

HCDA Meeting Minutes, Sept 3, 2008 - KRP Presentation

Written by Administrator
Saturday, 04 October 2008 08:25

We're happy to present an excerpt from the HCDA Meeting Minutes for Sept 3rd, 2008, where we made our initial KRP Presentation. This is from a DRAFT of the meeting minutes, if changed, the article will be updated.

You can read the entire script by clicking on the following link: [HCDA Meeting Minutes](#)

D. SORT, LLC Presentation on Kalaeloa Race Track

Mr. Messer and Mr. Kitchens presented a summary of the SORT presentation enclosed in the packet distributed to the Authority Members.

Before taking questions on the SORT presentation, Chairperson Lai established a committee to work with HCDA staff on resolving the issues with the proposed Kewalo Basin Rules. The committee would be comprised of Members Formby, Dwight, Kimura, Chang and Saito.

Chairperson Lai asked whether Members had questions for Mr. Messer and Mr. Kitchens.

Member Kane stated Mr. Messer and Mr. Kitchens had worked with the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands ("DHHL") for the past six months to meet the requirements imposed on them and had met with organizations recommended to them. SORT made a presentation to the Hawaiian Homes Commission which had been unanimously supported and made themselves available to the Kapolei homesteaders during community meetings. It had been a long haul for everyone to find an interim use until a permanent site can be found. Member Kane acknowledged the work that had been done by SORT to mitigate and change some of their plans based on comments received during discussions with DHHL and community

stakeholders.

Member Mukaigawa asked whether there would be a racing school on weekdays, and the racetrack would be open on weekends and occasional holidays.

Mr. Messer stated that was correct.

Member Mukaigawa asked whether drag racing would be allowed.

Mr. Messer replied the immediate opportunity did not allow for a drag strip. The original plan to include the drag strip might have jeopardized the project, so plans were changed.

Member Saito inquired as to what constraints were involved with the drag strip.

Mr. Messer stated that the physical property did not allow for a quarter mile drag strip with a safety shut down area. There is a layout that shows a one-eighth mile drag strip that might eventually be extended to a quarter mile drag strip. In order to construct the drag strip, they would have to relocate the dirt track.

Mr. Kitchens stated if the facility were designed for drag racing, it could only support drag racing by itself which represented only one half of the users. Since there are no race tracks in Hawaii for road racers, they decided to build the dirt track first, but are designing it to be relocated fairly easily.

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Member Saito asked how it was determined that 2015 would be the date by which SORT would be in a permanent solution.

Mr. Messer stated that it had taken two years to get to the current point and he estimated it would take a minimum of three to four years to plan and relocate to a permanent facility.

Mr. Kitchens added that there could be a possibility that a private developer might come in and build a facility. Hawaii Raceway Park (HRP) had recently opened up for bid, however, no one stepped forward to bid. Member Kane of DHHL and Member Saito of the Department of Accounting and General Services have worked hard to assist SORT. He noted he had 300 letters of support and over 1,500 signatures on their petition in support of a racing facility.

Member Okada asked for clarification on the SORT organization.

Mr. George Grace, Jr. from the audience stated he is the attorney and developer for SORT which is a nonprofit organization. SORT does not have the space to support drag racers, but would help raise funds to send them to the neighbor islands where they can participate in racing.

Mr. Kitchens responded that his group is OMAC and is primarily composed of former tenants of the race track and the people who used to run the events. Earlier in the year, SORT and OMAC decided to work together to build the temporary facility.

Member Souza asked if SORT had met with the Kalaeloa Public Safety Group ("KPS").

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Mr. Messer replied they had not met with KPS. However, they had received a list of approximately fourteen agencies and responded to the concerns brought up in their meetings.

Member Souza posed questions regarding the number of spectators that a drift session would produce and the nature of the traffic study that SORT completed. She stated there would be substantial impact on the parcel and the adjoining community, Coast Guard, Surfing Beach, people staying in the cabanas and the housing areas as well on the roadway where the sides of the road are not up to standard. Over a thousand spectators had shown up at a recent event at HRP.

Mr. Messer stated the HRP event was not a drift session and they have about 300 spectators at a regular drift session. Major events that were sponsored and advertised did draw a greater number of spectators. For the traffic study, they did observations and counted cars in front of the property.

Member Souza asked whether SORT had spoken to anyone at the U. S. Coast Guard.

Mr. Kitchens replied that several attempts had been made to contact the U. S. Coast Guard, but they had not received a return call.

Member Souza posed questions to Mr. Grace regarding his plans to address the potential for fires, especially during summer months.

Mr. Grace responded that he would do his best to meet every safety requirement on the property and prevent problems in the surrounding areas.

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Member Souza posed questions regarding whether Mr. Grace had met with the Department of Land and Natural Resources (“DLNR”) and the State Historic Preservation Division (“SHPD”) and whether he was aware of the cultural sites, iwi and endangered species on the property.

Mr. Grace responded that Mr. Messer and Mr. Kitchens would meet with DLNR and SHPD, and they were very aware of the cultural sites, iwi and endangered species.

Mr. Grace questioned whether there was a conflict of interest with the questions from Member Souza.

Member Souza asked Deputy Attorney General Sandra Ching for an opinion. Ms. Ching stated that questions from Member Souza were within the parameters.

Member Souza posed questions regarding installation of lighting.

Mr. Grace stated they had not reached that stage in their planning. He commented they had stadium lights that had been donated, but were not sure if they would be able to use the lights.

Member Souza asked whether SORT was planning to fix the deteriorated roads at Roosevelt and Coral Sea since they would be adding a substantial increase in vehicular traffic.

Mr. Grace stated he would help in any way he could although he did not feel the racetrack would impact the area any more than the population of the Barber’s Point Naval Air Station when it was open.

Member Souza asked whether SORT had talked to DLNR about the archaeological survey.

Mr. Messer responded he did not think DLNR had jurisdiction over the archaeological site. He had talked with the Kapolei Hawaiian Civic Club and reviewed all the public archaeological reports for the area. He had discussed the reports with an archaeologist, but did not wish to release the name of the archaeologist at this time.

Member Souza noted the purpose of the presentation was to get SORT started on the temporary oval track which would be moved later for a road course. She asked if it was adequate for drifting.

Mr. Messer replied in the affirmative.

Member Souza stated she thought it was a go-cart track.

Chairperson Lai stated the Authority would take public comments. He noted there were various perspectives and opinions on the SORT issue and inappropriate behaviors would not be tolerated. He reminded speakers to limit their comments to two minutes.

Mr. Glenn Oamilda from the audience stated he lived in Ewa Beach which has long been impacted with traffic and development. He is a member of the Ewa Beach Hawaiian Civic Club and is a native Hawaiian who is sensitive to the cultural aspects in the development. Hawaiians used to traverse from Wahiawa to Makua, a contiguous route that included the beach shore. He stated Ewa Beach has not been involved in the grass roots process.

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Mr. Kurt Fevella from the audience stated he was an Ewa Beach resident and Vice Chair of Community Concerns for the Ewa Beach Neighborhood Board. Ewa Beach residents were concerned about the traffic. As a former racer he felt the proposed traffic numbers were inconsistent with the numbers of people who formerly came to the racetrack. He was concerned with the safety of the substandard roads going into the racetrack area.

Ms. Celeste Lacuesta from the audience stated her concerns involving the month to month lease for the project; grading permits; usage of potable or non-potable water; whether the temporary facility would become permanent; who on the Authority would approve the facility; the environmental impact statement; iwi on the property and historic sites.

Ms. Polly Grace from the audience introduced herself as "Granny" and stated Mr. Grace was her son. She described the history of racing as starting after the end of World War II when men and women like herself would put parts together to build cars. She stated the urge to race was "in your blood" and mentioned her mentors from Maui and Oahu.

Mr. Franklin Souza from the audience stated George and Jeanette Grace and Member Souza and himself were the original SORT members until they parted ways. DHHL recognized Mr. Grace on April 15 as being the lessee for the property. Mr. Grace has been a sponsor for the racing facility for two years, while Mr. Souza has operated and promoted racing and was the first promoter on the island to bring in racers from the ASCoT spring car show. He questioned the discrepancies between the first and final phases of the SORT plan and showed a plan printed from the SORT website. SORT stated they have to move the dirt track to get to their final phase. He noted the dirt track was going to be built on an archaeological site and a drag strip would be on a cultural site. He felt SORT was deceiving the Hawaiian people. He and Member Souza had spent 2-1/2 years and their own money working on the project, until Mr. Grace discontinued their association.

Member Kane stated the graphic shown by Mr. Souza was presented to DHHL by SORT. Through that process, DHHL directed SORT to meet with the Kapolei Hawaiian Civic Club to address issues that were raised. SORT made the modification to limit the development mauka of the currently graded area. Member Kane wanted to make clear there is no Phase 2 Makai of their current development. DHHL and the Hawaiian Homes Commission ("Commission") have not authorized and at no point will SORT be able to go makai of their current Phase I without

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approval from DHHL or the Commission. SORT has been receptive in accommodating concerns about the rich cultural sites that are makai of the currently graded area.

Mr. Souza stated the graphic was printed off the internet on August 30 or 31. If the final phase was not going to happen, then SORT was not informing Member Kane or the general public.

Member Souza stated that Mr. Souza presented the final phase. The form dated August 30 has the complete Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3 and final phase promoting what the racing community will get.

Mr. Kitchens noted there is a disclaimer on the website stating that it is not the end result and things can change. The only phase they are concentrating on is the first phase.

Mr. Edwin Hollman, Jr. from the audience stated he represented the Hawaii Regions Force Car Club of America, a national organization with about 60,000 members in 112 regions. The Hawaii region was established in 1953. For over 50 years, they have been presenting events in Hawaii. The Islands of Hawaii, Maui and Kauai all have racing facilities, but Oahu has nothing since HRP closed. The SORT proposal is not ideal, but it is the only thing going right now and should be supported until a permanent facility can be established. There are thousands of people who were involved at HRP who now have nothing to do.

Members Bradley and Kane exited the meeting at 12:29 p.m. Member Chinn replaced Member Kane.

Mr. Les Vallarano from the audience stated he was speaking as a member of the racing community. While he supported efforts to build a racetrack, he had concerns about traffic in this particular project. HRP was located in an industrial area and didn't bother anyone. The SORT facility would be in an area with traffic going through a residential area. The Aliamanu

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Neighborhood Board and Crosspointe Community Association residents did not want racing in their backyard. It was important to do an environmental assessment and get public input before the racetrack in Kalaeloa is built. He believed promotion of the racetrack has been dishonest since the final phase diagram incorporated every venue at HRP. Instead of saying there will not be a drag strip, SORT is telling the drag racers and racers that they will be accommodating them. He stated his concern about point 4 miles. From his experience in road racing, point 4 miles is a go-cart track, not a road racing course.

Mr. Sean Oliberos from the audience stated he is 100% in support of the project. He acknowledged there was concern with traffic, but felt the concern was addressed because the parking would be free. Cars would be able to roll right in and not wait on the road to enter. He stated he personally worked on two race jobs, one that specifically built drift cars and the other to show cars. Everyone who comes into the shop and is involved with racing is in support of the project. They were able to race at Halawa Stadium for a while and were able to make it work.

Member Souza asked why there is no racing now at Halawa Stadium.

Mr. Oliberos responded there were concerns from the neighborhood on noise and traffic issues and the effect on children.

Ms. Jeanette Grace from the audience stated she was with SORT. They were working with Kim & Shiroma, an engineering firm that is working with the State and City Department of Planning and Permitting ("DPP") to put together their stockpiling permit. The final plan was submitted to DPP and the turnaround time is two days. The State has already signed on and they are waiting for final approval from DPP. SORT has complied with all requests from DHHL and the City.

Member Souza noted DHHL had told SORT to get the necessary permits in May 2007. She inquired as to why they were getting a permit after receiving a notice of violation from DPP for illegally transporting 35,000 cubic yards of material on the property.

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Ms. Grace stated there were issues about permits when they initially got the property from DHHL because Hawaiian Home Lands is sovereign and not required to go through the permit process like other landowners. Member Kane had initiated a letter to DPP asking whether permits were required or not. The letter stated if no response was received within 20 days, SORT would proceed. Since no response was received, SORT proceeded to bring the dirt material needed to build the racetrack onto the property. The material came from one job site, so the soil is consistent.

Member Souza asked for the date the 20-day letter was initiated by DHHL. She had copies of letters dated March 4 and April 15 which specifically state SORT must obtain stockpiling and grading permits from the City.

Ms. Grace stated she did not see those letters. However, they have notified the contractor they would be submitting the stockpiling permit application.

Member Souza inquired whether SORT would be doing an environmental assessment ("EA").

Ms. Grace responded they had asked DHHL if an EA or environmental impact statement ("EIS") would be required. Since the site is temporary and modifications to the site were within certain levels, DHHL advised an EA was not required. If it was determined something was being done to the property that required an EA or EIS, they would be advised.

Member Souza questioned whether changing topography of the property and impacting the streets would not require an EA. She noted the letter dated April 15 stated DHHL was subject to HRS Chapter 343 and laid out regulatory conditions pertaining to the impact from the environment and neighboring community. If DHHL deemed the use exceeded what was allowable as minor, then it may trigger the need for an EA. Member Souza stated her belief that SORT was impacting the community and the parcel.

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Ms. Grace stated she had a discussion with DHHL because she was informed the matter was brought up at the July HCDA meeting. DHHL has told them an EA is not necessary at this time.

Member Souza posed the question to Member Chinn whether SORT would need an EA.

Member Chinn responded that DHHL was not requiring an EA at this time.

Ms. Grace stated SORT was not doing the full phase and was doing the smaller portion which was approved by DHHL. They are staying on the piece of property that does not have cultural sites.

Mr. Oamilda stated the question being presented to the Authority was whether the race track or cultural issues are more sensitive. Centuries of people have been buried on the site and there would be no EIS or inventory of what is under the land. He stated he had an issue with DHHL and felt they should not be facilitators of development in the Kalaeloa region.

Member Timson posed a question to Member Chinn regarding whether DHHL as landowner would be liable for what happens on the property leased to SORT.

Member Chinn declined to comment since she did not have all the documents in place and requested that questions be submitted to DHHL in writing.

Member Timson recommended that SORT have discussions with the neighboring communities since comments from the audience indicated a need for the interaction.

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Member Timson posed questions regarding electrical power and lighting on the property.

Mr. Grace responded that generator power would be used. They had water but no electricity.

Member Timson noted that SORT might be looking for another location in 2015. She asked Member Chinn whether the lease would be extended.

Member Chinn stated DHHL would do an annual review of the operation and if SORT was in compliance with the agreement, the position would be extended.

Member Souza posed questions regarding whether SORT was subject to Chapter 343.

Member Chinn responded that DHHL did not see a major change of the terrain based on what SORT had submitted. Since the plans do not really change the topography of that landscape, DHHL made the exception to waive preparation of the EA.

Member Okada asked whether people who were against the project had been able to approach DHHL to address their concerns.

Member Chinn replied in the affirmative.

There were no further questions from Authority Members on the SORT presentation.

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