

PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 5, 2016

A public hearing of the Council of the County of Kaua'i was called to order by Ross Kagawa, Chair, Public Works / Parks & Recreation Committee, on Wednesday, October 5, 2016, at 1:30 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 Mason K. Chock
Honorable Gary L. Hooser
Honorable Ross Kagawa
Honorable Arryl Kaneshiro
Honorable Mel Rapozo (*present at 1:38 p.m.*)
Honorable JoAnn A. Yukimura (*present at 1:33 p.m.*)

Excused: Honorable KipuKai Kualii

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

“Resolution No. 2016-57 – RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING TRAFFIC LANE MODIFICATIONS AND BICYCLE LANES ON RICE STREET AND HO‘OLAKO STREET; ESTABLISHING CROSSWALKS ON RICE STREET, PUA‘OLE STREET, HO‘OLAKO STREET, KALENA STREET, HO‘ALA STREET, AND MALAMA STREET; AND REPEALING, AMENDING, AND ESTABLISHING PARKING RESTRICTIONS AND BUS STOPS ON RICE STREET, COUNTY OF KAUA‘I,”

which was ordered to print by the Council of the County of Kaua'i on September 21, 2016, and published in The Garden Island newspaper on September 26, 2016.

The following communication was received for the record:

1. Mickens, Glenn, dated October 3, 2016

The hearing proceeded as follows:

SCOTT K. SATO, Deputy County Clerk: We received one (1) written testimony in opposition and we have one (1) registered speaker. The first speaker is Glenn Mickens.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Glenn, you have the floor.

GLENN MICKENS: Thank you, Committee Chair Kagawa. For the record, Glenn Mickens. I believe you have a copy of my testimony, but let me read it for the viewing public. As Ken Taylor asked last week, what analysis was done to

find out the cost-benefit of investing about sixteen million dollars (\$16,000,000) in this project? During the entire Administration's presentation, not one word was ever brought up to answer this question. If I put money in a certificate of deposit (CD) or in a municipal bond, I know what interest I will make upfront, a guaranteed return.

(Councilmember Yukimura was noted as present.)

Mr. Mickens: Why are we asking for the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant to supposedly beautify and rejuvenate an area that we have no factual idea what kind of return or success, if any, we will ever get for this kind of investment? In fact, this Resolution states "Establishing Traffic Lane Modifications And Bicycle Lanes On Rice Street" and other streets "Establishing Crosswalks On Rice Street" and other streets and "Repealing, Amending, And Establishing Parking Restrictions And Bus Stops Along Rice Street." Thus, we are proposing to spend about fourteen million dollars (\$14,000,000) of federal funds and two million dollars (\$2,000,000) of our own money—federal, state, or local is still our tax dollars, to make Rice Street and adjoining streets more conducive for vehicles, buses, bikes, and walking to somehow revitalize this area. Slowing traffic down will never be a solution for getting people to shop or eat at restaurants as business on Kaua'i found that when they stopped the power line road from being built forty (40) years ago by Senator Billy Fernandez. Kapa'a Town for one, has become a parking lot with traffic and is in dire need of an alternate southbound route. Are we being realistic with this project? Does anyone really believe that by exacerbating our traffic problems, narrowing it to two (2) lanes with an arrow non-driving lane in the middle like Kapa'a, and adding bike lanes and wider sidewalks will somehow magically revitalize the area? What makes any of these planners, designers, or engineers believe that all of the businesses that were once here; Big Save, Sears, and the rest that were once in that complex will return? This area is for state and local government activity with a few businesses staying alive. Just like industrial parks that were made for industry and businesses, nothing else. On a prioritized scale, what is most needed on Kaua'i? Alleviating traffic would be at the top of that list. As Council Chair Rapozo has so passionately said, why are we not using our valuable time and money going after highly-needed grants and not this TIGER grant that the majority of people on Kaua'i have said that they do not approve of? Even more mystifying, fourteen percent (14%) of those quizzed about the grant do not even know what it is. We need money to widen our roads, not narrow as this grant proposes and open our cane haul road so that we have more options to move around, truly lessen traveling on one (1) road, and make it safer for emergencies such as hurricanes and tsunamis. Also, for those proponents of this grant, how can they justify spending sixteen million dollars (\$16,000,000) in the Lihu'e area...

Committee Chair Kagawa: Glenn, your time is up.

Mr. Mickens: Okay. I will come back.

Committee Chair Kagawa: You have another three (3) minutes after everyone is done.

Mr. Mickens: Thank you.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Do we have any other registered speakers?

Mr. Sato: The next speaker is Elliot Yamamoto representing Po's Kitchen, followed by Chris and Karen Blair.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Elliot, you have three (3) minutes. Do you have any box lunches for us?

ELLIOTT YAMAMOTO: No. I should have brought some because we had extra.

Committee Chair Kagawa: I am just kidding.

Mr. Yamamoto: My name is Elliot Yamamoto. The TIGER grant is a federal grant program that specifically targets transportation projects with the expectation that individual counties might be able to take the funds and leverage economic benefit from it. To this end, it becomes important to ask in what form might the proposed transportation change as so economic benefit. My name is Elliot Yamamoto and today, I intend to voice my support for the changes proposed for Rice Street under the TIGER grant. For the past sixteen (16) years, my family has lived and worked on Rice Street. We have occupied a unit at the Līhu'e Townhouse building and we have operated Po's Kitchen, the box bento restaurant, right next door. For sixteen (16) years, we have been very fortunate to have the support of the community; men and women on lunch breaks coming from offices from the industrial parks, parents picking up lunches for children's field trips; and sports-goers from the stadium. We have been very lucky that those around us have made Po's Kitchen such an ubiquitous part of their life in Līhu'e.

(Council Chair Rapozo was noted as present.)

Mr. Yamamoto: The success of Po's Kitchen has only made it clear that when my family came upon the opportunity to invest back in Līhu'e, that we could commit ourselves to what could have the greatest benefit to the most people. In this past year, we have begun initial work on a development project for the undeveloped parcel located on 4181 Rice Street between Dani's Restaurant and Kalapakī Villas. It is maybe the last undeveloped parcel of its size in Līhu'e, definitely on Rice Street itself. This property is a blank slate and a number of different kinds of commercial operations could have been built on it. I do not mind saying that in past, our family has been approached to sell the property or develop it towards more of a private interest such as a large telecommunications storehouse and garage, an automotive parts warehouse and supplier that came from the mainland. As the owners, this would have been an easy way to make a quick buck for ourselves, but we have turned away these kinds of offers, holding nothing against these types of businesses. A storehouse and garages were just not the types of usages we envisioned for such a visible and accessible property on Rice Street. We are very much in the early phase of developing building usage and layout, for our family's aspiration for the property is to produce a much more vibrant type of building, a mixed use to provide apartments for residents on upper levels and multiple units for local businesses on the ground floor. My own family's business has been so fortunate

to have the support of the community and so our main goal in this development is to build a space where we can replicate that kind of local ownership for others. Līhu'e and the areas around Rice Street has already moved towards older patterns of density and live-work lifestyles, projects like Kaniko'o Senior Housing and others near our property only assures us of the need for local businesses near and on Rice Street that provide essential community needs such as grocers, eateries, and offices. As I know better than most, running a local business like Po's Kitchen is hard work and it will be even harder work to find the kinds of tenants and businesses that could populate a successful mixed-use complex. Businesses that are new, exciting, well-liked, and successful are hard work. It only becomes easier when there is a community that can support ongoing business that chooses to stay around and patronize them. As for the scope of the TIGER grant, this is all to say that changes in the infrastructure of Rice Street like safer crosswalks, large sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and bus stops encourage the presence of community members and people out and around Līhu'e only makes it easier for small businesses to stay open and become successful.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Elliott...

Mr. Yamamoto: I only have two (2) more sentences.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Okay. Go ahead.

Mr. Yamamoto: The multiplier effects of these kinds of local businesses from construction, to employees, and to supply chains can have a much greater effect on more of the community than more private kinds of development. I believe Līhu'e and Kaua'i is in great need of making local and small businesses a greater reality of our economy and everyday life. I believe that funds for the TIGER grant and the Rice Street updates can motivate and incentivize these beneficial changes. Thank you.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Thank you, Elliott. Next speaker, please.

Mr. Sato: The next speakers are Chris and Karen Blair representing the Hotel Coral Reef, followed by Ian Jung.

CHRIS BLAIR: Good afternoon.

KAREN BLAIR: Good afternoon. Well, I have to say that we certainly did not come prepared as well as these two (2) gentlemen. We were asked to come here today because we want to show support to the bike path. Again, we are Chris and Karen Blair from the Hotel Coral Reef. We humbly have a business right there on the bike path and I cannot tell you in the short time that we have been here, how many people come to our business because of that path. We just wanted to share that with you, in addition to the fact that the other thing that is a beautiful thing is the connectivity throughout the whole island. So not only has it helped our business, but it also connects the island. Any type of bike path interconnectivity is very important. I will humbly say that we experienced it in my previous job on the mainland. We truly had a bike path that was an old railroad and it connected miles upon miles upon counties upon counties, just with that bike path alone. The local

businesses depended on that bike path for business. It was truly like an interstate highway on most Saturday and Sunday mornings. The economic survey that we developed down there is that those bike riders can afford to go ahead and buy a lot of the products that were along the bike path. As small business owners and having seen that type of benefit, we are in strong support of wherever in any way, shape, or form you can grow this bike path.

The other part that we wanted to share too, was not only do we see it from a business standpoint, but also a community standpoint. It will connect all of us. One of the joys we have is our front window is literally in front of the bike path, so we see moms and children literally playing on the public side of that bike path, and of course, over by us too, and that is okay because we are here to share and to work together. We kind of look at sharing the sandbox, so being right on the bike path helps to us see not only from a business standpoint, but also from a community standpoint.

Mr. Blair: I will just add the perspective our business has changed from being our frontage mainly being on Kūhiō Highway to now our front yard being the bike path. I think the majority of all of our visitors see that as our front yard and it is our primary vantage point. So it has really become our front door. The bike path has effectively changed what our entrance is to our guests. It is the ocean's view. The bike path brings the activity and energy to our area and the entire eastern side of Kaua'i. We are here to lend our support for a similar project and talk about what its added to the Kapa'a area and the eastside, and how it might, at some point, benefit what the current proposal of other areas of the island as well.

Ms. Blair: Thank you.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Thank you.

Councilmember Yukimura: Committee Chair Kagawa, I have a question for them. For the record, can you tell us where you came from where that bike path is an old railroad for miles and miles?

Ms. Blair: Sure. It was Dundee, Illinois.

Councilmember Yukimura: Dundee, Illinois?

Ms. Blair: Yes. It just changed the face of that community, a very old community that revitalized as a result of that bike path.

Councilmember Yukimura: Thank you very much.

Mr. Blair: Thank you.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Thank you. Next registered speaker, please.

Mr. Sato: Our last registered is speaker is Ian Jung.

IAN JUNG: Council Chair and Members of the Council,
Ian Jung.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Welcome back.

Mr. Jung: Thank you. I am here testifying on behalf of myself as an employee of a business along Rice Street as well as patron of businesses on Rice Street. My particular experience in this is in my new position with a private law firm, is pulling out onto Rice Street. If I am looking up, looking left or looking right, I can either make a quick right as traffic comes up to head up Rice Street or I can make a long left going down Rice Street. But I think this particular design where we have this middle lane of the turn in/turn out will help those making left angle to go out to hit Kapule Road to go home quicker to the east side, which is a little more beneficial. I was involved with a couple of the charrettes that were taking place. I think the Department of Public Works and the Planning Department did a great job in going out and reaching out to the community because I attended one (1) at Hā Coffee Bar. What they did was they laid out this long stretch of road on the table and we had an opportunity to pencil in what we see and what we like. I think this design came to fruition with the community because some of the things that I wrote on there, such as trees and putting a crosswalk right in front of my office so I could cross into where Kaua'i Toyota is, really helped in terms of preparing what people want to see in terms of this design component. We appreciate the community outreach that was done. I am in support of the Resolution, in support of the interior turn lane, and in support of the enhanced sidewalks that will help benefit and create this so-called revitalization of Rice Street.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Thank you. Ken. Anybody else want to speak after Ken?

KEN TAYLOR: Council Chair Rapozo and Members of the Council, Ken Taylor. At the last meeting in discussing this issue, I talked about discretionary money in the pocket that makes the economics work, which makes this whole plan work. I talked about the mention of an economic study that was done or a cost-benefit analysis that was done by the County, and I have not seen it. I got the impression that none of you had seen it, so I hope that when this comes back for the final reading, that we can see a copy of the documents that were done. It is hard to talk about something when you have not seen it. At the last meeting, it was mentioned that the discretionary money would come from new people living in this area that did not have to have an automobile. Well, let us use Rice Camp as an example. There are sixty (60) residential units, which fifty (50) of those units have automobiles. Fifty (50) out of sixty (60). If the percentage is an indication of what will be coming, there is no way in the world that this is going to provide enough economic development to make this thing work. I have lived through these problems. I am not saying to believe what I have to say. I have said again and again, "Go find out from communities that have gone through this for the last forty (40) or fifty (50) years and see what it takes to make this kind of activity work." It is really unfortunate that we are spending this kind of money for something that is going to fail. I hope I am wrong, but we are not reinventing the wheel here. It has been done over and over and over again. More often than not, it has failed because it takes

either lots of discretionary money or increase the density, which I do not think Kaua'i is ready for. But ten thousand (10,000) to fifteen thousand (15,000) people in this core plan area would be required to make this work, and that is not in the cards at this point in time. I do not know how it is going to successfully move forward. Thank you.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Thank you, Ken. Just for your information and the public who are interested in this item, it will come back during the Committee Meeting next week. The Committee Meetings starts at 8:30 a.m., so it will be soon after 8:30 a.m. Chad.

CHAD DEAL: Aloha, Council Chair Rapozo and Councilmembers. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify. I am Chad Deal, here as the Interim Government Affairs Committee Director for the Kaua'i Board of Realtors. We have over six hundred (600) members. We wish to support the TIGER grant initiative, as we feel this will help enable the revitalization efforts for downtown Līhu'e, the Rice Street area, and also the town core of Līhu'e. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Thank you, Chad. After this, we will go to second round if nobody new wants to speak.

LARRY FEINSTEIN: My name is Larry Feinstein. I am with the Kaua'i Beer Company. Just sitting here, I was not exactly sure what I was going to say without prepared notes, but I had a quick thought about global warming, which I am not going to go into. But much of the discussion has do with waiting for something to happen and government being way behind in addressing it. I think it is the responsibility of government to be ahead of the curve wherever possible, and what we are talking about here is the future of the downtown area, not how it is presently, so it does require some vision. But the idea of this grant is to make the development possible. It is invaluable and we are a business on Rice Street with a vested interest in progress. We have certainly proven that people will come to the downtown area, so that is really not an issue. It is a viable commercial area and when the facilities are put in place, it will provide opportunities for businesses to come in. If you look at the street now, that is not what is envisioned by these plans. We are completely in favor of the TIGER grant and moving forward and embracing the future, not resisting it. Thank you.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Thank you, Larry. Bev, do you want to speak on the TIGER grant? The first round is now.

BEV BRODY: Is it my turn already?

Committee Chair Kagawa: We are going to go through the second round if you are not ready.

Ms. Brody: I am ready.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Okay. You can state your name and then you may begin.

Ms. Brody: Hi, my name is Bev Brody, and I am here to testify in strong support of the TIGER grant resolution. You folks all saw the presentation that the Planning Department gave last week, there was a specific photo I want you to recall in there. It was a picture of me and Pat Griffin. Do you remember it? Think about it. So what we were asked to do was to go and walk up and down Rice Street and contact all of the businesses to tell them about the Rice Street week and about the TIGER grant. The outreach efforts have been next to extraordinary. I had the privilege of walking the street with Pat Griffin on this particular day, and do you know what? I found a hair supply place that carries my favorite shampoo. This might sound really irrelevant, but it is very relevant because if I had not been walking, I would never have known that place was ever there. The only reason why I was walking was because I had to. Rice Street, in its current form, is not a pleasant place to walk. The sidewalks are narrow, they are cracking up, and they are no safe places to cross the street. So there are two (2) wonderful things about this TIGER grant; number one is that it is going to increase the safety of pedestrians such as us, and the other thing that I failed to mention is that at the end of our walk, I checked my Fitbit and I had nine thousand seven hundred (9,700) steps. That is three hundred (300) steps shy of the recommended amount of steps for physical activity benefits in one (1) day. We can help the health of our community members and we can help the economy of our town if we pass this TIGER grant. I am speaking from experience. I vote in strong support or I ask you, actually. I ask you to vote in strong support of the TIGER grant. Beep. Thank you.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Anybody else wanting to speak for the first time? Seeing none, for the second round, you may just come up one (1) at a time.

Mr. Mickens: Thank you, Committee Chair Kagawa. Again, for the record, Glenn Mickens. Whatever my testimony is here, I am not trying to belittle these people who have shops here and want to do business. I am not saying that. I am saying that for the majority of the people on this island. If you take a poll of the people on this island that want this grant or do not want this grant, I think you will really see the truth. Anyway, continuing on with the rest of my testimony, for those proponents of this grant, how can they justify spending sixteen million dollars (\$16,000,000) in the Lihū'e area and ignore or discriminate against other Kaua'i areas such as Waimea, Hanapēpē, Kapa'a, Kīlauea, and Hanalei? Maybe none of them would want a grant for this purpose, but to not even factor in that input is wrong. Without a truly thorough study, cost to benefit priority on a total maintenance basis, we should never keep "ready, fire, aiming" for these projects. Sixteen million dollars (\$16,000,000) is a lot of money. Again, on a prioritized basis, where is this? Is this really a top priority? We scream about traffic, about our roads not getting paved, and everything. I understand that this grant cannot go for that. I have asked Wally what the restrictions were, what the money can be used for, and what it cannot be used for. He was going to get back to me, but I have never seen it because I am not sure what restrictions were. When you folks vote on something, I hope you take the whole island into consideration and not just one (1) area or for the few, but for everybody on this island. Thank you.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Anybody else wanting to speak for a second time? Ken.

Mr. Taylor: Council Chair Rapozo and Members of the Council, Ken Taylor. Again as I said last week, we should have been discussing all of these issues back in 2010 when the project was originally approved. But for whatever reason, it was more important to move forward than to clear the deck and get all of the issues on the table before we move forward. It is unfortunate. Again, we are developing a maintenance issue that is going to require money and we know the budget is short, but some way or another, we are going to have to come up with three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000) or four thousand dollars (\$400,000) a year to maintain all of this. There is nothing worse than doing a nice landscape job and then let it look shabby. That does not solve any problems, similar to the discussion that went on this morning. Yes, it is a wonderful idea to take on the armory, but again, we cannot maintain what we have and yet, we want to take on more and more. Somewhere along the line, we are going to have to say, "No, we cannot do this until we can come up with the funds to maintain these things." Maintenance goes on and on forever, and it is going to be interesting. Years ago, I saw an article that was about old town Pasadena where they revitalized it and put parking meters in. They did not get the landscaping in the first-round, but the original article says, "No problem. We will take the money from the parking meters and we will get the landscaping done." Well, six (6) months later, because the crowds were so great on Friday and Saturday after they had a few drinks with their dinner, they were wandering through the stores and the stores were starting to close up because people were helping themselves to things that they were not paying for. "Well, that is not a problem. We will put more police, we will take the money from the parking meters, and pay for the police." Well, wait a minute. That money has already been spent for landscaping and the landscaping is not in yet, but now we are going spend the money for police. We have to think these things all the way through. Thank you.

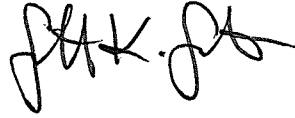
Committee Chair Kagawa: Thank you, Ken. Anybody else wishing to speak for a second time? No? Is that it? Larry. This is your last chance. Again, it will come up again next week during the Committee Meeting and you will have another opportunity. You will six (6) more minutes to express your thoughts.

Mr. Feinstein: I wanted the last word. I kind of waited for it to be positive. I think it is extremely important for this to be passed. I was think this obviously, talking to a political body, this is an island that those fight for money from the State. Getting money from the federal government is not an everyday occurrence and just purely from a practical standpoint, the smartest thing we can do is do a really fine job with this grant and be a showcase. It will enable us to go back for additional funding because we will have proven our abilities. So just from that alone, it is a very smart idea. We have been given the money. I am sure our representatives went out on a very serious limb to argue for it, and we have come up with a matching amount. Again, I think we should be doing the best job imaginable with the TIGER grant. Thank you.

Committee Chair Kagawa: Thank you. Anybody else wishing to speak on this? Seeing none, the public hearing hear is closed.

There being no further testimony, the public hearing adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SK. SATO", written in a cursive style.

SCOTT K. SATO
Deputy County Clerk

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