

From: [Matt Glickstein](#)
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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Matt Glickstein testimony Lānaʻi Affordable Housing Project
Date: Monday, June 17, 2024 10:12:11 AM
Attachments: [Matt Glickstein testimony Lanaʻi Affordable Housing 6.17.24.pdf](#)



Aloha,

Attached is my written testimony regarding the Lānaʻi Affordable Housing Project (agenda item VIII).

Please confirm this is received.

Mahalo,

Matt Glickstein
Executive Director, Lānaʻi Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA)
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Aloha Land Use Commission,

My name is Matt Glickstein and I'm the Executive Director/Founder of the Lānaʻi Academy of Performing Arts. I have lived on Lānaʻi since 2008, when I moved here with my wife, Kerri, who taught at Lānaʻi High and Elementary School for 15 years.

Since we moved to Lānaʻi, housing has been a constant issue for the community here. When we arrived in 2008, we were fortunate to have found a one bedroom apartment in the Iwiole housing complex, where we stayed for five years. We were on a waiting list for teacher housing from 2008-2012, and finally in 2013 we were able to move into a three bedroom teacher house, where we stayed until 2022. There is a five year limit for teacher housing, which up until 2022, was never enforced by the school/state, due to the lack of availability of any affordable housing. In January of that year, we received a letter from the state letting us know we would have to move out of our teacher house by the end of June, along with 5 other teachers who had been in teacher housing beyond the five year limit.

My wife and I had always kept our eye on the housing market, but the only houses available for sale/rent were so far out of our price range, it didn't seem like a realistic option. The eviction notice forced us to try to qualify for a loan and look at all available options. It was a stressful period because if we were not able to find a place, we would be forced to uproot our family and leave the island. The new Hokuao housing (built by Pulama Lānaʻi) was still being built, and didn't wind up opening until 2023, so although that was a possible option, we knew we wouldn't be able to move in in July of 2022. We were extremely fortunate and blessed to have found a house that was perfect for our family. We were able to purchase a home in June of 2022 for \$767,000, a price way beyond what we thought we could ever afford. The only way this was possible was through a 20 percent down payment, most of which was financially aided through many family and friends.

The new Hokuao development has seemed to alleviate some of the housing crisis that has been going on for so long. However, while very nice, these houses are all the same —pre-furnished 2 beds, 2 baths—and only available for rent. These are not ideal for a family with children, and a better fit for employees of the Four Seasons and Pulama Lānaʻi that move here from off island. When we moved to Lānaʻi in 2008, there was talk even back then of the County building affordable housing. The community has been in need throughout our 16 years on this island, and only Pulama Lānaʻi has done anything to address it.

There are still many families and residents here who are sorely in need of affordable housing. I would love to have my children be able to live on Lānaʻi someday, and in



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order for that to happen, there has to be more housing built, other than by Pulama Lānaʻi. Housing that families can live in, and homes that can be purchased at an affordable price. The community of Lānaʻi is a special place with special people, unlike anywhere else I've ever lived. If we want to keep Lānaʻi Lānaʻi then we need to make it possible for people to thrive here.

As a second part to this testimony, I'd also like to petition for a community center/performance space to be built in the Affordable Housing project that could be used by the Lānaʻi Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA). My wife Kerri was the only music teacher (band) at the school from 2008-2023. However, even during that time there was no drama or theater program offered to students. Kerri left the school last year and is now working on her degree in library science. The school did not hire a replacement music teacher, so there is currently no music offered at the school. LAPA is really the only outlet for Lānaʻi youth who wish to pursue music and performing arts. I helped to found LAPA in 2013, and was able to make it a non-profit 501(c)3 in 2016. I'm now the Executive Director, and LAPA has six other part-time employees. Yearly, LAPA involves over 100 children in our programming. LAPA usually does at least one musical production and play per year and offers performing arts classes, including dance, songwriting, acting, creative writing, videography, and modern band (piano, ukulele, guitar). For the first time this year, LAPA had a production with both adults and children (cast size of 34, including 7 adults). We would like to continue to expand our program to offer more opportunities for both adults and children and gain even more community involvement.

However, growth and expansion is difficult on Lānaʻi due to lack of access to our own facility. LAPA has tried just about every available community space for rehearsals and performances over the past 11 years—the County gym, the old bowling alley, the Union Hall, the former Lānaʻi Playhouse (now the new movie theaters), several churches, and the Lānaʻi High and Elementary School (classrooms, cafeteria, and gym). While we have been grateful to have the use of these spaces, all come with challenges. There are always scheduling conflicts with using the school cafeteria and gym for performances, and this limits what we are able to do. There is also the constant issue of having no storage space (other than my personal garage) for all of the equipment LAPA has acquired over the years (mainly valuable sound equipment—speakers/microphones, etc.).

There is an opportunity with the County Affordable Housing to build a community space which could be used by LAPA and other groups around Lānaʻi. There is no real stage or venue in Lānaʻi City that is specifically designed for performances. The old bowling alley and Union Hall are typically used for these types of events—however, the acoustics in both facilities are very poor, and the layout is certainly not ideal for any type of performances. I was optimistic when Pulama Lānaʻi built the Lānaʻi Ocean



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Theater (outdoor amphitheater) down at the Four Seasons Resort Manele property. However, the venue wound up being designed more for music concerts (no dressing rooms, no backstage), with only a temporary stage (which needs to be constructed for every use). To do a night show there would cost \$10,000 because of having to bring in mainland experts to run lighting. While a very nice venue, there have only been a few concerts there since the opening in 2023.

With Lāna'i being such an isolated community, I feel it is very important to be able to offer a high quality performing arts program. Part of that is having access to a real performance space to allow for the best performances possible. A community center would also allow other groups to showcase what they can do. It would even be possible to bring in guest performers and have workshops, and create a myriad of opportunities for the community.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to reach out with any questions or comments.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Matt Glickstein'.

Matt Glickstein

Executive Director, Lāna'i Academy of Performing Arts (LAPA)

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