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**HO'OKAHUA HAWAI'I STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY
Wednesday, July 24, 2024, at 2:00 p.m.
VIRTUAL MEETING**

MINUTES OF HO'OKAHUA HAWAI'I STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mahina Paishon (Chair), Kimberly Agas, Mufi Hannemann, Stephanie Iona

NON-VOTING MEMBER: David Arakawa

HTA STAFF PRESENT: Daniel Nāho'opi'i, Kalani Ka'anā'anā, Caroline Anderson, Maka Casson-Fisher, Carole Hagihara

GUEST: Jennifer Chun, Samantha Lacey, Kristi Manseth, Lexi Strasburg, Chris Kam

LEGAL COUNSEL: John Cole

1. Call to Order and Opening Protocol

Chair Paishon called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m. Mr. Casson-Fisher opened the meeting with the E Hō Mai chant.

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 did the roll call. All were confirmed in attendance, and that they were by themselves if attending via Zoom.

3. Approval of Minutes of the June 26, 2024 Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee Meeting

Ms. Iona made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Hannemann seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

4. Presentation, Discussion and/or Action on the Destination Management Action Plan Evaluation Report Findings by Pacific Research and Evaluation (PRE).

Chair Paishon said there were various presentations and asked that each be limited to 15 minutes and then 10 minutes for discussion after. Ms. Anderson requested that the next presentation be 30 minutes because robust information came from the evaluation of the DMAPs. Ms. Paishon said that would be appropriate.

Ms. Anderson thanked all those who participated in the focus groups, interviews, and surveys to provide the information for the evaluation. The purpose of the evaluation was to help them as they move forward in the next iteration of the DMAPs. It is a tool to help them understand what could be improved upon. Lexi Strasburg introduced the team. Ms. Strasburg, from Pacific Research & Evaluation, joined with Kristi Manseth and Sam Lacey. They also have a broader evaluation team that supports the evaluation. She said they have been contracted to conduct an evaluation of the DMAPs. They started the evaluation towards the end of April 2024 and have been working over the last several months to do the evaluation. She said they are looking forward to sharing their findings and recommendations.

She spoke about the background and objectives of the evaluation. The DMAPs were initiated to rebuild, redefine, and resettle tourism structures over three years through the collaborative process. The DMAPs were built to service the comprehensive strategies for sustainable tourism development across four destinations: Hawai'i Island, Kaua'i, Maui Nui, and O'ahu.

As the first set iteration of DMAPs concludes, it is important to be able to look back to see what happened with the first set of plans and how effective they were and learn from them to help with the development of the next set of plans.

With that, they had three key evaluation questions that guided their approach:

How effective was the process of developing the DMAPs?

How effective was the implementation of the DMAPs?

What could be improved upon in the next iteration of the DMAPs?

For the methodology, they used a mixed methods approach to gather qualitative and quantitative information. They conducted interviews and focus groups with a variety of DMAP stakeholders. They conducted a survey with the steering committee and task force members. They leveraged existing measurement data available to track the progress of the DMAPs across trackers, reports, and other measurements. For the focus groups and interviews, they did a few informational interviews with the HTA staff as part of the process. With the rest of the

evaluation, they conducted twelve interviews and seventeen focus groups across various agencies and groups that were informed about the planning and implementation phases of the DMAPs. With the survey they conducted, they had a 50% response rate. Ninety members were currently or previously engaged in the steering committee or task force, and 45 participated in the survey. She noted that there were not sufficient responses received from a few islands to report an island breakout.

She spoke about the DMAP accomplishments in terms of the DMAP objectives. The DMAPs outlined six objectives that were consistent across the island plans that were specific to each island.

Objective 1: Create positive contributions to the quality of life for the island's residents.

Objective 2: Support the maintenance, enhancement, and protection of the island's natural resources

Objective 3: Ensure the authentic Hawaiian culture is perpetuated and accurately presented in experiences for residents and visitors, materials, and marketing efforts.

Objective 4: Maintain and improve visitor satisfaction of their experience on the island

Objective 5: Strengthen the economic contribution of the island's visitor industry

Objective 6: Increase communication and understanding between the residents and the visitor industry.

The HTA has KPIs that speak to the main components of the objectives:

Across all markets, survey results indicated high levels of satisfaction in visitors to Hawai'i.

Visitor satisfaction was maintained or improved between 2019 - 2023.

Total visitor spending increased between 2019- 2023.

Resident favorability ratings of tourism in Hawai'i have increased from 2021 to 2024.

Residents who are aware of the HTA's destination stewardship initiatives have more positive perceptions of tourism and tourism management.

Regarding DMAP objectives, she had information from a stakeholder perspective. They survey some of the steering committee members about their perspectives on contribution towards the DMAPs. Overall, the findings suggest that many stakeholders feel that the actions identified in the DMAPs supported the DMAP objectives. The survey results show feelings across many respondents that were moderate or substantial contributions to the objectives. More specificity is needed in the desired outcomes to evaluate the progress towards the objectives effectively. She said it is important to continue the work and improve any objective areas with opportunities for improvement.

DMAP accomplishments - actions.

Hawai'i island DMAP actions. For all the projects and activities that were identified, they

determined what percentage of those were completed, what percentage had some progress made, and what percentage had no progress. For most of the actions, many of the activities and projects were completed for Hawai'i island. For Action H and I, which focus on infrastructure and vacation rental regulations, there was less progress made across the projects and activities, but largely, a lot of great work happened.

She summarized some of the key initiatives for the Hawai'i Island DMAP.

She pointed:

Stewardship programs that piloted a lot of education, marketing, and communication efforts that efforts.

Interpretive signage was also added, in addition to many other great efforts.

Hawai'i island hotspots

More specifically, they listed the support that the HTA and the IHVB provided to the hotspot destinations. She noted that many organizations supported the hotspot locations for Hawai'i island and the other locations. She also showed the figure representative of the steering committee's perspectives on the extent to which they agreed that the DMAP mitigated issues for the identified hotspots. Some locations were well supported and some with less support.

Kaua'i DMAP actions

There was a lot of completion across the projects and activities. Some key initiatives that happened included stewardship agreements, communication campaigns, and marketing and education efforts. Park rangers were hired, and many other programs supported the DMAP efforts.

Kaua'i hotspots

There were several hotspots that the steering committee shared, where a lot of support was provided to mitigate the previously identified efforts, and some support around messaging and education was provided, specifically from the HTA and the KVB.

She showed Maui DMAPs projects and activities. She included Action F about developing and promoting initiatives to improve the experience of transportation and ground travel. For key initiatives, these include the East Maui tourism management pilot program. There were some efforts around cultural and education training, tour guide certification study, some programs to protect natural resources, and other steps taken to address visitor impact. She noted some of the efforts taken by the HTA and MVB to support Maui hotspots.

For Moloka'i DMAP actions, she showed the completion rates. She noted that for Moloka'i, a task force was developed that resulted from merging members from the advisory group and

the steering committee. This group worked to prioritize specific areas of action to focus on which reflects in the completed projects and activities. Some key outcomes included an educational pamphlet, needs assessment studies conducted, and business and organizational capacity webinars to support businesses.

For Lānaʻi, she showed the completion rate. For all the actions, the projects and activities were completed or progress was made. For the key initiatives, progress was made in terms of the Lānaʻi guide map, a brochure, an advisory group was formed, and a lot of other great work.

For Oʻahu, the key initiatives there was a lot of great work supporting the DMAPs. There were legislations paths for regulation short-term vacation rentals, educational programs, and reservation systems were implemented in addition to the other work that happened.

The hotspots slide reflected the work done from the HTA, the OVB, and a steering committee perspective. They have information from stakeholders' perspectives across the completion of the actions. On the slide were survey results for four of the DMAP steering committees reflecting the levels of progress made. They also collected perspectives in the informational discussion, the focus groups, and interviews. Largely there was reported mixed satisfaction with the DMAP progress. For the most part, there was a shared perspective that a lot of great work happened, with many good examples. There were other challenging areas for implementing the planned activities and projects. There was an overall perspective shared that although there were barriers experienced, implementing the initial plans allowed for piloting destination management in a way that hadn't happened before, which allowed for learning for future work. There was an overwhelming feeling that despite challenges, there was a desire to continue working in those areas and advance plans in DMAP efforts.

She spoke about recommendations for the next iteration of DMAPs. They are also working on a more thorough report that provides a lot of detail about the findings and the recommendations. In our findings, there were areas where lots of progress was made and others where there was an opportunity for improvement. Getting perspectives from DMAP stakeholders, they learned that at the end of the DMAP development process, steering committee members felt happy and satisfied with the end result of the plan. Given the available time and resources, a narrower scope of plans might have been more effective now that they had been able to look back and see how long the implementations took and what resources were needed. Some of the actions were outside the implementation control team.

Going forward, some of the plans could have been more specific. There was a recommendation to simplify the DMAP scope going forward, trying to consider reducing the number of actions and sub-actions identified to allow prioritizing areas of action and resources more effectively. There could be more efforts to review and refine to ensure the plans were at the right level of

specificity and that the right types of actions were included. To allow to re-evaluate is also necessary to be effective in changing circumstances. They spoke about steering committee engagement. The committees were recognized to be inclusive and have great representation and diversity across a variety of industries, not just representative of tourism. This helped with communication and trust across the island. There were some opportunities to increase representation in some areas regarding DMAP stakeholders, but largely, there were a lot of positive experiences shared by steering committees in the development process, and a lot felt like they could engage in meaningful discussion and learning when developing the plans. They recommended continuing to maintain and increase diversity in the steering committee make-up to ensure everyone with a voice is involved. There could be ways to inform and prepare the steering committee members to share lessons learned from the first round, such as the desired level of specificity, what resources are available, etc. There are ways to increase engagement for the steering committee members since they are represented across various industries to build relationships at the start and help have more meaningful discussions as part of the planning process.

For measurement and reporting, a lot of tracking happened across the actions. The question that came to mind was, did they achieve what they set out to achieve? Some things could benefit from having clearer methods identified during the planning process at all levels. There are ways that tracking and meetings could be streamlined, so they provided recommendations for those pieces.

For staffing and resources perceptions were shared recognizing the HTA's staff for their meaningful commitment and support throughout the process. Some staff changes happened during the implementation process, which led to some confusion and delays. There were also positive thoughts shared about the destination manager role, which was perceived to be an important and impactful role for the process. They noted what could be accomplished with the available staffing resources for the HTA and the destination manager. There was a recommendation to enhance HTA's staffing resources relative to the scope of the DMAP process. There could also be some greater integration between the HTA in terms of the oversight of the planning process and the implementation process to ensure alignment. Some perspectives and disappointments were shared regarding some pilot programs that were initiated to pilot out and test. There was some disappointment when these processes were not able to continue. The recommendation was to ensure consistent communication regarding pilot programs and what is expected from them.

She spoke about cross-organization collaboration. Effective collaboration is important across various organizations for DMAP actions and objectives. This process allowed entities that worked in a more solid fashion to engage and communicate to come together to support

destination management. There were also challenges, but the recommendation was to clarify roles and responsibilities at the start of the plans. Progress reports, annual reports, and meetings were used to communicate with DMAP stakeholders. One takeaway was that more communication could be beneficial. There was a perspective that residents tended to be aware of destination management but might not know about all the initiatives that were happening that could be supported to provide more education around those pieces. Steering committee members desired more involvement in the implementation and more updates and information in addition to what was already provided. The recommendation was to increase engagement and communication in the groups. She thanked everyone who participated in the evaluation.

Chair Paishon opened the floor to the Board members. Ms. Iona asked about the recommendations for the HTA. Some concerns were keeping communication going and getting everyone to clarify their roles and responsibilities. She asked who would ensure the responsibilities and recommendations would be identified and achieved. Ms. Anderson said it will be a collective HTA leadership thing where they will be advising responsibilities. Ms. Strasburg noted the recommendation was not lacking in the prior plans, and the recommendations were fairly new to the HTA team, so they will be familiar with them. Mr. Ka'anā'anā said they will ensure the iteration of the plans has clarity around who has what responsibilities. Mr. Hannemann said the DMAP process is an opportunity to get the counties involved and engaged. There is a growing awareness that they all need to work together. Some members of the private industry do not believe that using the TAT dollars is an important responsibility. He asked what the takeaways from the study were to help reinforce his two observations.

Ms. Strasburg agreed with his first point. To his second point, she said it is important for residents to be satisfied. If they are unsatisfied, it will not enable efforts to be continued. Ms. Agas reiterated that there has to be great collaboration between each island and everyone involved.

Mr. Casson-Fisher said a comment from the Hawai'i Island Destination Manager, Rachel Kaiama, that the action was to focus on A to I, and the implementation was to do A first. The idea is that programs and projects are unique to each island and to work with the partners on the island. She thanked them for the study.

Mr. Arakawa followed up on Ms. Iona's question about who is responsible for collaboration, cooperation, etc. He asked if every island coordinator is responsible for the position of getting the county and state resources on that island and getting private business. Mr. Ka'anā'anā said he is responsible, as well as the ten staff members who will hopefully join soon. It is also done in conjunction with Ms. Anderson, Michelle, and her team on the planning side.

Chair Paishon said everyone should be proud of the first pass at DMAPs. The data shows a lot has been accomplished. She was interested in replicating and scaling what was working so they could double their impact level. She asked how much of the budget had been allocated to DMAPs as the stakeholders were asking, and they needed to show the economic impact for the residents and businesses transparently. She wanted to know how many contractors were assigned to the DMAP process, the plans, and the implementation. She asked about the process for setting the next DMAP processes and when it would commence.

Ms. Anderson said that they can take a deeper dive into replication and scale. Regarding the budget, they have the budget with the destination managers, but they also had projects with the HTA, which is a large amount of money that went into the implementation of the DMAPs. The counties also put effort and time into moving their projects related to the DMAPs. Regarding the staff question and contractors needed, that will move forward when they start to develop the process for the next DMAPs. She said the next step is to start working with their team to set out the processes and bring it before the Ho'okahua and other committees to approve to move forward with the next round of DMAPs.

Chair Paishon thanked everyone for their hard work.

5. Presentation of DBEDT's Spring 2024 Resident Sentiment Survey by Chris Kam of Omnitrak Group

Ms. Chun asked for an additional five minutes for their presentation. Mr. Paishon approved. The Resident Sentiment Survey was first conducted in 1988 and was not conducted on a regular cadence until 2014. DBEDT issued an RFP for the Resident Sentiment Survey for the next three years, and Omnitrak won the bid. The intention is to have this survey fielded in the spring. She gave the floor to Mr. Kam for the high-level results of the Spring 2024 survey. The full report has been posted on the HTA and DBEDT websites.

Mr. Kam spoke about the highlights.

Three key points:

1. Destination Stewardship measures of Resident Sentiment are rising.
2. As Destination Stewardship initiatives take root:
 - Key measures of Hawai'i Resident Sentiment edge upwards.
 - The perceived balance of tourism's benefits vs. challenges gains strength.
 - Providing residents a voice in tourism development takes on a new level of importance.
3. Nonetheless, perceived challenges of tourism remain, and an integrated effort between

multiple public and private sector organizations is required to address them.

Other highlights include:

- Tourism is being better managed on my island - 48% agree.
- Tourism should be actively encouraged on my island - 61% agree.
- Tax dollars should be spent to manage the impacts of tourism in my community, which is held steady.
- More effort is being made to balance the economic benefits of tourism and the quality of life for residents - 49%.
- Tourism helps fund the stewardship of Hawai'i's natural resources, parks & cultural sites - 57%.
- I feel like I have a voice in my island's tourism development decisions - 27%.
- Favorable Views of Hawai'i Tourism edging higher - 69%.

Chair Paishon thanked Omnitrak. She asked if any of the questions had been changed from the previous year's survey. Mr. Kam added a few but did not change any of them. Ms. Chun said they deleted some irrelevant questions and made the survey shorter.

Ms. Agas said residents want a voice to come across loud and clear. She asked if there were any suggestions on how they wanted to share their feedback. Ms. Chun said the questions are not formed in that way. Ms. Agas said in a previous meeting that this question did come up, so she asked the questions. Ms. Agas recommended asking that question in the future to ensure they understand where the best impact is for them.

Mr. Hannemann wanted to ensure county governments feel more engaged in the process.

Ms. Anderson said that they will get more feedback when they return to the community for the DMAP.

6. Presentation, Discussion and/or Action on the Maui Recovery Tourism Emergency Special Fund

Ms. Anderson said this is the remaining \$125,000 from TSF. In June 2024, at the BFCC, it was mentioned that Chair Arakawa asked if they could reprogram the funding. Mr. Nāho'opī'i had said it is internal. Ms. Anderson said she would also check with the county to see what the funds could be used for. She spoke to Ms. Luana Mahi, the Director of Maui Economic Development, and wanted to see if the Maui Economic Commission had identified any

economic development projects. She was advised of the Lahaina Street market, which consists of vendors, food trucks, farmers' markets, etc., for economic development and getting small businesses back up and running.

Mr. Nāho'opi'i spoke about the process - a recommendation that an emergency exists and that there is a need, that the funds need to be used, and then a project identified. This would have to be brought up by the Board at the end for their approval.

Ms. Anderson said the emergency still exists because there was a governor's proclamation on July 19, and it was extended to September 17. Arrivals are still down for Maui. Chair Paishon added that this would be an appropriate way to spend the remaining dollars as it would provide a new product for travelers and an important venue for local businesses and the community to gather. She asked if they had spoken to Dir. Tokioka about the possibility of this idea. Mr. Anderson had not yet, and she apologized but had reached out to Ms. Luana Mahi for her thoughts because this project was originally a \$100,000 contract with CNHA to find a venue for something like Lahaina Makeke, which didn't pan out.

Ms. Iona asked to discuss an opportunity for some of the other islands to have some of the funding and talk about better ways to handle fires, as there is a need for that. The islands need them to pull together and have a focus group. Ms. Paishon asked that the staff note that and get back to that.

Mr. Arakawa said what Ms. Iona mentioned is one of the primary uses of the fund - for disasters. He mentioned Ms. Anderson's comments and said they should discuss this with DBEDT as there might be other departments whose kuleana it is. He spoke about the federal grant deadline the following week and to see how the HTA could be part of the team involved.

Mr. Hannemann added to Ms. Iona and Mr. Arakawa's comments. He said they need to elevate public health and safety as something that the HTA should be collaborative and a leader in bringing together the various counties, joining with HiEMA, etc., to help promote safety and being part of the team.

Mr. Arakawa agreed with Mr. Hannemann but said they need to look at whose kuleana that is. They need to work with the agencies, but they remarked on Mr. Hannemann's comment about being part of the team and said he would be careful about bringing that in-house as the staff is already overworked. Mr. Hannemann agreed, but what he experienced in COVID was the collaborative effort, and HiEMA was front and center. He said they just need to see how they can be at the table to give their input.

Chair Paishon said they heard the governance findings on the PIG, and it was calling for more cross-collaboration, so it aligned with where they are headed. She wanted to set up a conversation to entertain some of the money for the Lahaina Street market and some towards what Ms. Iona brought up for consideration.

Mr. Nāho'opi'i circled back to the safety of public health issues. He said they could present in another meeting, but there was a process where they were involved with HiEMA in developing emergency plans. He had spoken to HiEMA that day about emergencies. Mr. Gionson, Ms. Sunnie Lasconia, and himself are the staff assigned. They work through the plans and have meetings with HiEMA, and they help create the details, check and approve their plans, etc. Ms. Iona suggested putting together a discussion at the next conference. Mr. Nāho'opi'i said they could bring forward ideas and suggestions.

Mr. Arakawa suggested Mr. Nāho'opi'i look at existing contracts as a street market might not have been presented to the legislature as part of the budget. Mr. Nāho'opi'i said it is part of the emergency dollars. Mr. Arakawa said they could look into existing contracts and maybe add them. Chair Paishon asked what would happen if they did not spend the remaining money and if it went back to the TSF. Ms. Anderson confirmed that as correct.

Chair Paishon said this committee will meet in August to offer additional ideas and, hopefully, call for a vote and present it at the August regular BOD meeting.

Mr. Casson-Fisher shared the comment from the O'ahu Destination Manager, noting that the City and County of Honolulu DEM (Department of Emergency Management) handle the new shut-off program, and Sue Kanoho of the Kaua'i island chapter can give their two cents on their respective emergency management agencies.

7. Adjournment

Chair Paishon thanked the guest presenters, the HTA leadership, and the committee members, and adjourned the meeting at 3:49 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Sheillane Reyes
Recorder