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O'AHU HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
KOMIKINA A'OA'O MĀLAMA HALE KUMUPA'A O O'AHU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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January 31, 2025

The Honorable Tommy Waters
Chair and Presiding Officer
and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Councilmembers:

SUBJECT: Ordinance 17-44 - Periodic Review of Boards and Commissions by The City Council - O'ahu Historic Preservation Commission (OHPC)

Pursuant to Ordinance 17-44 and the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 2021 (ROH), Section 3-15, the OHPC submits this report to the City Council.

(1) A statement of the purpose for which the board or commission was created.

The OHPC was initially enacted with the passage of Ordinance 93-55, Bill Number 18 in 1993, but was not implemented until the passage of Ordinance 22-33, Bill Number 44 in 2022. The purpose of the Commission is as follows:

(1) Protect and preserve historic properties and artifacts in the county and encourage, where appropriate, their special emphasis and attention to the cultural resources of the native Hawaiian people;

(2) Encourage the restoration, rehabilitation, and continued functional use of historic properties;

(3) Encourage the identification, preservation, maintenance, development, promotion, and enhancement of those historic properties which represent or reflect distinctive elements of cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history, and to encourage the designation of historic properties, thereby ensuring that our cultural and historic heritage will be imparted to present and future generations of residents and visitors; and

(4) Formulate county-wide, comprehensive, historic preservation polices, programs, and plans.

It is also the purpose of this Commission to qualify the City as a "certified local government" (CLG), so that the City may qualify for funding under the federal historic preservation program.

(2) A summary of the accomplishments of the board or commission during the preceding five-year period.

On August 20, 2024, the City and County of Honolulu successfully received local government certification, in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA). This achievement makes Hawai'i the first state to have 100 percent county participation in the CLG Program. The Commission facilitated this feat by gathering the necessary components for the CLG application, such as an updated inventory of historic properties within the City and drafting a five-year historic preservation action plan. Upon certification the City and County of Honolulu is now eligible to apply for special CLG matching grants to be used for eligible local historic preservation projects. The Commission is currently working on preparing a CLG Grant application to fund a project in Kailua, on behalf of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, to identify archaeological sensitive areas in order to provide better protection for iwi kūpuna.

(3) Factors that aided or inhibited the achievement of the accomplishments, including but not limited to the composition and purpose of the board or commission and staff support.

Pursuant to ROH Section 3-10.5, the department shall employ a full-time commission staff to include, but not be limited to a staff archaeologist. The Commission has been ably assisted by Mr. Michael Kat from the Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP), who possesses both professional and educational experience in planning and archaeology. However, Mr. Kat is currently on special assignment to support our Commission, which is his "second job" at DPP. The establishment of a dedicated staff position to oversee the Commission, and manage all of the duties and responsibilities of a historic preservation program has been impeded by bureaucratic obstacles. As a CLG, the City signed a certification agreement with the State of Hawai'i specifying the responsibilities of the local government to implement a historic preservation program, as described in the NHPA. Failure to create a dedicated staff position jeopardizes the City's CLG status, which would mean losing out on grant funding for local historic preservation projects. Our Commission's ability to fulfill our volunteer roles will rest in large part on appropriate staff support. Given this, we humbly request your support in creating a dedicated staff position for our Commission. In the long run we envision a robust historic preservation program with multiple qualified staff who can perform review and evaluate programs at the county level.

(4) A statement of the measures implemented by the board or commission to enhance transparency in its operations.

The OHPC upholds transparency in its decision-making process by presenting, discussing, and acting upon all matters during its regularly scheduled meetings. These

meetings occur monthly and are open to the public. To ensure transparency, the Commission has implemented the following measures:

- The Commission uses a public email address (dpp@honolulu.gov) to receive and respond to public communications.

- The Commission publishes its meeting agendas, detailed meeting minutes, video recordings, and other information in a timely manner on an accessible webpage at https://www8.honolulu.gov/dpp/home/organization-contacts/o%ca%bbahu-historic-preservation-commission/.

- During meetings, the Commission provides the opportunity for the public to provide testimony after each agenda item.

(5) A statement of the measures implemented by the board or commission to ensure responsiveness to inquiries and comments from the mayor, the council, and the public.

The OHPC ensures responsiveness to inquiries and comments from the Mayor, the City Council, and the public by having its Chair and/or DPP staff reply in a timely manner.

(6) The annual costs of operation of the board or commission for each year of the preceding five-year period.

Pursuant to ROH Sec. 3-10.11, the commission shall recommend a yearly budget that shall be administered by the director of planning and permitting. No dedicated staff position has been created for the commission, and all commissioners participate on a volunteer basis; therefore, no additional cost to the City is incurred as a result of the meetings other than DPP staff salaries.

(7) A statement of whether the charter or ordinance provisions establishing the board or commission should be retained without change, amended, or repealed; and

The Commission recommends ROH Section 3-10.3 establishing the Commission should be retained without change.

(8) If applicable, suggested modifications and revisions to membership number and qualifications; organization; purpose; or powers, duties, and functions to better enable the board or commission to serve its purpose, including justification and suggested amendatory language.

The Commission has no suggested modifications and revisions to membership number and qualifications; organization; purpose; or powers, duties, and functions at this time.

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to enhance the OHPC and for allowing us to share our passion for the history and culture of the City. We appreciate your support. If there are any concerns, please reach out to me or feel free to contact our liaison, Michael Kat, acting Historic Preservation Planner at (808) 768-8013.

Me ke aloha pumehana,

Kēhaunani Abad

Kēhaunani Abad
Chair

cc: Director Dawn Takeuchi Apuna, DPP