

PUBLIC HEARING

MAY 10, 2017

A public hearing of the Council of the County of Kaua'i was called to order by Arryl Kaneshiro, Chair, Budget & Finance Committee, on Wednesday, May 10, 2017, at 5:00 p.m., at the Council Chambers, 4396 Rice Street, Suite 201, Historic County Building, Lihu'e, and the presence of the following was noted:

Honorable Arthur Brun  
Honorable Mason K. Chock  
Honorable Arryl Kaneshiro  
Honorable JoAnn A. Yukimura  
Honorable Mel Rapozo

Excused: Honorable Ross Kagawa  
Honorable Derek S.K. Kawakami

The Clerk read the notice of the public hearing on the following:

“Resolution No. 2017-25 – RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE REAL PROPERTY TAX RATES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2017 TO JUNE 30, 2018 FOR THE COUNTY OF KAUAI,”

“Bill No. 2645 – A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO THE OPERATING BUDGET AND FINANCING THEREOF FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2017 TO JUNE 30, 2018 (*Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Operating Budget*),” and

“Bill No. 2646 – A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE RELATING TO CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND FINANCING THEREOF FOR THE FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2017 TO JUNE 30, 2018 (*Fiscal Year 2017-2018 CIP Budget*);”

which were ordered to print by the Council of the County of Kaua'i on March 22, 2017, and published in The Garden Island newspaper on March 31, 2017.

The following communications were received for the record:

1. Imanaka, Mitchell, Chair Executive Committee, and Blake Oshiro, Executive Director, for the American Resort Development Association  
Re: Resolution No. 2017-25, dated May 10, 2017
2. Medeiros, Wayne D., Re: Resolution No. 2017-25, dated May 8, 2017
3. Matayoshi, Coralie, Chief Executive Director, and Padraic Gallagher, Kaua'i County Director, for the American Red Cross Hawai'i  
Re: Bill No. 2645, dated May 10, 2017

The hearing proceeded as follows:

Committee Chair Kaneshiro: We will open it up for public testimony on any one of the three (3) items: Resolution No. 2017-25, Bill No. 2645, and Bill No. 2646. Do we have any registered speakers?

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA, County Clerk: Committee Chair, we have two (2) registered speakers at the moment. The first registered speaker is for Bill No. 2646, Ana Mohamed Desmarais.

Committee Chair Kaneshiro: Hi Ana. This is on the Capital Improvements Budget, and as you know, you have three (3) minutes. When the light turns orange, that means you have thirty (30) seconds left, and if you need it, you can have another three (3) minutes.

ANA MOHAMED DESMARAIS: Thank you all for being here. It is lovely to see all of your faces and for having the public hearing on this very important matter. In reference to Bill No. 2646, item Z14002, the Northeast-South Transit Feasibility Study, I feel that before there is any advancement into the conservation zone by way of road, bridge, or the eventual homes and grocery store that will be sure to follow, there needs to be a resolution to the problem we are facing, which is the economic disparity caused by exploitation, resulting in drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, crime, homelessness, and suicide. There are steps being taken to alleviate these symptoms, but we need to go to the root of the cause and heal the wound. I have suggestions for this, but three (3) minutes at a time, right? I feel that the thirty-five thousand seven hundred nineteen dollars (\$35,719) allocated for the study would be better used for the Native Hawaiian children to choose which preschool they wish to attend, since some did not get accepted to The Kamehameha Schools this year. Furthermore, a portion of the profits made from a century ago, up until the last five (5) years by those profiteering off the land should be directed to providing a better life for island families. Children should have a fun, safe place to stimulate their minds, discipline their bodies, and spend time with their families, which will also provide a proper place for young adults to work. The only attractions or activities are for those visiting the island, which leads me to the negative impact tourists are having on our island and our culture. We need to have a visitation tax that can be collected at the airport, which can be a percentage of the amount paid for the flight, which will supplement the cost of rescue missions and clean-up that I suspect are partly responsible for the increase in the Police and Fire budgets. I feel the amounts of airplanes permitted to land should be greatly reduced in order to have more control over the influx of people. But regardless of this, there should be signage at the airport educating people on how to behave on our sacred island, like what is *pono*, *kuleana*, *āina*, and *hō'ihi*. On that same token, we all need to take care of each other, be kind, and work with integrity. Those profiting off the land did not create the product. We must remember who or how the mountains, rivers, forest, sandy beaches, oceans, and the setting sun were created; the *āina*: fertile, sacred, and not for sale to anyone. It does not matter if you have a piece of paper that says you own real estate; the truth is that she owns you and your responsibility is to her. The conversation of the real estate tax increase should be targeted more towards the visitor destination zones...

Committee Chair Kaneshiro: Ana, that was your first three (3) minutes. I will just let you take your second three (3) minutes now because we only have one (1) other testifier. Then we will move on.

Ms. Desmarais: Thank you, Committee Chair. The conversation of the real estate tax increase should be targeted more for the visitor destination zones and those that are not full-time residents and rent out their homes. Some go for over three thousand dollars (\$3,000) a night and the island should be receiving a portion of that. I think this will help solve some of the issues the County is facing with the budget. There should not be a situation where the County says, "We do not have enough money for that," while many are profiting off the island. I would also like to understand why the budget has more than doubled on traveling and related items. Just a note, I think that what is generated in this County should stay in this County, like driving tickets, taxes, et cetera. I understand that this is a heavy responsibility, but I feel that we have the capacity to solve this problem and balance the economy. All of you have the talents necessary to ensure this success, and when coupled with those of the community, I feel it is assured. We can lead the nation and inspire the world. Thank you.

Committee Chair Kaneshiro: Thank you. Next speaker.

Ms. Fountain-Tanigawa: The next speaker is Imani Belt.

Committee Chair Kaneshiro: Hey Imani. Again, you will have three (3) minutes and you will see that the light will turn yellow when you have thirty (30) seconds left and it will turn red when your three (3) minutes is up. If you need another three (3) minutes, we will give you another three (3) minutes.

IMANI BELT: Okay. I do not really know the issues addressed here.

Councilmember Yukimura: Can you state your name for the record?

Ms. Belt: I am Imani Belt. I was just told that I could come and speak about the Kaua'i Bus and how to improve on the weekend schedule, because I believe it will be very beneficial for not only tourism, as well as residents that live here for their jobs. It is very detrimental to scheduling when you have to take the bus home at a certain time because it no longer runs. I think it will help the economy with people being able to go to work at longer hours, as well as help with traffic and having sustainable community transportation. Please extend the weekends. Thank you.

Committee Chair Kaneshiro: Thank you. Councilmember Yukimura.

Councilmember Yukimura: Are you a bus rider?

Ms. Belt: Yes, and a resident.

Councilmember Yukimura: Okay. Is the bus your main mode of transportation?

Ms. Belt: Yes. I believe that for people that do not have a steady, reliable car or someone that will be willing to drive them, it will be extremely helpful if the County stepped in, in helping people that need to go to places without having the needs to get there.

Councilmember Yukimura: Are you that kind of person, too? Are you lucky to have a car and can get around?

Ms. Belt: I am lucky to have transportation when I can, but I do rely primarily on the bus and I do believe that for the youth, it would be very helpful to having that step before having to get a driver's license. It would be a nice step to have at least the public transportation there available at times.

Councilmember Yukimura: May I ask, are you a youth?

Ms. Belt: Yes.

Councilmember Yukimura: May I ask how old you are?

Ms. Belt: I am seventeen (17).

Councilmember Yukimura: Do you have a driver's license?

Ms. Belt: Not currently.

Councilmember Yukimura: Are you in school?

Ms. Belt: Yes.

Councilmember Yukimura: Do you use the bus to go to school?

Ms. Belt: I use it to get home sometimes, but I usually use the school bus system.

Councilmember Yukimura: Okay, but other than school, you use the bus to get around?

Ms. Belt: Yes.

Councilmember Yukimura: Okay. Are there other young people like you?

Ms. Belt: Yes. I could count on my fingers the people that would support this.

Councilmember Yukimura: Thank you very much for coming today.

Ms. Belt: Thank you.

PUBLIC HEARING  
RESOLUTION NO. 2017-25,  
BILL NO. 2645, AND  
BILL NO. 2646

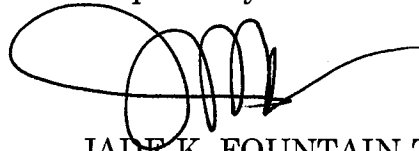
5

MAY 10, 2017

Committee Chair Kaneshiro: Anyone else in the audience wishing to testify on any of these Bills? Seeing none, the public hearing on Resolution No. 2017-25, Bill No. 2645, and Bill No. 2646 is now adjourned.

There being no further testimony, the public hearing adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

JADE K. FOUNTAIN-TANIGAWA  
County Clerk

:cy