

**HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD
SUMMARY MINUTES**

**February 19, 2026
9:00 a.m.**

**In Person, Planning Department Conference Room, Kalana Pakui Building
and
Remote Via Microsoft Teams Videoconference**

PRESENT: Richard E. Mitchell, Director of Housing (in person)
William Curtis, Member (remote)
Sandra Duvauchelle, Member (in person)
Leilani Pulmano, Member (in person)
William Spence, Member (in person)
Jordan Molina, Director of Public Works (in person)
Shane Agawa, Director of Environmental Management (remote)

EXCUSED: Jessica Crouse, Acting Director of Human Concerns
Jacky Takakura, Acting Director of Planning

VACANCIES: 1

STAFF: Chris Nahulu Nunokawa, Deputy Corporation Counsel (remote)
Amanda Martin, Private Secretary (in person)

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Housing Director Mitchell called the inaugural meeting of the Housing Advisory Board (HAB) meeting to order at 9:13 a.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Director Mitchell took roll call. Members Curtis, Duvauchelle, Pulmano and Spence were present. There is one vacancy on the board. Directors Molina and Agawa were present. Directors Crouse and Takakura were excused. The meeting was held at the County of Maui Planning Department Conference Room and remotely via Microsoft Teams.

III. PUBLIC TESTIMONY

There was no public testimony.

IV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Election of officers was conducted by Director Mitchell.

A motion was made by Member Duvauchelle and seconded by Member Pulmano to nominate Member Spence as the Chair of the Board. Vote passed unanimously with 3 in favor and 1 abstain. Member Spence chose to abstain and not vote for himself.

A motion was made by Member Duvauchelle and seconded by Member Pulmano to nominate Member Curtis as the Vice-Chair of the Board. Vote passed unanimously with 3 in favor and 1 abstain.

A motion was made by Member Duvauchelle and seconded by Member Spence to nominate Member Pulmano as the Secretary of the board. Vote passed unanimously with 3 in favor and 1 abstain.

Results:

Chair: William Spence

Vice-Chair: William Curtis

Secretary: Leilani Pulmano

V. BOARD ORIENTATION

Deputy Corporation Counsel Nunokawa provided a comprehensive presentation to the board on Hawai'i's Sunshine Law, ethics requirements, and conflict of interest rules, addressing questions from the director and members of the board and agreeing to distribute the presentation materials for future reference.

VI. DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE

Chair Spence shared that the draft Rules of Procedure will be discussed, and no action is taken on the rules.

Director Mitchell led a discussion on the board's draft rules of procedure, clarifying their intent, the absence of Robert's Rules of Order, and the testimony time limits with input from the members and Deputy Corporation Counsel Nunokawa on possible revisions and existing legislation affecting housing.

Discussion took place regarding the length of time for testimony. Member Spence shared that every other board, commission, and County Council allow three minutes for members of the public to be heard. Member Spence confirmed that the rules of procedure are in draft form and that it was forwarded to Deputy Corporation Counsel Nunokawa for his review and comments.

Deputy Corporation Counsel Nunokawa communicated that he will forward his edits to the department in preparation for the next meeting.

Chair Spence noted that it would be favorable to have something in the rules addressing executive session.

No further discussion on the rules of procedure.

VII. GENERAL DISCUSSION TOPICS

A. Policy ideas to pursue to increase affordable housing.

Chair Spence initiated discussion among board members on potential policy ideas to increase affordable housing, the board advisory role, streamlining permitting, and reviewing both new and existing legislation affecting housing.

Chair Spence indicated he is not familiar with Member Curtis's background but familiar with the other members' backgrounds in construction and business including appearances before the Planning Commission and different committees. Chair Spence added that this is a very knowledgeable board with a lot of experience and would be interested to hear what everybody would like to explore with this board.

Member Duvauchelle stated that she is curious as to how the board is going to be fed any needs, wants, and recommendations from the different directors and department heads. She added that it was obvious as to how the Planning Commission transmits the department's projects, policies, SMA's, etc., and was curious as to how they would help this new board. She noted this as an amazing opportunity to see what this board could do as a team to bring something to the table that could help improve, and that she would like to make a difference.

Member Pulmano did not have any further thoughts on Member Duvauchelle's comments.

Member Curtis raised the matter of surveys and presentations to the County Council. Further added that Director Mitchell has the public side under his direct hat but how can the board assist the private sector and potentially expediting or streamlining permitting for housing.

Member Curtis shared that he moved to Maui in 1988, been a general contractor, worked for general contractors, as well as Arita Poulson General Contracting for two years, and currently works for TJ Gomes Trucking.

Chair Spence shared that as a former planner his thoughts are in the areas of legislation, zoning and permits, and comprehensive zoning. Years are spent adopting community plans and yet the property owner must go through the rezoning process that takes years. If a property is properly zoned, covered environmental matters, cultural archaeology, drainage, etc. and the criteria are met, the property owners should be able to pull building permits. What would it take to see an ordinance that lays out all those criteria?

Chair Spence added that everyone is interested in 2.96. Realtors that have worked on workforce housing projects have shared that the qualifications that people must go through don't necessarily meet the need of qualified buyers. Retired schoolteachers do not qualify because they have saved money in the bank.

Chair Spence stated that Workforce housing projects were sold before coming to the county first and they are still under the restricted time. This is an area where 2.96 can be cleaned up. Although the Director has stated that this board is not for individual project reviews, Member Spence shared that there might be cases where the Director will have experimental housing or something unusual that he may request the board to review. Therefore, we would not want to exclude that all together. We do not want to put one more layer of review that slows everything down.

Member Duvauchelle raised the matter of the building permit process and seeing building codes all over the place. New things are being implemented for Firewise, but we need to step back and look at the cost impact that is associated with changing codes. Architects are having a hard time keeping up with the changes. This is another moving target that is increasing the cost of construction. Contractors have stated that single family homes are now required to provide a structural engineering stamp that also adds to the cost, which was not required previously.

Chair Spence commented that the preapproved plans design (design registers) is a very poorly publicized resource for the public.

Member Curtis communicated that one recommendation in the recent grassroot study suggests updating the code potentially every six years rather than every three years allowing the public works plan inspectors more time to review drawings compared to updating it themselves with changing codes. Hawaii County uses the same new MAPPS system as Maui County. Hawaii County system provides feedback on their MAPPS website tracking permits in the system. The monthly recap shows the number of new permits added each month by classification, number of permits currently being processed and how many were issued. Hawaii County processing time is half the time, and we can

learn something from them. Many years ago, one could pull 30 permits at one time doing market rate housing.

Director Mitchell shared that he had suggested to some of the Councilmembers that this might be a good opportunity for them to present their policy ideas when they are in its nascent stage. Everyone on the board has direct experience with friction points within the county and leveraging the experience of those friction points to identify how to streamline the issue in the code is an opportunity.

Member Duvauchelle added that the Maui Contractors Association was somewhat of a watchdog on bills and ordinances. When the industry is busy, no one is paying attention to the bills and legislation that is being passed. An example is the 30-foot height restriction legislation. This was made specifically for infill projects. Years later it got applied to subdivisions that had not been graded. Show me the water bill is another example. Councilmembers and Directors eventually move on, and nobody revisits legislation that was passed that may need to be corrected. This body might have the opportunity to bring some of those to the forefront. The missing link is not having that legislative watch committee.

Director Mitchell noted the challenge is when bills are introduced, there's a really quick turn around so making sure the timing is right to get those bills before this body to get broader insights and wisdom.

B. Reference materials to be collected for possible dissemination.

Member Pulmano requested a list of any legislation that is available now that could affect permits for affordable housing.

Director Mitchell added that it would be good standing practice to include an agenda item for the body on pending bills and if the timing is right, giving the department advice on those bills. This can be shared with the council that the comments are not only the department's opinion but the opinion of the board.

C. Next meeting date and time.

Chair Spence and members discussed scheduling future meetings, considering Thursday or Friday to accommodate department conflicts, and clarified the participation of non-voting ex officio members and their designees, with Deputy Corporation Counsel agreeing to confirm relevant regulations.

Director Mitchell thanked the board for being incredible public servants and how it demonstrates their commitment to the community in the county and looks forward to working with them and their input.

Chair Spence shared on behalf of the board that they really have vested interest in seeing what's best for this county and housing made available to our residents.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:22 a.m.