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**David Y. Ige**  
*Governor*

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

**HO'OKAHUA HAWAI'I STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING  
HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY  
Tuesday, April 20, 2022, at 3:30 p.m.  
VIRTUAL MEETING**

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

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Kimi Yuen (Chair), Keone Downing (Vice Chair), David Arakawa, Daniel Chun, Dylan Ching, George Kam, Kyoko Kimura

**MEMBER NOT PRESENT:**

Sig Zane

**HTA STAFF PRESENT:**

Kalani Ka'anā'anā, Caroline Anderson, Maka Casson-Fisher, Ilihia Gionson, Irina De La Torre, Jadie Goo, Iwalani Kūali'i Kaho'ohanohano, Laci Goshi, Dede Howa, Carole Hagihara, Todd Toguchi, Yvonne Lam, Michele Shiowaki, Tracey Fermahin, Bryant Yabui

**GUESTS:**

Julie Morikawa, Peter Apo, Jennifer Chun, Ross Birch, Kylie Butts, Minh Chau Chun, Dherry Duong, Lei-Ann Field, Heidi Fujimoto, Loryn Garcia, Kara Imai, Sue Kanoho, Cheyenne Kelekoma, Erin Khan, Susie Kim, Sunnie Lasconia, Darlene Morikawa, Joseph Patoskie, Mālia Sanders, Jay Talwar, John White, Marisa Wong

**LEGAL COUNSEL:**

Gregg Kinkley

## **1. Call to Order and Pule**

Mr. Casson-Fisher welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mr. Casson-Fisher did the roll call. All members confirmed attendance and that they were by themselves. Mr. Zane was excused from the meeting. Chair Yuen called the meeting to order 3:31 p.m. and asked Mr. Casson Fisher to do the opening pule.

## **2. Approval of Minutes of the March 28, 2022, Meeting**

Chair Yuen asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Kam made a motion, and Mr. Ching seconded. Chair Yuen asked if there were any questions, but there were none. Mr. Casson-Fisher did the roll call, and the motion passed unanimously.

## **3. Status Update by Director of Planning Caroline Anderson of the Destination Management Action Plans**

Ms. Anderson updated the Destination Management Action Plans (DMAPs). She said they are meeting with the Steering Committee members in the coming week, to update them on the progress of the DMAPs. All of the DMAPs Phase 1 is completed with the exception of O'ahu. She put together an annual report for Phase 1, which includes high-level actions of what had been accomplished.

Ms. Anderson said they had the Hawai'i Island meeting, and O'ahu's Steering Committee meeting, where their progress report was reviewed. They have meetings for Maui and Lāna'i the following day, and a meeting for Kaua'i on April 22. After discussing all the reports with the various islands, they will add the necessary information.

At the Board meeting the following week, Ms. Anderson will present the final reports to the Board members. She said that Moloka'i had a Steering Committee and Advisory Group, and had since merged the two because the majority wanted one group. The group is now called the Task Force. They met with them on April 9, to go over the high priority action items the Task Force wanted to work on. She said they will have another meeting with the Task Force in May. There were no questions from the members or the public.

## **4. Presentation, Discussion and/or Action from ClimbHI and the LEI (Leadership Exploration Inspiration) Program for 2022 on their Current Activities**

Chair Yuen gave the floor to Mr. Ka'anā'anā to introduce the speakers. Mr. Ka'anā'anā introduced Ms. Morikawa, the Founder and President of ClimbHI, a long-term partner of the HTA, and a fellow cohort member of Hawai'i's 20 For the Next 20. He said many at HTA had heard the desire from people in the community, industry, and legislators about the importance of creating a pipeline for the youth into Hawai'i's hospitality industry, giving them resources, and helping them to make the connection to all the opportunities that exist across the hospitality industry. He asked Ms. Morikawa to give an update of the activities for 2022 at ClimbHI.

Ms. Morikawa said that while preparing her presentation, she thought of Judge Ketanji Jackson being confirmed to serve on the Supreme Court. She said what fired Judge Jackson up was when a school counselor told her not to set her sights too high. Ms. Morikawa said it is important to allow students to see that there are pathways forward with a support network.

Ms. Morikawa shared a few videos from students on how ClimbHI has been helping students find pathways for a future in Hawai'i and beyond. Ms. Morikawa said ClimbHI is also working directly with hotels for recruitment opportunities for students. ClimbHI helps students achieve their goals no matter which community they belong to. ClimbHI also connects with individuals and youth that have never had interaction from the business community.

Ms. Morikawa showed slides with a few pictures from their past events and programs. The ClimbHI program does more than engage students in the industry, they help individuals find their leadership skills and find their future. ClimbHI also works in the college community, where students can get involved at ClimbHI with mentorship, cultural and leadership training. This helps ClimbHI guide students for the day, so they can also receive credit.

ClimbHI also supports the teachers; they have a teacher award with HLTA. The roots start from the Leadership Exploration Inspiration (LEI) program, helping teachers understand that there is a network for them. She shared a video of individuals speaking of their experience with the LEI program.

ClimbHI has ventured into other areas as it continues to educate their students to provide them with the resources to take the next steps. The ClimbHI Service Excellence Certificate was born with the support of the HTA, and it launched in 2021. Since the launch, there is a credential program for the Hospitality Pathway associated with Human Services.

Ms. Morikawa said ClimbHI had tied in the aloha spirit law and culture and put that with the Cornell Service Excellence curriculum as well. Over the last year and a half, it reached over 1,500 students, and it has become like an Adopt a School Program. Many of these entities came

on to support students. They can take a school or multiple schools and support them to get their certificate. This gives them all a network that links them directly to the industry.

Ms. Morikawa mentioned they have events and different engagements, and the teachers are connected directly to those businesses. She said they are not just taking a course, but they are also getting linked to see the industry's relevance and their futures. She thanked HTA for all their support, and the program continues to move forward.

She spoke about the ClimbHI Bridge Initiative, a portal that connects businesses and educators. This initiative is also supported by HTA. It is the first of its kind, working towards systematizing workforce development. It is a tool connecting educators and businesses directly, and it goes beyond the industry but starts with hospitality and shows the youth all that is available. Currently, there are over 470 registered opportunity providers live on the portal, with over 3,400 educators live from 158 schools. Ms. Morikawa showed a video of teachers speaking about ClimbHI Bridge.

Ms. Morikawa said the initiative is about solving the challenge of educators wanting to incorporate more workforce development and businesses, but not knowing how to navigate the education space, and achieving State and County goals of improving social capital equitably across all of the islands. It also helps in improving economic self-sufficiency for all.

She said as they move from 2022 to 2023 school years, she wanted to showcase what they were doing moving forward as the Department of Education (DOE) moves from six Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways to thirteen. She said hospitality was never a Pathway. It was part of Public and Human Services, but would move and have its own Pathway when the thirteen Pathways rolled out. She said in 2023 to 2024 they will be rolled out to the schools. It is not a given as the principals and schools would decide which Pathways they would have. Some schools are only budgeted for one Pathway, and some for two. She said this is why the portal is important, so they can have everything at their fingertips.

ClimbHI is launching a new campaign called Hospitality For Me, and they are looking for HTA support as well. She said Women In Lodging (WIL) had come on board first. She said the concept is building all the resources to hand it to the DOE to get a list of Board members for them to choose from. She said they had put all the different opportunity categories for the DOE onto the portal - guest speaking, career fairs, internships, mentorships, judging, and coaching. She said the challenge for them is to have one hundred companies live by 2023. She said they reached over 32,000 students during COVID, and she hoped to reach even more outside COVID. She thanked HTA for going through the journey with them at ClimbHI.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā said for the Board's awareness, on calendar year 2022, the ClimbHI program and LEI were supported with Contract 18135 Supplemental 6, and HTA provided \$120,000 to this program.

Mr. Ching asked of how significant was HTA's contribution to ClimbHI. Ms. Morikawa said the majority of the budget goes to the Leadership, the LEI Program. She said they use that for all islands, and a small portion goes to the ClimbHI Bridge. She said they would appreciate even more support as they want to continue with the work.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā mentioned that Ms. De La Torre is the Brand Manager assigned to the contract. She attended various events in the Career Fair at Waipahu Middle and Waianae Middle Schools where Mr. De Fries spoke the opening, and Mr. Ching attended as well. He said HVCB participated on each island, with the island chapters participating as well. He thanked them for their support. Ms. Morikawa further added Mr. Chun was there to present an award on O'ahu.

Chair Yuen asked where the funding came from, and Mr. Ka'anā'anā said from the Future Workforce budget line item. He said it was an existing contract in 2018. He said once they hit the statutory limit, they will have to go back out for the procurement.

Mr. Chun thanked Ms. Morikawa for her presentation, work, and passion in solving workforce issues. He asked about the Excellence Certificate and how they are distributing the certificates. Ms. Morikawa said that it all ties together because they have got the ClimbHI Bridge. It gets sent out to the high schools, and everyone is welcome to use the program. When wishes are made, ClimbHI reaches out to hotels in that community to see if they can support it. She said they had been able to reach all the requests, and twenty-two high schools are utilizing the Certificate program.

Mr. Chun asked about their outreach to the Legislature in terms of what ClimbHI is doing and what HTA's role in it so that the legislators know about their great work and ensure HTA continues to work with them.

Ms. Morikawa concurred and said she would be happy to do presentations or any outreach needed. She clarified that she represents Hospitality and leads this, and no one else is doing that for any other industry. She said all the other industries are eager and trying to come together to follow their model. She mentioned healthcare, Engineering, and the Defense Industry reaching out. She said the Hospitality for Me Campaign and hoped that HTA would continue their support.

Mr. Chun said it would be helpful after the session, to put a briefing together, as he wants the legislators to see her passion, and the proof of the outcomes.

Ms. Kimura said WIL fully supports the program.

Chair Yuen thanked Ms. Morikawa for her presentation and echoed everything everyone said. She asked if there had been any movement to integrate natural resource protection or culture into the program.

Ms. Morikawa said it falls under the ClimbHI Bridge, and links everything from every industry, from all aspects together. She said with the Hospitality Challenge 100, by 2023 they want to incorporate all of those aspects into their resources, so that the teachers can find all of that. She said natural resource protection and culture have always been important in their programming and the renewable, sustainable aspects; they had always been incorporated. She said in 2022, they structured the LEI program around showing the mālama campaigns and opening the eyes of their students on how the destination is being marketed.

She reiterated that ClimbHI dealt with many old 'Ōlelo Hawai'i schools that are anti-tourism. After meeting with the schools, their impression became positive about the industry. She said it was about the grassroots initiative.

Chair Yuen mentioned that even with the DMAPs, they were getting into the grassroots, and commended Ms. Morikawa for doing this in the schools as well, and bridging everything on behalf of the industry.

There were no questions or testimony from the public.

## **5. Presentation, Discussion and/or Action Regarding Restoring Hawaiian-ness to Resort Areas including Waikīkī**

Mr. Downing would lead the discussion, and Mr. Apo on behalf of NaHHA, the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, would present and share the document titled, Restoring Hawaiian-ness to Waikīkī.

Mr. Downing said he was concerned after a Board member said that Waikīkī was not Hawaiian anymore after a discussion about putting a zip line in Waikīkī. He thanked Chair Yuen, Mr. Ka'anā'anā, and Mr. Casson-Fisher for reaching out to start the discussion again. He said the discussion is about how they can maintain their Hawaiian-ness. He said they could do a few things. One could be to create a template that could be used in other resort places in Hawai'i. He said Waikīkī is special to him, and he spoke about the founder, Dr. Kanahele. He said they should start the discussion again and keep it in the front of their minds instead of in a book.

Mr. Casson-Fisher pointed out that the original document by Dr. Kanahale is on page 25 of the meeting packet. Page 97 is the update by Mr. Apo for the Waikīkī Improvement Association (WIA). He introduced Mr. Apo on behalf of NaHHA to speak about the update.

Mr. Apo said he was happy this was given the attention it needs, as he has been waiting for this for years. He said it is important for everyone to read through the update, and that Dr. Kanahale's model that he fashioned should be applicable anyplace in Hawai'i. It is not just about Waikīkī as Mr. Downing pointed out. He said all of Hawai'i is under what he calls the negative aspects of tourism creep. He said they must focus on three important aspects in the report – 1). Dr. Kanahale's vision of Waikīkī on page 5, 2). the historical context on why the report came about, the original, and the update on page 7, and 3). a sense of place dialogue and the visitor experience on page 72.

Mr. Apo explained what the update was. The 144 recommendations came about after Dr. Kanahale walked Waikīkī, day after day for months, with a notebook. He went through all of Waikīkī and began making notes about things he felt could improve with respect to a sense of place. Mr. Apo mentioned when Mayor Harris was elected in 1994, he was concerned about Waikīkī, as it had gone through a period where there was very little money in both the public and the private sector being invested in maintaining Waikīkī, to take care of a certain sense of place.

Mr. Apo said the investment in Waikīkī dropped immensely, and it was a period where locals were getting upset about what was going on in Waikīkī. After that, the mayor fell into line with the recommendations with Dr. Kanahale's effort. The city helped fund it because besides Dr. Kanahale, Kenny Brown, and Rick Egged from the WIA were all involved who created a little synergy; therefore, the Department of Waikīkī Development was started. Christina Kemmer was the first Director. Mr. Apo said when he came in in 1994, he was the Director of Culture and Arts for the city and county of Honolulu and then eventually became Director of Waikīkī Development.

The 144 recommendations took about six months, and they looked at every recommendation that Mr. Kanahale had. He said it was interesting to read what was being proposed, the ambitions, and what succeeded.

He said there was no defined center of gravity concerning finances, and trying to join the public and private sector was difficult because of the huge responsibility on both sides. So, the idea of Hawaiian Sense of Place became an official initiative. He hoped that HTA could take a look at the framework as a great opportunity. He said it seemed to be coming at the right time with the DMAP dialogue and the new leadership.

He mentioned that the document is not the end, but just the beginning. He said it is a model that can fit anywhere. He noted while Mayor Harris was in office, that they worked on restoring awareness to Waikīkī, which inspired him to move forward on the rebuilding of the entire area (Waikīkī Historic Trail) that stretches from the police substation to Kapi'olani Park on Kalākaua Avenue.

Mr. Downing said he thought the WIA did a good job on the revision, and now is the time for HTA to do something. He said not to look at the 144 recommendations but wanted to see what are the top three things that HTA can commit to do. He went back to the concept that the community wanted to see something. He said they must focus on the top three and get it done.

Mr. Apo concurred with Mr. Downing, and said it is one step at a time. He said the issue between the private sector and public sector is a huge hurdle. He mentioned that over half of Waikīkī is Hawaiian owned and this often shocked people. For example, Bishop Estate, Queen's Hospital Systems, Queen Lili'uokalani Trust, and International Marketplace. These property ownership starts from the beach to the Ala Wai Canal. It is ironic to have this discussion when these lands should be Hawaiian land. He said there are only two open spaces: the Kapi'olani Park and Fort DeRussy. Mr. Apo said trying to restore Hawaiian-ness to Waikīkī is a real challenge, but it can be done. He said something that the government could do, which Mayor Harris did, is ensure they always provide some kind of Hawaiian program to be written into lease agreements whenever investors come in.

Chair Yuen said he made a good point about the Ali'i Trust and the land ownership, and HTA should reach out to the leadership at the Ali'i Trust.

Mr. Apo mentioned that Kamehameha Schools realized it was a mistake when designing and building the Royal Hawaiian Shopping Center, where the land and ocean space were separated. Its renovation in 2007 opened up the shopping center, and Hawaiianized it with a small park by the shopping center's center stage. Chair Yuen also mentioned the re-development of the International Marketplace that was highly controversial, where they tried to integrate a lot of Hawaiian-ness back into that space.

Mr. Apo said the Hawaiian sense of place came down to the people. He said the industry could make sure the people and the employee population have the right kind of training, it is about how they interact. It will be a win-win if they understand this concept; the institution wins, the investor wins, the visitor wins, and the locals win with that kind of management scenario.

Mr. Ching said he appreciated everything Mr. Apo mentioned. He said he was fortunate to work on Queen Emma land at the Outrigger Waikīkī. He said he was there for twenty years, and Dr. Kanahele's training is what they used. He spoke about the hospitality triangle, teaching this to

the staff is important, and teaching them that the guest is important. This would create a synergy between all. He said this helped approach the visitor industry and guests in their homes to teach them about Hawai'i. He encouraged everyone that the training works and that they do not have to reinvent the wheel as it is all readily available.

Mr. Apo thanked Mr. Ching for his comments. He said if the entire industry had the opportunity to go to this type of training, and if there were programs like that for the kids, it would make a huge difference. He said it is not a huge investment either.

Mr. Downing said they have to remember that Hawaiian-ness and creating a sense of place is not necessarily only for the visitor, but how to give the local Hawaiian-ness, and their sense of place, instead of feeling like they were pushed out. He said if they create a sense of place for the locals, they radiate a sense of place to the visitor.

Mr. Apo reiterated that is what the training does. It affirms that the local people are important and that they are not a servant, and that they can stand with dignity and honor. He said Aloha is about extending love and friendship to each other.

Mr. Ching said ironically a lot of the locals who come to Waikīkī were kind of like visitors because they did not know or had lost respect for Waikīkī for the things that they had heard or seen. He said the key component is the Aloha that comes with the people, especially the locals. He said most people do not even know what Waikīkī means, so everybody is kind of a guest in many ways, even though there is more entitlement for locals. He said he loved it when the locals visited, relearned or rediscovered what a special place Waikīkī is.

Mr. Apo encouraged everyone to read the three sections that he mentioned earlier, as it is a good framework to get people to start thinking.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā asked the members to give him and Mr. Casson-Fisher until the meeting in May 2022, to select three Chairs and Vice-Chair, to bring back as recommendations to include as part of HTA's Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 planning, budgeting and program request.

Chair Yuen said that would be great, and Mr. Downing suggested they should select five and then pick three from there.

Mr. Kam thanked Mr. Ka'anā'anā and said Mr. Apo's insight was pertinent, but it is dated. He said if they talk about Mālama Ku'u Home, they have great opportunities, and Dr. Kanahale's training resonates strongly with everyone. He said the DMAPs are incredible, but they are in and for the communities. Waikīkī is the largest fish pond, and it needs more special care and understanding. He said they must all come together with Mr. Ka'anā'anā and his team, to give the updated version of restoring Hawaiian-ness to Waikīkī. He mentioned what they spoke

about it at the previous month's meeting, and with Mr. Apo's report they have the opportunity to do something special. He said he spent 30 years in Waikiki, and had worked with Mr. Downing's father would check to ensure all public facilities work. He said to make it a great place to visit; they have to make it a great place to live. He said HTA can play a leadership role to bring the light back to it. He said if they put in a concerted effort and hold true to what Dr. Kanahale and what Mr. Apo expressed, it is a great start on their journey to Mālama Ku'u Home. He said he is looking forward to the 2022 updated version of opportunities.

Chair Yuen said they should also start looking at the other resort areas on the neighbor islands as well. She suggested to Mr. Ka'anā'anā that maybe that funding request needs to increase, so they can do this on a large statewide scale.

Mr. Kam concurred with everyone. He said him and Mr. Ching talked about giving people reasons to stay in Waikīkī and helping them realize how special Waikīkī is. He said they must all fully share and embrace their best Aloha with everybody.

Chair Yuen concurred and said perhaps every space should be different and have its sense of place unique to it, regardless of what island it is, or what side of the island it is.

Mr. Apo mentioned WIA had appointed a new Board member, Mike White, the general manager of Kā'anapali Beach Hotel, who helped Dr. Kanahale with his book. Mr. White has the working model for his hotel and pointed out that he would be a good resource for the HTA.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā suggested not creating new programs but deepening the support for existing programs. He mentioned Chair Yuen's point about the resort area, Hawaiian culture initiative, that it may be one of the opportunities where they deepen that commitment, as they have started to do the planning for the procurement and outreach to various community stakeholder groups. He said one of the resounding needs that continue to come back is how to support Hawai'i's Creative – the musicians, hula practitioners, weavers, carvers, etc. as they have been out of work for so long. He said this would need more funding to make the impact bigger for them.

Chair Yuen said this is great, as HTA has the steering committees that have the attention of all the counties too, so they have the network to help if there were any issues.

Mr. Apo said he felt great about the timing, as HTA has the right people in the right places.

Mr. Downing thanked Mr. Apo for his insights. He said HTA has the opportunity to make these ideas materialize.

Mr. Apo said he feels like he is finally at a place where the torch is passed.

There were no questions from the public, but Mike White, shared a comment online by thanking everyone for having the rich and vital discussion.

Chair Yuen thanked everyone and said it had been inspirational and reinvigorated what HTA's mission is.

## **6. Adjournment**

Chair Yuen asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Ching motioned, and Mr. Downing seconded. Mr. Casson-Fisher did a roll call, and the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Ka'anā'anā concluded the Meeting.

Chair Yuen adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Sheillane Reyes

Recorder