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**Josh Green, M.D.**  
Governor

**John De Fries**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

**HO'OKAHUA HAWAI'I STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING  
HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY  
Tuesday, January 17, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.  
VIRTUAL MEETING**

**MINUTES OF HO'OKAHUA HAWAI'I STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Keone Downing (Chair), Mahina Paishon-Duarte (Vice Chair), Dylan Ching, Sig Zane, Mike White, Kimberley Agas

**NON-VOTING MEMBERS:** George Kam, David Arakawa

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** None

**HTA STAFF PRESENT:** John De Fries, Kalani Ka'anā'anā, Daniel Nāho'opi'i, Ilihia Gionson, Caroline Anderson, Maka Casson-Fisher, 'Iwalani Kūali'i Kaho'ohanohano, Jadie Goo, Irina De La Torre, Dede Howa, Ross Wilkom, Micah 'Ākau, Carole Hagihara-Loo, Yvonne Lam, Tyler Mejia, Tracy Fermahin, Jennifer Chun

**ATTENDEES:** Jeffrey Eslinger, Lei-Ann Field, Patti Ornellas, Kainoa Daines, John White, Laci Goshi, Ana Espanola, Donna Kimura, Sue Kanoho, Darlene Morikawa, Kara Imai, Ina Chang, Davis Price, Frecia Cevallos, Catherine Orlans

**LEGAL COUNSEL:** John Cole

## **1. Call To Order**

Chair Downing called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

## **2. Roll Call to Announce Name of Participating Board Members and to Identify Who Else is Present with Board Member if Location is Nonpublic**

Mr. Casson-Fisher conducted a roll call, and all members were present and confirmed they were by themselves.

## **3. Opening Cultural Protocol**

Mr. Casson-Fisher provided a wehena and the 'ōlelo no'ēau, "I ka 'ōlelo nō ke ola, i ka 'ōlelo nō ka make. In language there is life, in language there is destruction."

## **4. Approval of Minutes of the June 23, 2022 Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee Meeting**

Member Zane made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2022, meeting unamended. The motion was seconded by Member Ching. Mr. Casson-Fisher did a roll call and the motion passed unanimously.

## **5. Discussion and Action on the Implementation of 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures principles in the work of the HTA.**

Chair Downing called upon Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte to facilitate the discussion on this agenda item. Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte asked to verify the date of the board meeting during which 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures declaration was accepted by the HTA board of directors. Mr. Ka'anā'anā verified it was in June 2020. Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte explained three reasons the HTA Board approved the 'ĀAEF declaration. First, was that the HTA strategic plan was already in alignment with the declaration. Second, DMAPs were another area where 'ĀAEF mission and values aligned. Third, during the shutdown in 2020, there was a lot of discussion of what tourism would look like once the doors of tourism were reopend. Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte opened discussion around the questions, "What is the regenerative travel that we are trying to head towards? How might we now operationalize 'ĀAEF into some of our administrative and programatic functions of HTA? What are some areas we might integrate and apply 'ĀAEF principles and framework into existing operations to help to bolster the current efforts and help to ensure we are meeting our mission and objectives stated in strategic plan and DMAP processes?" Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte then asked for any comments.

Mr. De Fries brought up the discussion on quality of life and how it gets measured (nexus) from the Ways and Means Committee hearing that took place earlier that day. In June 2020, there was a unanimous vote to affirm 'ĀAEF which effectively made HTA a signatory to the declaration.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā confirmed that HTA has previously collaborated with Hawai'i Green Growth on this. Mr. De Fries then asked for more thoughts from Mr. Ka'anā'anā as one of the 14 co-authors of 'ĀAEF.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā explained that both the declaration ('ĀAEF) and the Huliau Action Agenda outlines the stated goals of the group. During the community outreach as part of the process of creating the action agenda, they found that in all the focus areas of the work of HTA, there was alignment in the idea of managing tourism. One thing that was explored in drafting the declaration and action agenda was how to understand the reciprocal relationship between tourism and residents and how do we ensure we are supporting balance (how do we make sure we can thrive here as we welcome guests).

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte gave further information on resources being discussed (Huliau Action Agenda, 'ĀAEF Framework). She went on to read off the Huliau Action Agenda to define Ho'okipa and the reciprocal relationship between residents and visitors. Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte then asked if anyone else would like to add further thoughts or comments.

Ms. Anderson expanded on the efforts of refining program measures with SMS research to develop measures and outcomes. She went on to explain that HTA has incorporated 'Āina Aloha into the framework for each of the pillars as a goal to be achieved. She emphasized that they were connecting the 'ĀAEF rubric to HTAs work. She stated that this is still in draft form, but is hoping to present it to the Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee and the Board meeting next month.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte asked if there are any other comments regarding what was just discussed. She also asked to open up conversation about any other areas 'ĀAEF might be applied in HTA operations.

Member Ching expressed his support for aligning 'ĀAEF framework with HTAs work, but also some reservations simply in that he, and perhaps other members, were not on the Board when this was previously voted on. He said he feels good about moving forward, but that he would like to know more about the 'ĀAEF framework.

Mr. De Fries expressed his support for this framework influencing HTA's relationship with contractors and putting out future RFPs. He said he does not sense there is enough knowledge outside of the industry surrounding this.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā brought up that 'ĀAEF also put together a Policy Playbook which called for revisions to the state planning act HRS 226-8 , and recommendations pertaining to Green Fees.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte called upon Member Kam and Member Arakawa to speak to the 'ĀAEF framework's use in recent RFPs.

Member Kam affirmed that they want to make sure this framework is foundational and embedded in everything HTA does, there should be measurements and ways to be held accountable.

Member Arakawa agreed with Vice Chair and Member Kam that destination management and the foundation of 'ĀAEF is important. He also posed the question, "does our budget reflect this?" He said he is unsure if support for 'ĀAEF is reflected in our budget.

Member White acknowledged Member Ching earlier statement about support for aligning the 'ĀAEF framework with HTA's work, but also the reservations.

Member Arakawa expressed concern that only two people in the entire organization are dedicated under the budget to destination management. He said we should make more efforts to incorporate the framework into HTAs action.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte called on Mr. Casson-Fisher for any public testimony. Mr. Casson-Fisher then called on a member of the public and co-author of 'ĀAEF Mr. Davis Price to provide his testimony. He disclosed that he is a recent former employee of the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA), but now works with a national organization dedicated to indigenous empowerment. He stated that the 'ĀAEF Initiative helped him to see possibilities and potential for economic diversity in communities. He applauded the HTA for making efforts to integrate 'Āina Aloha into their work. He also expressed concern with what transpired afterward, however that it did not entirely fall on HTA and the Board, but also lack of understanding from industry and others. He stated that it is critical that HTA's work adopt a ground level community based approach and not to get lost in policy. He stated that it is critical that HTA's work adopts a ground level community based approach and that the organization not get lost in policy. He believes DMAP is a great start and if there is a need to engage legislators to understand what the DMAPs is supposed to achieve, the community should be engaged. He urged HTA to stay grounded in the community and to elevate the message of programmatic purpose.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte asked for any follow-up questions from members and staff for Mr. Price. There were no further questions or comments.

Mr. Casson-Fisher confirmed there is no further testimony online.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte recapped previous discussion and posed the question, "Where else might we apply 'ĀAEF goals, objectives, rubric tools to our operations?" She stated that she has ideas, but wanted to ensure everyone would have an opportunity to share.

Member Ching asked if the 'ĀAEF Framework would supercede DMAPs and where this would fall on the hierarchy of what would be considered the "backbone" of HTA. He asked the Vice Chair to speak to the relationship between the two programs.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte asked Member Kam or Mr. De Fries to respond.

Member Kam explained that DMAP is the facilitator of the foundation of 'ĀAEF offers. He stated it is in alignment with the strategic plan and that they are aiming to bring it more to the forefront and even develop measurements for what this looks like. He expressed that 'ĀAEF permeates throughout the entire organization.

Mr. De Fries explained that 'ĀAEF's power rests in its founding principles and values. This has been seen especially in the context of economic recovery out of the pandemic. He expressed that it is a platform of values that can be shared without people losing autonomy in the way business operations are conducted. The heart of 'ĀAEF is mālama Hawai'i, but goes much deeper into the community

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte added that the 'ĀAEF framework helps to show that the previous status quo way of doing things caused more harm than good and highlighted a need to shift to a newer, more regenerative mindset.

Member Ching acknowledged that HTA's work does seem to line up with the 'ĀAEF, expressed concern that the verbiage was not previously laid out. He said that it would be helpful in understanding what we have been missing or what we have been doing that hasn't been marketed efficiently.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte responded that there is no hierarchy of components but that the tools HTA uses is a circle; component and pieces that are intended to work together - Strategic Plan, DMAP, 'ĀAEF, Mālama Tool.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā, as another co-author of the 'ĀAEF, reiterated the importance that everything must be driven by community; what anchors them all is continued conversation with community as HTA moves forward. Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte agreed and then called on Chair Downing for thoughts.

Chair Downing agreed we are headed in the right direction and stated that he understands Member Ching's concern. He expressed support in giving the 'ĀAEF resource to every board member to read. He wondered if HTA is using 'ĀAEF correctly and implementing it fast enough? He believes this will allow the board members to be more updated before the upcoming January board meeting. He is focused more on how to implement 'ĀAEF than what or where to implement.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte listed areas HTA is already implementing 'ĀAEF: DMAP process and RFPs. She posed these other areas for consideration: board and staff onboarding (all the tools are a part of the full onboarding), grant processes ('ĀAEF language to be worked into grant processes RFP or selection), 'ĀAEF being used in performance evaluation. She repeated the list for clarity and then asked for discussion.

Both Chair Downing and Mr. De Fries expressed support for Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte's ideas. Chair Downing stated that the framework should be implemented in as many pieces of HTA as possible.

Member Arakawa also expressed his support for Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte's ideas.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā added on to Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte's ideas. There are two paths of 'ĀAEF: 'ĀAEF framework being integrated as tactical operational alignment into performance measures and the philosophical alignment of HTA's Community Enrichment, Kūkulu Ola and Aloha 'Āina Programs with 'ĀAEF.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte asked Mr. Ka'anā'anā how we would look at both the tactical and philosophical areas in HTA's work and who from the staff should be involved in the conversation.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā responded that he and Ms. Anderson would be best to look at this relationship within HTA's programs. He then gave an example of NaHHA's previous presentation of their work plan. In each program they planned to implement, they showed the strategic plan alignment, the DMAP alignment and the 'ĀAEF alignment.

Mr. De Fries added that the ultimate responsibility of this alignment lies with HTA and highlighted the importance of 'ĀAEF being systemically grounded.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte called on Mr. Casson-Fisher to read off Mr. Price's additional testimony.

Mr. Casson-Fisher read Mr. Price's written testimony in the chat: "The goal would be to provide a tool for community-based models and organizations to use to attract private capital. Is it possible for HTA to develop an impact investment strategy that would provide a road map to leverage HTA funds to be injected directly into the development of community based models for tourism beyond the grant program?"

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte explained her understanding of the question in asking if HTA would entertain a more in-depth conversation regarding these ideas. If the HTA agrees, it would open more opportunities to work with more impact investors and the philanthropic community.

Mr. De Fries responded that this conversation should happen and that this should be rolled into an onboarding session HTA would co-create with 'ĀAEF.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā gave an example of Ms. Anderson's work with U.S. Economic Development Administration funds around the community tourism collaboratives and investments around International Festivals and Events Association certifications as an example of building the capacity of the community to deliver services and programs.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte stated that they will have future conversations. She entertained the motion that the Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee would agendaize the implementation of 'ĀAEF into HTA operations, RFP process, grant process, DMAPs, performance evaluations, board & staff onboarding. This comes with the caveat that it is not all done at once, but should be scheduled at a doable pace.

Chair Downing agreed to make a motion but stated that first other committee members have to read 'ĀAEF and understand it. Chair Downing further asks that the committee tentatively agree on the motion and present to the full board at a later time.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte entertained a separate motion, "to provide information to the full board and provide all committee materials and ample time to learn about 'ĀAEF."

Chair Downing supported this motion, "to provide information to the full board and provide all committee materials and ample time to learn about 'ĀAEF."

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte amended the previous motion to put forth a motion that "the Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee would agendaize a presentation of 'ĀAEF at the next board meeting so that all members have the opportunity to receive information and learn about 'ĀAEF."

Deputy Attorney General Cole confirmed that Vice Chair can make the motion.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte made a motion, "to provide information to the full board and provide all committee materials and ample time to learn about 'ĀAEF." Chair Downing seconded the motion.

Member Ching asked if there is need for a motion, to which Chair Downing responded yes.

Mr. Casson-Fisher called a roll call vote of members present. The motion was unanimously adopted.

Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte put forth another motion, "for the administration, CEO, and team to identify areas where 'ĀAEF can be implemented."

Chair Downing seconded.

Mr. Casson-Fisher called a roll call vote of members present. The motion passed unanimously.

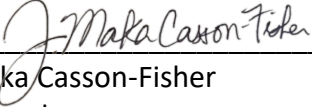
Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte turned the meeting back over to Chair Downing who then thanked the committee. Mr. De Fries added a last comment that if George Kanahele and Kenneth Brown saw the 'ĀAEF framework, they would have been among the first to sign it because it is everything they stood for.

## **6. Adjournment**

Member Ching moved to adjourn, Vice Chair Paishon-Duarte seconded, and the motion was adopted unanimously.

Chair Downing adjourned the meeting at 5:05p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Maka Casson-Fisher  
Recorder