



## MAUNA KEA STEWARDSHIP AND OVERSIGHT AUTHORITY (MKSOA) COMMUNITY MEETING

19 E. Kawili Street,  
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Website: <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/maunakea-authority/>

MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, March 13, 2024  
6:00 pm

In person at 19 E. Kawili Street,  
Hilo, HI

Online via ZOOM, livestreamed at  
<https://www.youtube.com/@MaunaKeaSOA>

### AUTHORITY MEMBERS

**PRESENT, Zoom:** Chairperson John Komeiji; First Vice-Chair Noe Noe Wong-Wilson; Second Vice-Chair Rich Matsuda; Doug Adams; Paul Horner; Lanakila Mangauil; Kalehua Krug; Pomai Bertelmann; Bonnie Irwin; Ryan Kanaka'ole

**EXCUSED Members:** Ben Kudo; Kamana Beamer;

**MKSOA SUPPORT:** Jordan Ching, Deputy Attorney General (DAG); Pua'ena Ahn (MKSOA Executive Assistant);

**GUESTS:** Greg Chun, Executive Director, Center For Maunakea Stewardship (CMS)

### I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME PROTOCOL

Chair Komeiji called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. Opening remarks by Chair Komeiji on the importance and need for communication with the community being the reason for this meeting. Opening protocol by Member Mangauil- oli Hānau Ka Mauna and Kūkulu.

**II. PRESENTATION – Public Testimony taken (written or oral) on any of these items**

**A. History and Purpose of MKSOA**

1. **INTRODUCTIONS:** Explanation by Chair Komeiji of the purpose of the community meeting being to introduce and explain the history, activities and intentions of the Authority to date, as well as to hear from and invite discussion with the community. Chair made specific note to assure community members present that the words “astronomy” and “TMT” have not even been uttered in a single Board meeting, as the singular focus of the Authority has been to build agency’s functional capacity.
  - a. Self-introductions by Board members and brief explanations of their respective seats. Chair noted that John De Fries- incoming Executive Director could not attend due to a prior commitment and will attend the next community meeting to introduce himself and similarly dialogue with the community.
  - b. Chair Komeiji also noted that comment could not be provided regarding the recent OHA lawsuit but that the MKSOA would continue in their work nonetheless. Chair Komeiji further noted that MKSOA has very little information regarding recent developments with the National Science Foundation and telescope funding, but that the US Senate Appropriations Committee had made a brief comment about its preference for funding two telescopes, rather than a single telescope.
2. **HISTORY OF MAUNA KEA WORKING GROUP:** 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair Wong-Wilson provided a brief history of the Mauna Kea Working Group and the report it produced in 2022, which preceded the introduction of Act 255, which created MKSOA.
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair Wong-Wilson made specific note that MKSOA will only receive the lands that are currently in the possession of University of Hawai‘i. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair Wong-Wilson also specifically highlighted the Hawaiian spiritual and cultural foundation of Act 255, which it inherited from the Working Group Report.
  - b. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair Wong-Wilson also specified that astronomy is declared to be a policy of the State of Hawai‘i in Act 255 and is required to, at least, continue on Mauna Kea.
  - c. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair Matsuda recalled his observation that there was a real equity of voice within the working

group meetings, and an expectation of genuineness regardless of position, which is a practice which should be continued by the Authority.

- d. Member Irwin shared that the working group was a tremendous learning experience, and that it was a safe and honest space due to the process, and is an extraordinary foundation for the work the Authority needs to do now.
- e. Member Mangauil echoed Member Irwin's sentiments, and that the hard work ahead is going to be a long process and stressed the importance both of "hashing things out" and seeing things through.

3. DISCUSSION WITH COMMUNITY-

- a. Cory Harden (community member): Please explain comment about UH mandate to promote astronomy?
- b. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair Wong-Wilson: Recalled the history of astronomy as an economic driver following the Hilo tsunami, CMS ED Greg Chun confirmed the mandate through State Senate Concurrent Resolution of 1964.
- c. Claire Loprinzi (community member): Comment on the need to heal the Mauna.
- d. Pua Ishibashi (community member): It's the policy of the state to move forward with astronomy, but how do we heal? The astronomy community has space on the Mauna, but what about giving the Hawaiian community [dedicated physical] space?

4. EXPLANATION OF ACT 255: Chair Komeiji briefly introduced Act 255, the 5-year transition period and required co-management with UH, creating process "as the train is moving."

- a. Chair Komeiji: After 5 years, MKSOA will be sole authority responsible for the Mauna, which is not a lot of time. Currently UH is undergoing an intensive inventory of assets in preparation for transfer. Also, boards & commissions ordinarily do not perform the type of work that the MKSOA Board has had to undertake for lack of staff (ex: creating position descriptions and hiring personnel), in addition to the difficulties imposed on the accomplishment of these types of tasks by the strictures of the Sunshine Law, but did note that the five authorized staff positions which have been created and established so that they may be filled. Pending hire, Executive Director will be able to take over personnel hiring duties.

- b. Chair Komeiji also explained the immense task of creating a Master Plan as required by Act 255, and that even with the hire of additional five staff positions, MKSOA will still be understaffed. Other needs and responsibilities will require the retention of contractors and consultants in the meantime.
- c. Member Mangaul: This is the “boring” but necessary part of the process, which requires a considerable amount of clerical and administrative work. To those wanting to know how they can help, the job positions will be coming out. The strong foundation needs to be set in order to even reach the point of being able to have the serious conversations about leases or other major decisions. Even under Act 255, whatever continuation of astronomy occurs must take place within the framework of putting the care and wellbeing of the Mountain at the center.
- d. Member Bertelmann: We are in the place of restructuring the ark, and that the work is going to be long and require talent and skill, and people who understand the care of the Mountain is first and foremost “before anything else.” The work has to be done, there is no choice but to do it, and collectively.
- e. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair Wong-Wilson: Want to reiterate that we intend to have more of these community meetings more regularly. One of the statements of Act 255 is the importance of having communication, dialogue and feedback from community, and hopefully this a way to do better for our community. The difficult conversations are coming, such as the number of telescopes to remain on the Mauna, and the issue of access, both of which must be decided by MKSOA per Act 255.
- f. Member Mangaul: The reason that this is taking so long is also because the State is archaic and unpracticed at setting up new agencies, and we are working on a better way of getting announcements out, e kala mai.
- g. Chair Komeiji: People were stuck in 2019 and 2020, so they [the Legislature] created a new process. Is this new process going to work? I don’t know, but the 12 of us have signed on to try and make it work. That is why we are having these meetings, so you, the community can tell us if we’re doing something wrong or doing good. This Board is unlike other boards, this

- is our chance to do things differently, I want us to come to a Hawai‘i way of doing things and a Hawai‘i solution for Mauna Kea. As with the hiring of John De Fries, we are going to be as transparent as we can and of course we will make mistakes, so please forgive us.
- h. Cory Harden (community member): Who is making decisions now, between MKMB, you guys [MKSOA], DLNR if, for example one of the telescopes gets damaged and equipment needs to be brought up there?
  - i. Chair Komeiji: UH has a framework of different grades of projects (A,B,C), MKSOA has asked to have input and approval of B & C (medium and large scale projects). A committee between UH Board of Regents and MKSOA has also been formed to deal with any disagreements, as well as having the ability to bring in others as needed, from DLNR as an example.
  - j. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair Wong-Wilson: In the event of an emergency, UH has protocols in case of emergencies, and during the transition day-to-day operations will remain with UH. MKSOA does not have the ability or the desire to supervise operations currently.
  - k. Member Irwin: Robust communication currently taking place, Greg goes to MKSOA Meetings, John goes to MKMB meetings, Bonnie is part of both the UH and MKSOA structures.
  - l. Chair Komeiji: Also approximately 50 CMS employees to be transferred over to MKSOA by the end of the transition period.
  - m. Laulani Teale (community member): A few suggestions, hard to follow who is talking, maybe state your names before speaking? As you are building this process, providing a space that is more conducive to participation- the location could be upgraded a bit. Regarding Management Plan- to adopt early on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), especially the international standard on free prior informed consent, would be beneficial. US is a signatory and state agencies are encouraged to adopt it. Request for clarification to be provided for a productive relationship. In order to clear up misunderstandings from the outset, to clarify to the community that this body does not exist for the purpose of facilitating “conflict resolution” in order to facilitate construction of the TMT, because MKSOA is being named by TMT

International Observatory (TIO) and National Astronomical Observatories of Japan among others as the body as the means by which the problem [for TMT] within the community will be resolved. Say what you're NOT doing. If possible, the Executive Director might want to write a letter to Dr. Kirschner and TIO that MKSOA's purpose is not to make TMT happen, as well as for individual kia'i who sit on the Board to take a public position on TMT just so there's no confusion.

- n. Leilani Lozi (community member): Agree with Laulani how important clear communication is, suggests that one of these 5 positions being hired be a communications director, because people don't know the good work that is being done if the money isn't being put into outreach and having the storytellers in place.
- o. Member Krug: I want to make sure to acknowledge what Laulani said, that as an Authority we are not here to rubber stamp any project, and that having the robust and in-depth conversations has been our methodology. The clarification that is needed here is that we as a Board are not going to allow ourselves to be politically railroaded, and none of us are getting paid. We are going to endeavor to heal a major societal rift that has taken place over the last 10+ years. I give my pledge of clarity to have the difficult discussions, and not just about the TMT.
- p. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chair Wong-Wilson: I also want to follow-up and clarify that this authority has never taken any position on TMT or any project. It is alarming to hear that our name is being misused, and can maybe be looked into. In the end, we know who was standing on the road and we haven't changed.
- q. Member Mangauil: It is problematic for us that these statements are being made, people have been sending me clips of statements, this is troubling and cease and desists may be necessary. This is creating more drag on our canoe, and is recreating rifts in our community.
- r. Chair Komeiji: Not sure if I agree, people are going to say what they are going to say, we can say what we have done. We cannot tell the kia'i or astronomy what to say. Part of the idea of this group is that we need to be able to trust each other. If you were on the road for 6 months, people have to trust your intention and not

what someone else is saying. This is part of what I think this structure is supposed to do.

- s. Pua Ishibashi (community member): When you're dealing with the Hawaiian community, not that you can fully address this issue, but you have to recognize that you are dealing with various stages of generational, historical and cultural trauma, whether its hurt phase, angry phase, etc.
- t. Chair Komeiji: This is our first attempt to reach out and provide some clarity. Next time we'll bring John [De Fries] and you folks can have the same discussion and find out where he's coming from. We're trying to go about building this in a systematic way. We will have the discussions about things like astronomy at the right time, but this is not the right time. We appreciate everyone for coming and sharing your thoughts.  
Mahalo

B. Tasks at Hand

(covered in prior discussion)

**III. DISCUSSION– Public Testimony taken (written or oral) on any of these items**

- A. The Work Ahead and Future Steps- Open discussion with community attendees

(covered in prior discussion)

**IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. REGULAR BOARD MEETING- THURSDAY MARCH 14, 2024, 10:00AM-12:00PM, DOFAW-HILO BUILDING, 19. E. KAWILI ST.

**V. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** Motion by 1st Vice-Chair Wong-Wilson to adjourn, 2nd Vice-Chair Matsuda second.

**ACTION:** The motion was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:43 pm