

# THE KA'Ū

Volume 22, Number 5

The Good News of Ka'ū.

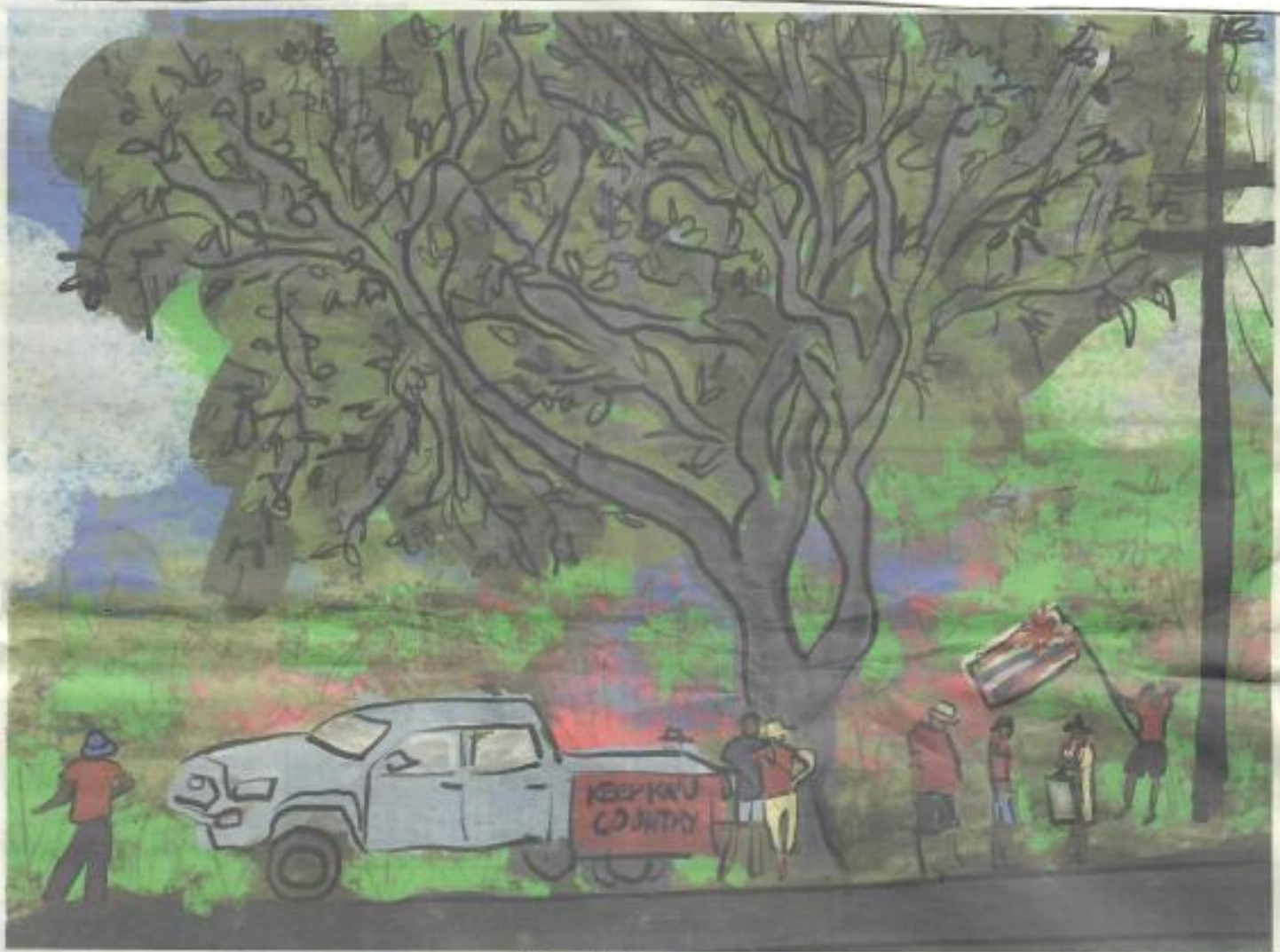
## Punalu'u Development Goes

# CALENDAR

Hawai'i

May 2024

## Back to Public Hearing



### *Keep Ka'ū Country*

Citizens in opposition and support Black Sand Beach, LLC's proposal for development at Punalu'u both state they care about the community and the environment. This illustration by a Ka'ū residents says, Keep Ka'ū Country, an issue that will be discussed at the public hearing on Monday, May 6 at County Council Chambers in Hilo at 9:00 a.m.

*Illustration by John Inserra*

The Punalu'u proposal for a Special Management Area permit for development goes to an extended public hearing on Monday, May 6 at 9 a.m. at the County Building Council Chambers in Hilo. Those who were turned away at the end of day during the March hearing will be allowed to testify first. There will also be testimony allowed through Zoom. See the video of the March 7 public hearing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfA6VoyabyE>.

The hearing is before the Windward Planning Commission, during a special day set aside for this issue. The Commission, including its Ka'u commissioner Louis Daniele, are tasked with deciding whether or not to issue a Special Management Area permit to allow the proposed Black Sand, LLC development, including 225 accommodations that are set back a quarter mile from the shore, makai of Hwy 11. Black Sand is also asking for other commercial enterprises, some close to Black Sand Beach as well as other renovations and expansions of the old Sea Mountain resort there. The decision is that of the Planning Commission and does not go to the County Council nor the Mayor for consideration.

Eighty persons spoke in opposition and eight in support of the SMA approval during the first hearing. That left about 50 who were invited to testify on May 6, plus any new persons who want to give their opinions.

Mālama Punalu'u has announced protest events and is encouraging those opposed to join a caravan to Hilo and to testify against the proposal. People for the development spoke at the recent Ka'u Community Development Plan Action Committee Hearing in April. Opposition testimony was also given. See the video of the Ka'u Community Development Steering Committee at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuYKe58UAz0>.

Three contested cases have been filed with the Planning Commission. Should any one of them go forward, the decision-making by the Planning Commission will



be delayed until mediation and other legal proceedings are complete, which could take months.

Should the result be requirement for an Environmental Impact Statement, last done in the 1980s, the SMA decision making could be held up for a year or more.

Center for Biological Diversity's Maxx Phillips, along with Guy Enriques, Nohealani Ka'awa, and Elsa Kalanikauleleiaiwi Dedman, filed a petition seeking a contested case. Another contested case was filed by the homeowners of Punalu'u condominium association.

Since the first hearing, Black Sand

Beach, LLC and its supporters have added videos with testimonials to its Punalu'u Community facebook page. Testimonials include such statements as one from Sharon Morales, who said, "I support the project because the economy in Ka'u needs to be revived." Wayne Kawachi says, "The project allowed the community to have their input for three years now. So I think it's a good project because I feel that Ka'u needs some type of economic development so the people can stay here, the local people." Regarding the size of the project, Vance Bjorn says that the size is "less than ten percent of the proposals in the past in

terms of the number of units."

The facebook page says "Did you know what the situation was like in Punaluu over the past 30 years and how Black Sand Beach LLC has been cleaning and maintaining Punaluu in the past four years? Are you aware of how many dangers the long-unmanaged old restaurant area has posed to the community and tourists?"

"Are you aware of how much Black Sand Beach LLC has spent on cleaning the Punaluu village and restoring pedestrian pathways, and how much gratitude this has garnered from the community?"

*Punalu'u Development, pg. 5*

***Punalu'u Development,  
from pg. 1***

It also states that "Cultural, Archaeological and Biological studies have been updated. There is no legal requirement for an Environmental Assessment (EA). The analysis typical of an EA has been included within the SMA application.

"Past studies have noted that 90% of the project area was previously disturbed or altered when Sea Mountain was built in the late 1960s."



## BRINGING OPPORTUNITIES

*"Our number one economy has always been tourism. Our tax dollars we pay the state goes towards the promotion of tourism. If you don't want Punalu'u to be impacted by tourism, then stand at the airport with a sign that says "Don't Go Punalu'u". You cannot stop the impact of tourism and people moving to our island. Lots of concerns on the Punalu'u development are coming from retired people having no historical knowledge of the place. Conservationist that were not concerned about Punalu'u in the past, the three proposed rocket launch sites, and other resort owners who proposed more development. There was never any voice from environmentalist. Conservationist are more interested in grabbing lands and using the Kanaka in the process, and never considered the Kanaka traditions as part of the environment. There has never been a conservationist management plan, as well as National Parks management plan where there is no mention of our traditional practice to these lands.*

*So what now? With no jobs in the area, no sugar mill, limited mac nuts, and no resort there is no future for our young people. For those who are against these job opportunities should come to Ka'u and offer an alternative.*



PALIKAPU DEDMAN, PRESIDENT  
PELE DEFENSE FUND



**We support the Black Sand Beach team and the Punalu'u Village project.  
Join us to bring about these needed changes for our keiki and Ka'u.**



**Keamalu  
Waltjen**



**Jamie  
Kawauchi**



**Paulette  
Kaihilani Ke**



**Sharon  
Moraes**



**Sweetie  
Grace**



**Wayne  
Kawachi**

#### **PROJECT DOWNSIZED**

After listening to the community for three years, the project was downsized from a previous plan for 2,900 accommodation units to 225 units today. Punalu'u Village proposes an impressive shoreline set back of at least 1,100 feet or approximately three Ka'u High School football fields.

#### **JOIN OUR VISION**

Punalu'u Village represents a commitment to responsible stewardship of the land and proactive engagement with the community. We invite every resident to join us in this transformative journey, to help shape a future that honors our shared heritage and ensures the prosperity and beauty of Punalu'u for generations to come.



**Learn more about the project at [punalublacksandbeach.com](http://punalublacksandbeach.com) or scan the QR code:**



# BLACK SAND BEACH LLC

*Committed to Community, Culture and Conservation*

## DOING WHAT'S PONO

- Protecting the Federally protected honu (turtles)
- Moving all commercial activities off of the shoreline
- Protecting Native Hawaiian gathering and fishing rights
- Restoring Kawaihūkaula Pond and Native Hawaiian vegetation
- Working to limit or eliminate tour buses at Punalu'u Beach
- Establishing Shoreline Conservation Management Areas to ensure preservation for future generations
- Creating a community-led and community-driven Foundation to manage and steward the conservation areas and wahi pana (sacred sites)
- Working to nurture, steward and manage these lands in a manner that reflects the vision of the Ka'ū Community Development Plan





*“Always listening and learning to better balance the needs and desires of the community, my hope is to work with the Kaū community to nurture, steward and manage Punalu‘u Village in a manner that reflects the vision of the community.”*

EVA LIU

***Black Sand Beach LLC’s Punalu‘u Village is a bold step towards creating an environment where the entire community can take a collaborative part in sharing a place that can be enjoyed by all, while protecting what makes this place so special.***

**PUNALU‘U DEVELOPMENT HISTORY**

90% of the Punalu‘u Village project area was previously disturbed or altered when Sea Mountain was built in the late 1960s by C. Brewer Properties, Ltd. After nearly 30 years of neglect, Punalu‘u Village was purchased by Black Sand Beach LLC in 2020. Since then, more than a million dollars has been spent on the upkeep of the land and maintenance of the existing private infrastructure systems, including the water and wastewater systems that serve the surrounding community.



# KEEP KA'U KA'U MĀLAMĀ PUNALU'U

Show Your Support for Punalu'u & Ka'u

WHEN IT'S GONE...  
IT IS GONE FOREVER!

"For far too long, Hawaiians and rural residents have been silenced in our pursuit of a regenerative future. We will not be silent any longer. We will fight tirelessly to ensure that the character of Ka'u is controlled by our community, not by nonresident profiteers. And we will not back down."

With aloha,  
Representative Jeanné Kapela  
State House District 5

Sign the Petition



Add your name to the  
more than 15,000  
who OPPOSE development.

## MAIN CONCERNS

1. Proposed Development is not in alignment with many policies outlined in the Ka'u Community Development Plan (See flow in the testimonials below). (<https://www.planning.hawaii.gov/general-plan-community-planning/0dpr/kauidoc>)
  - a. Require a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The last one completed was 36 years ago in 1988.
  - b. Require a new Shoreline Survey to determine current high water mark and building setbacks.
  - c. Require a Burial Treatment Plan and Cultural and Archeological Resources Protection Plan.
  - d. Require infrastructure repair (water, sewer, fire suppression) that is not contingent on SMA Application approval.
3. Proposed development will
  - a. Accelerate property tax increases for all Ka'u residents.
  - b. Increase overcrowding as the beach is already at capacity with current use by locals and visitors.



PUNALU'U & KA'U ENDANGERED LIST



c. Further threaten endangered species and ecological resources.  
d. Drastically constrain the Ka'u county lifestyle for future generations.



**JOIN THE CARAVAN TO HILO ON  
MAY 6  
TO THE NEXT WINDWARD  
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING!**

5:45a Chalking windows  
6:00a Leave Punalu'u  
6:10a Passing Pāhala  
6:40a Passing Volcano  
8:30a Arrive County Building  
8:45a Sign in to testify



SCAN for  
HOW TO  
TESTIFY INFO

**Support by wearing RED &  
submitting your testimony or by  
testifying in-person or via Zoom!**

- Country Lifestyle
- Rural
- No Traffic
- Quiet
- Connection
- Total Beach Access
- Undeveloped Coastline
- Self-managed Boal Raup
- County Park & Pavilion

- Nāne (Hawaiian Goose)
- ʻŌhelo (Mokk Seal)
- Hōmū (Green Sea Turtle)
- Honuhea (Hawksbill Turtle)
- ʻŌpeʻapeʻa (Hawaiian Booby)
- ʻŌhiʻihi (Bonin)

**Read the Key Testimonies Already Submitted!**

All testimony to SUPPORT & OPPOSE is publicly available on the Hawai'i County website. Find more testimony [here](#).



Testimony presenting concerns from a group of Ka'u residents, Ohana and supporters.



Testimony from the Center for Ecological Diversity's concerns and legal intervention.



Testimony from Dr. Gina McGuire, research ecologist and ethnographer in coastal and community health.



Testimony from Lilla Mokuia, urban planner and lineage descendant of Mokuia at Punalu'u.



**Ka'u CDP excerpts related to the Punalu'u SMA Application 24-36. Compiled by Ron Whitmore, former Hawai'i County Planner who facilitated the CDP.**

**COMING UP...  
MAY 4, 2024  
10 AM - 12 PM**

**SIGN WAVING @  
PUNALU'U INTERSECTION**

**WEAR RED!  
SIGNS AVAILABLE OR MAKE YOUR OWN!**

Sponsored by Friends of Punalu'u