvements in getting persons into housing and receiving social services.

Michelle Sojna, Waikiki Health Center outreach worker, reported on some of her work with the homeless, including food, hygiene, providing social services, etc. She noted work with individuals can take time before help is accepted.

7:35 p.m.

Randy Wong, from the City Department of Community Services, reported on some of the programs the City provides including the use of government funds such as Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grants, for affordable housing development, Home Partnership Fund for non profit to develop housing, Emergency Shelter grants to non profits to provide social services, and rental assistance and case management for homeless persons with AIDS and the Partners in Care program where service providers, government agencies and private organizations apply jointly for federal funds receiving approximately \$4 million a year for housing assistance, including Section 8; housing for homeless persons with disabilities, case management.

Wong also noted the complexity of the problem and the importance of forming government and private partnerships to address the problem. The Partners in Care program includes: 1) use of prevention and outreach such as rental assistance to families to prevent them from becoming homeless, 2) government owning facilities such as IHS which is owned by the City and leased to a private service provider, 3) transitional homeless shelters; and long term supportive programs such as Shelter Plus Care housing for persons with drug and mental problems. Wong noted the problem is difficult to address with persons needing various types of assistance.

7:45 p.m.

Questions, answers and comments followed:

1. In response to Benevento: a) there are approximately 3,000 homeless island wide at any given time, and approximately 5,000 in shelters. All shelters have waiting lists from three to six months, to as much as a year; and there is also a lot of red tape involved in getting persons into shelters, b) the Shelter Plus Care program is for single persons with disabilities, some income, and have been homeless for more than one year, c) there is a lack of Section 8 units and if funding is not used, the federal government can cut funding.
2. In response to Peters: a) the Interagency Council on the Homeless is a coordinating agency with federal, county and non profit organizations, b) there is not a problem with other states sending their homeless persons to Hawaii, rather, homeless persons are coming here on their own possibly thinking they will be better off here than elsewhere, then find they cannot return from where they came, and there is a lack of resources to send them home.
3. Among suggested temporary shelters be established on certain beaches with social services made available; and that trailers or as has been done by a private organization – modified buses be used as temporary housing.
4. Smith noted that the homeless population in Waikiki is different than other areas, consisting mainly of middle aged men with mental and other problems, and members of this population have confronted visitors.
5. Major Macadangdang, noted that being homeless is a social issue, and that the department will respond to deal with criminal activity, and wants to improve the quality of life for all. For instance, one activity, illegal camping, is being addressed and has resulted in 1500 citations this year.
6. A resident suggested sending homeless who came here to live back to where they came from, and not providing social services to them.
7. Poole noted the need to help those with drug and mentally illness, including the use of separate, temporary shelters for persons with different problems.
8. Adams suggested: a) the use of mobile homes to address the shortage of affordable housing, b) the use of separate, temporary shelters for persons with different problems, c) while there could be shelters for the homeless in Waikiki and/or Kakaako, these shelters should be temporary with more permanent shelters located where the land is not so expensive, d) the move from leasehold property to fee simple property has contributed to the lack of affordable housing.
9. Hein reported Kaneohe State Hospital only takes court ordered patients so it is not available as a resource for the homeless.
10. In response to Martin, it was noted UH study found the homeless population is mobile, and that the closing of Ala Moana Park at night is a possible cause for some movement.
11. Erteschik noted the release of mentally ill persons from institutions years ago was a good thing, but not providing them with needed services was a problem.
12. Hein noted the Waikiki Health Center and Kalihi-Palama Health Center have outreach programs to match persons needing services with providers. She also noted the Shelter Plus Care program could use beefing up, and that Congress needs to provide additional funding. More affordable housing needs to be developed, and the City has helped fund infrastructure improvements at the Waikiki Community Center.

13. Kim noted San Francisco's program to reunite homeless persons with family members has had some success.
14. Merz noted a list of social service providers previously distributed had a lack of faith based organizations, the lack of homeless persons at this meeting to explain their situation and what they are doing to help themselves.
15. Flood suggested creating a fund to send homeless persons back to the Mainland.

**Peters moved and Flood seconded that the Board support expanding existing legislation on camping to include....** Discussion followed.

Gruntz noted New York state has iron clad loitering laws which can be used to get person into the legal system.

Hein noted in Los Angeles a ban on sleeping on the sidewalk is illegal if there are no shelter spaces available.

**The motion and second were withdrawn.**

**Peters moved and Among seconded that the Board supports the New York state on loitering.** Discussion followed where Poole noted that the law is unconstitutional. **The motion and second were withdrawn.** Chair Finley tabled the motion.

**Benevento moved and Flood seconded that there be a ban on the possession of shopping carts.** Discussion followed.

Erteschik opposed the motion, noting if a shopping cart were stolen, it would be receiving stolen goods.

Martin noted the Board should not address this issue.

Merz noted seeing no harm in the motion.

Peters noted banning the possession of shopping carts is a start.

Flood noted he sees mostly junk, not personal possessions in shopping carts being used by the homeless.

Carroll noted seniors need the shopping carts to take their purchases home.

Poole opposed the motion.

It was noted stores checked do not give away their shopping carts and the cover of the University of Hawaii report shows a homeless person with a filled shopping cart.

**The motion and second was withdrawn.**

**Benevento moved and Adams seconded that the State of Hawaii and/or the City and County of Honolulu adopt loitering legislation similar to the loitering law currently in effect in New York state. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Peters moved and Flood seconded that the Board support prohibiting aggressive solicitation or panhandling within 50 feet of an ATM, outside of a business with an ATM, or outside of a check cashing business.** Discussion followed.

In response to Peters, Adams, and Erteschik; Sgt. Nihei noted there are panhandling and harassment laws that can be used to make arrests, and while more laws provide police more options, those arrested are eventually released. Also, persons with complaints need to file them with police.

**The motion carried, 11-5-1. Yea:** Poole, Simpson, Apaka, Erteschik, Finley, Flood, Benevento, Chen, Merz, Peters, Smith. **Nay:** Gruntz, Martin, Adams, Carroll, Personius. **Abstain:** Among.

9:00 p.m.

Peters noted during the discussion on the above motions; that the motions are to make a point, and not necessarily see the motions become law.

Everyone was thanked for their participation in this portion of the meeting.

**GOOD NEWS JAIL AND PRISON MINISTRY – HAWAII** – Carroll introduced Pastor Dennis Yokota who reported that the ministry, which provides chaplains to Hawaii's jails and prisons, is celebrating its 30th anniversary on November 2, Hyatt Regency Waikiki, 6:00 p.m.

Chen suggested homeless persons attend the Board's meeting.

Members of the Homeless Permitted Interaction Group were thanked for their work and encouraged to continue.

#### **CHAIR'S REPORT:**

**FORMATION OF NOISE PERMITTED INTERACTION GROUP – Benevento moved and Carroll seconded that the Board form a Noise Permitted Interaction Group.** Discussion followed on revising the name of the PIG to be more specific, but keeping it as is was recommended. **The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Neighborhood Commission public hearings on proposed revisions to the Neighborhood Plan, November 5, City Hall, Mayor's conference room, 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.; November 3, Kapolei Hale, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon; November 3, Windward Community College, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Members are encouraged to review the proposed changes. Testimony is welcome.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Submitted by,

Dean Chu  
Neighborhood Assistant