



**ĀINA HAINA COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
November 2019**

PRESIDENT: Jeanne Ohta • VICE PRESIDENT: Melia Kamahale • TREASURER: Art Mori • MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Kathy Takemoto • BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE: Wayson Chow, Jeff Carlson, Meymo Rego, Marie Riley

**Please Attend:
The Āina Haina Community Association
General Meeting**

Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2019

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: Āina Haina Elementary School Cafeteria

On the Agenda

• **Election of Officers and Directors**

Nominees: President-Jeanne Ohta; Vice President-Melia Kamahale;
Membership Secretary-Kathy Takemoto; Treasurer-Art Mori; Directors-At-Large:
Wayson Chow, Jeff Carlson, Meymo Rego, Marie Riley

• **Āina Haina Prepared Update**, Danny Tengan

Meals Read to Eat (MREs) will be distributed to attendees

• **Upper Hao Street Development, Purchase Complete! Next Steps**

• **Wakea Kai Condominium Development (Kiai-Keikilani Street)**

• **Wailupe Stream Update**

• **Reports from Elected Officials (invited, not confirmed)**

Questions and Answers

“Celebration Cake” and Punch will be served

President's Message, Jeanne Ohta

FINALLY! After decades of effort, the purchase of the Upper Hao Street property is finally complete, expanding the 'Āina Haina Nature Preserve by 9.5 acres. This is not the end of the journey, there is still work to do, but because we have come this far, I am confident that our community will meet the challenges ahead because we have neighbors who care, take action and are generous with their time, effort, and pocketbooks.

In the coming months, we will be working together with stakeholders to develop a management and preservation plan. The AHCA Board will organize meetings to obtain ideas, feedback, community input and research best practices. Please look for future meeting notices.

What did it WE do to achieve this milestone?

- We overcame proposals for cemeteries, commercial tennis courts, and a gated community. Research is always very important and time consuming. For the cemetery proposal, one of our neighbors discovered that a cemetery proposal required a public hearing, thus giving the community a voice in that issue. It became a turning point.
- While researching another issue, a neighbor discovered an application for a building permit on upper Hao Street. AHCA discovered that the last 9.5-acre property had been omitted from the purchase of the larger parcel. Everyone had assumed that the entire back of the valley had been protected; another turning point.
- Since the 1970's there have been petitions, testimonies, letters, and lots of research. Neighbors called on their friends, contacts, trail and hiking clubs, hunters, cultural practitioners, former neighbors who grew up hiking the upper

valley but live elsewhere, community groups, newspapers, television stations, government agencies (Department of Planning and Permitting, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, elected officials), and importantly, the lineal descendants of Wailupe became involved.

- Neighbors stood before bulldozers to protect cultural artifacts; another produced a video; and neighbors attended many community meetings. We want to also acknowledge the neighbor who for many years cared for the heiau in the valley.
- Because of their experience, a community group became a resource and helped develop the pathway to preserving the land; they were recommended by yet another community group. Our community raised \$50,000, many in small donations to show the City our commitment to preserving the land.
- At the last minute, the purchase of the property was delayed because of the discovery of a requirement on the deed that limited the use of the property to residential use (not preservation). To overcome this requirement, we were required to obtain releases from 51% of certain property owners. There were about 100 properties involved. Volunteers went door-to-door, neighbors contacted neighbors to explain the paperwork, neighbors volunteered to provide notary services for free, collected the agreements, families mailed agreements to out-of-state relatives. It was a huge effort, illustrating what happens when a community pulls together.

As our property values increase, some say it is because of our proximity to downtown; I think the real value is in the community that 'Āina Haina residents have built.

'Āina Haina Prepared Danny Tengan, Coordinator

'Āina Haina Prepared is four years into its mission of preparing for the next disaster with a committee of your neighbors that are concerned that not enough is being done. It has held community outreach events to educate citizens to be prepared for

the next disaster. WHY? Because after a major disaster, the government will not be there initially to help its citizens. Currently the recommendation is to have at least 14 days of supplies; but that is inadequate because it will take at least a month or

longer to get enough supplies to all communities. What will you do when you do not have any food or water until help comes? Roads will be blocked; there will be no communications, no water, no electricity, etc. Think about all the deaths and major injuries to our community. Are you prepared to help those who are hurt?

AHP has tried to prepare the community but only 15-20 percent of the community is prepared for the next disaster. The majority feel that it will never happen and are prepared to sacrifice their lives and the lives that they love.

AHP will lead community response and act as a focal point for information and communication. AHP will be activated when disaster is imminent or has unexpectedly occurred in the community. This does not mean that it has enough supplies and resources for everyone. In the case of a major disaster, there will be too many fatalities and injuries which will overwhelm the available medical services.

If you would like to get notices for the community outreach presentations or would like to participate with AHP, please reply to ainahainaprepared@gmail.com.

One Million Dollar Fine and Growing

Jeff Carlson, Board Member

When last we wrote, the fine for the illegal wedding chapel at 919 Punahale Place was approaching one million dollars and the operation was ongoing. Over a year later, the fine is growing, but nothing has changed. It is common that two weddings a day are held, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Neighbors have been complaining to the Department of Permitting and Planning (DPP) since 2013.

The accumulated fines are now well over one million dollars (\$1,005,750 as of 12/14/17); accumulating at \$750.00 per day. The Department of Corporation Counsel's (COR) efforts have been focused on settling the fines. Our experience has been that fines are settled for as little as 5% of the total amount. When asked for a current status, COR declared that they are not responsible for collecting fines; rather, collecting fines is the responsibility of the DPP.

The current operators were previously involved in another wedding chapel operation which was closed. They are aware of DPP's lax enforcement and the potential profit so there is no incentive to comply with zoning laws.

For home occupations, "only household members shall be employed under the home occupation." [Land Use Ordinance Section 21-5.350(b)] Neighbors amassed over 400 pages of written and photographic evidence regarding the illegal weddings and turned them over to the DPP. Within those 400 pages of evidence are photos showing wedding planners, limousine drivers,

musicians, florists, photographers, chefs, waiters, and organizational staff, none of whom live on site or are "household members."

These are not small, intimate, events—rather they are commercial weddings requiring a large variety of personnel to operate. Recently, a large multi-national Japanese corporation that specializes in staging weddings has purchased another beachfront property a few lots from the Punahale wedding business, so residents are now faced with further commercialization of their neighborhood. Increased illegal activity is what happens when the City fails to enforce our laws.

Longtime residents of properties along the oceanside of 'Āina Haina object to these commercial ventures on residentially-zoned property. Vans and limos blocking the sidewalks and increased traffic along Kalanianaʻole Highway create dangerous situations for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists.

AHCA expects our government to find alternatives to the current policies. For example, AHCA supports the "disgorgement" of profits. Owners would lose the profits from illegal businesses, to deter the continuation of these businesses despite the accumulating fines.

DPP and COR must work together to enforce our laws. Taxpayers and citizens deserve better than agencies who continue to point a finger at one another rather than solving the problem. AHCA continues to hold our government accountable.



`Āina Haina Community Association
c/o `Āina Haina Library
5246 Kalanianaʻole Highway
Honolulu, HI 96821

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See you at our meeting on November 13, 2019!

`ĀINA HAINA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP DUES & ENROLLMENT FORM

(Dues are \$10 per adult—July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020*)

TYPE OF ENROLLMENT
___ NEW ___ RENEWAL

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP
___ RESIDENT ___ BUSINESS

Amount Paid:
\$ _____

Name of Business: _____
Name of Member(s): _____
Street Address: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email Address _____ Landline # _____ Cell # _____

ANY SUGGESTIONS? _____

Please send your application with your dues to:
AHCA Membership, c/o `Āina Haina Library, 5246 Kalanianaʻole Highway, Honolulu, HI 96821
OR

Bring your application to the meeting on November 13, 2019

*\$10 per adult/year would help to improve communication, cover research expenses and a lot of valuable things. For the price of the membership, you get to vote. If you and your family cannot afford \$10 for each adult in your household, we appreciate any contribution you can make, but please understand that only the registered member will be eligible to vote at AHCA meetings. Mahalo for your understanding.