

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM (DBEDT)
MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION ON THE 13TH FESTIVAL OF
PACIFIC ARTS & CULTURE (FESTPAC) MEETING

TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2020 AT 3:00 PM

VIA VIRTUAL APPLICATION ZOOM: VIDEO / AUDIO CONFERENCE

Commission Members Present were:

J. Kalani English, Chair	-	Senate President's Designee
Richard Onishi	-	House Speaker's Designee
Kalani Ka'anā'anā	-	Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Designee
Māpuana de Silva	-	Community Member At-Large
Snowbird Bento	-	Community Member At-Large
Mehana Hind	-	Office of Hawaiian Affairs
Kalani Ka'anā'anā	-	Hawai'i Tourism Authority Designee
Misty Kela'i	-	City & County of Honolulu Designee
Monte McComber	-	Governor's Designee
Dennis Ling	-	Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT)

Guests:

Jacob Aki	-	Senator English's Office
Kanoe Takitani-Puahi	-	Mayor's Office of the Culture and Arts (MOCA)
June Matsumoto	-	Pacific Islands Institute (PII)
T. Ilihia Gionson	-	Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (NHHA)
Honey Maltin-Wisot	-	Strategies 360
Maka Casson-Fisher	-	Hawai'i Tourism Authority

Staff:

Margaret Ahn	-	Attorney General's Office
Jamie Lum	-	DBEDT
Marlene Hiraoka	-	DBEDT
Selma Malcom	-	DBEDT
Scott Tome	-	DBEDT

CALL TO ORDER

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Chair English on Tuesday, May 5, 2020, at 3:04 pm, who welcomed everyone present via Zoom.

APPROVAL OF March 6, 2020 MEETING MINUTES

- A. Minutes of the meeting held on March 6, 2020, were approved on a motion by Mr. Ling and seconded by Ms. de Silva.

Motion was unanimously approved.

REPORTS

- A. DBEDT Report:

Mr. Ling reported that with the postponement of the 2020 FESTPAC, DBEDT is waiting to deposit existing funds already appropriated, to the University of Hawai'i (UH) as a deposit for dorm rooms for the new FESTPAC event date. He stated that funds already encumbered with PA'I Foundation and remaining funds from DBEDT would be deposited with UH. Ms. Lum confirmed that the total amount of \$1,324,392.77 in funding is what is available that was already appropriated for FESTPAC. Chair English asked if that is the amount that will hopefully be sent as a deposit to UH and Ms. Lum confirmed that is was.

Rep. Onishi reported that he met with UH President Lassner and confirmed that UH is currently reviewing the Commission's request, from a legal standpoint, as to whether they will be able to accept a deposit for future FESTPAC housing. Should UH approve the Commission's request, there needs to be additional documentation that should be provided that would accompany the agreement. He further mentioned that the total amount will be dependent upon UH's estimate of the future cost of dorm rooms. Rep. Onishi said that the event date being used for the negotiations with UH is June 2021. If the event dates change, a request to amend the agreement will be made accordingly. The figure being used as a deposit is similar to the estimate used in the previous UH contract. Again, the deposit with UH will be an estimated cost of dorm rooms for FESTPAC. Ms. de Silva suggested that the Commission hold-off entering into any agreement and/or deposits with UH because the Council of Pacific Arts and Culture (CPAC) is scheduled to meet regarding the festival's postponement and considerations of a future date. Once the CPAC and the Pacific Community (SPC) have confirmed the date of FESTPAC, and addressed whether Hawai'i will be the host for 2021 or another year should determine the next steps regarding any payments to UH for dorm space. Ms. Kela'i also concurred with Ms. de Silva's recommendation and also suggested that the Commission wait until more information/confirmations are received from the SPC.

Rep. Onishi said that the Commission needs to make its own decisions regarding entering into an agreement with UH that would include a deposit for future dorm space. Chair English reminded members that these decisions are not sequential. If the Commission doesn't have a plan for the existing funds, those funds, if not encumbered, would be returned to the State General Funds.

Rep. Onishi suggested that, as an alternative, the Commission consider using remaining funds to add as a deposit to the Hawai‘i Convention Center. If there is a difference between the UH amount and balance, we might consider moving that funding to the Convention Center. Mr. Ling agreed that the second option would be to deposit any remaining balance at the Convention Center. Mr. Ka‘anā‘anā also concurred that those arrangements would be possible.

Chair English commented that costs will rise next year so as long as we have two venues to deposit funding into, we will be able to preserve funds already appropriated. Mr. Ling asked about whether the existing two contractors, Pacific Islands Institute (PII) and Strategies 360 (S360) should continue to work on FESTPAC. For PII, he felt it may not be necessary since they have already completed their scope of work through April. Mr. Ka‘anā‘anā expressed that it would be important to continue sending information to communities. Chair English suggested that the Commission allow S360 to continue. Ms. de Silva questioned whether anyone has been vetting the content that S360 has been distributing. Mr. Ka‘anā‘anā confirmed that he has been vetting all content provided by S360. The Chair confirmed that DBEDT may continue working with S360.

B. Artistic Director’s Report:

Ms. Bento reported that she is still using the participant grid that was created for FESTPAC 2020; however, if the event is moved to 2024, she will need to revise the information. Currently she is working on two plans – one for 2021 and another for 2024 so that the Commission will be ready for both time frames and invitation letters and proposed activities can be sent to participating countries once the date has been confirmed.

The Chair thanked Ms. Bento for maintaining the information on the grid. The grid is important so that we will be ready to move forward upon receiving confirmation of the new FESTPAC date.

C. Festival Coordination Directors Report:

Chair English reported that he and Rep. Onishi have been monitoring the status of legislative matters related to FESTPAC. The Legislature will be reconvening on May 11 to discuss/pass budget bills. It does not appear that the Legislature will review additional appropriation bills. The committee chairs believe that the best option for Hawai‘i is for the festival to be held in 2024 because it will give the Commission more time for fund development and overall planning and presentation.

Mr. Ling questioned the status of legislative measures to extend the Commission. The vehicle extends the Commission until 2022, however, this may not be decided upon during this Legislative Session. Chair English and Rep. Onishi will prepare for these legislative measures during the regular session of 2021.

Chair English also reported that he has been in discussions with Pacific Islands regional representatives. One option that has been discussed is the opportunity to modernize FESTPAC given the current circumstances. The physical meeting, i.e. Festival, will continue to be held every four years. Minister of Pacific Peoples in New Zealand and the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands were excited about connecting artists virtually prior to the in-person Festival. The opportunity to continue to meet organically and virtually with projects, etc. is tremendous and would contribute to the overall presentation and development during the interim years of the Festival.

D. Marketing and Sponsorships Director's Report:

Mr. Ka'anā'anā reported that he has not proceeded with sponsorship development. He would like to have a discussion later with Mr. Ling regarding sponsorships going forward. The Chair added that the merchandising and related plans are currently on hold, too. Social media report by Strategies 360 submitted to all members and posted online for public.

F. Venues/Facilities Director (Mike McCartney) Report:

Mr. Ling covered this in the DBEDT report given earlier.

G. Support Services Director Report:

Ms. Kela'i reported that she is happy to be joining in today's meeting. She wanted Commission members to understand that her position, as well as Ms. Takitani-Puahi's position, are Mayoral appointments that will end early next year. She further mentioned that the Executive Director's position is currently assigned to the Mayor's Office on Culture and the Arts (MOCA), however, there is a chance that it will be attached to another department within the next Administration's organization. She is taking notes for all the work she and Ms. Takitani-Puahi have done and copies will be given to the Commission. Originals will be in the City office. She will continue to serve on the Commission until her term ends.

Chair English shared that Ms. Kela'i's files are immaculate and expressed much appreciation and thanks to both Ms. Kela'i and Ms. Takitani-Puahi for all their assistance.

Ms. Bento asked if Ms. Kela'i could remain as a member of the Commission. Ms. Kela'i expressed that it has been a pleasure for her to serve with members of the FESTPAC Commission. Chair English expressed that Commission meetings will continue and membership of the Commission may be discussed and amended accordingly in the future.

Ms. de Silva commended Ms. Kela'i and Ms. Takitani-Puahi for their tireless efforts, being well-prepared and for their forward-thinking ideas during the planning of this year's Festival. She commended them for their outstanding work and for their support of the *lāhui*, *kanaka maoli* and our communities. Ms. de Silva further added that we cannot thank these two ladies enough for their commitment to the Festival.

Ms. Takitani-Puahi commented that if the Commission is interested in exploring other City properties for the future Festival, they welcome those inquiries so that she and Ms. Kela'i can obtain more information about those venues and connect Commission members with appropriate City personnel.

Chair English stated that, on behalf of the entire Commission, he thanked Ms. Kela'i and Ms. Takitani-Puahi for all their efforts and outstanding job in coordinating all details with City administrators to plan FESTPAC venues. He also is supportive of the idea for their continued involvement and participation during future Festival planning.

F. Residential Operations Report:

Ms. Hind reported that new Festival dates will trigger more movement for this committee. This committee developed a good foundation in securing accommodations for the 2020 event date. Chair English said a good template was developed that included a housing plan. Ms. Hind expressed that she was concerned about VIP housing requirements for the next FESTPAC.

Ms. Matsumoto of PII said she would recommend including VIP rooms in future sponsorship packages. She suggested that Mr. Ka'anā'anā include this item in future sponsorship packages and possibility of hotels to sponsor rooms/in-kind exchange. Ms. Bento suggested that negotiations regarding all sponsorship packages could include delegation performances at those properties.

Mr. Ling reported that regarding the UH Housing proposal, UH informed DBEDT that there were two cancellations that may be charged to the department. DBEDT does not agree with this policy because those reservations were scheduled for May and given the COVID pandemic situation, those events would probably not have taken place.

Rep. Onishi questioned about who from UH surfaced this matter. Ms. Matsumoto confirmed that Ms. Furutani of UH Housing is the staff member who indicated that UH had to turn away other business because of FESTPAC. Ms. Matsumoto requested UH to identify the groups that cancelled their reservation. She would like to confirm whether those groups booked accommodations elsewhere and later released space. Rep. Onishi said that we need to address this concern with UH Housing after we move forward with the new Festival dates. In the event of other cancellations, there should be no recovery cost imposed on the State.

E. Administration Director's Report:

Mr. McComber reported that there have been various discussions about an online platform for the Youth Ambassador program. Kamehameha Schools and Kaimuki High School are willing to move forward with a pilot program this fall with student leaders participating in the Youth Ambassador conference. In addition, there are discussions

about using filming as one of the strands for the Youth Ambassador conference in 2021. The Hawai‘i Film Festival model is being considered for this aspect of FESTPAC.

Mr. Ka‘anā‘anā stated that we need to be progressive and use technology efficiently; however, he also expressed caution that moving meetings virtually may present challenges because of WiFi/broadband accessibility. With good planning, practitioners can be supported by utilizing technology for programming options.

Mr. Ilihia Gionson said that connecting via virtual gathering is not an individual pursuit. Our member nations can connect in their homelands and are connecting.

Chair English shared, as an example, that Hana wants to keep its community closed from over-tourism. The Chair said that communities might consider developing protocols regarding controlling numbers of visitors to respective regions. He also shared the Palau Pledge as an example where a visitor’s passport is stamped and the traveler is required to sign a pledge. The Chair suggested that Hawai‘i might consider setting up a similar system and suggested that, on a larger level, Hawai‘i could consider including a pledge on the agricultural form that arriving passengers are required to complete. He asked Mr. Ka‘anā‘anā whether HTA could consider this suggestion.

Rep. Onishi said that there was a social media attempt to protect the land, etc. and being good stewards. The Hawai‘i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB) has a template to work on a similar message. Although visitor monitoring requires that a visitor sign a document/pledge, it is still difficult to control people’s social behavior. Comments were made that the majority of people are considerate and it is not their intention to desecrate the land.

Rep. Onishi expressed concern regarding the Governor’s 7th Proclamation that was issued on May 5 allowing more businesses/retail to open. He is concerned that this messaging will encourage visitors to travel to Hawai‘i and that the State will see a spike in visitor arrivals.

Mr. Ka‘anā‘anā expressed that pledges are ideal for communities but cautioned that it does not carry much weight. The Hawai‘i Tourism Authority (HTA) has included in its Strategic Plan, a *mālama* mandate for *kama‘āina* and visitors to follow rather than a pledge. Mr. Ka‘anā‘anā further expressed concern with the framework and structure of Hawai‘i’s overall tourism industry. Pledges are nice to have but do not control behavior. He summarized that one third of the 67,000 available rooms in Hawai‘i are considered upscale. Mr. Ka‘anā‘anā looks forward to exchanging meaningful discussions on policy development for the industry, however, indicated that the private sector controls the overall pricing of rooms.

Chair English said that in discussions with both Hana hotel managers, there appears to be much hostility against tourism. Going forward, the industry needs to engage communities that should also include policies regarding *kama‘āina*, too.

NEW BUSINESS

A. UPDATED DISCUSSION: COVID-19 and Impacts

Chair English reported that FESTPAC was the first major event to be postponed due to the global pandemic. He commended the Commission for making hard decisions expeditiously during the unprecedented developments that occurred at the time surrounding the pandemic.

On May 5, Governor Ige announced relaxing some of the rules and that would allow select businesses to open. According to the Governor's Proclamation, those businesses would be able to open from Thursday, May 7. The Chair believes that there is a push to normalize and get businesses operational again.

Chair English reminded members that there were three spikes during the pandemic of 1918. Regarding COVID-19, we are at the top of the first spike. He urged Hawai'i to look at history and be cautious about moving forward. As a Commission, thought must be made to consider our communities and the Pacific "bubble" that has, so far, protected the island communities. These nations have been relatively spared from the pandemic. When Hawai'i opens and allows visitors in, there needs to be protocols developed to manage the expected influx of tourists. The question remains, from a policy level, how must Hawai'i prepare for those challenges.

Ms. de Silva stressed that decisions need to be made in terms of instituting quarantines. There is concern and fear about hosting the Festival in 2021 because vaccines are not expected to be ready until mid-way of 2021. There is also the question about whether the Pacific nations will have the funds to acquire vaccines for their populations. If quarantines are still mandated, it is not reasonable to host the event in Hawai'i in 2021. We also will not know how stable each of the countries will be next year.

Ms. Bento agreed with Ms. de Silva. It is difficult to imagine how countries and Hawai'i will be able to secure financial support of the Festival if it is held in 2021. In Hawai'i, it will be difficult for sponsors to support the event. The idea of executing elements of the Festival via virtual meetings is positive given the current worldwide pandemic and post-COVID-19 considerations.

Members continued that there is a need to be concerned for all as planning continues. Ms. de Silva commented that this is a good opportunity for Hawai'i to relook at tourism. Although our State relies on tourism, there should be strategies developed to decrease the number of visitors to Hawai'i. Commission members want to be positive and host a great Festival without fears.

Rep. Onishi agreed that moving forward, there are many considerations related to logistical issues and other concerns before Hawai‘i opens up. He agreed with Mayor Caldwell that opening up some businesses on Thursday, May 7 was too soon. Businesses need time to prepare for being operational again. The other big issue is monitoring and enforcing rules and other mandates. If there is a local spike, no one is sure whether Hawai‘i will be prepared. General Hara reported to the House COVID Committee that the Department of Health is not on board to conduct general testing in the community and contact tracing.

Ms. Kela‘i mentioned that local artists that were supposed to participate in FESTPAC are facing much financial hardship. When Hawai‘i hosts the Festival in the future, we need to be confident that everyone is ready and able to participate.

Ms. Hind stressed that the Commission should decide, amongst its members, on how to prepare a compassionate response to what is occurring in the world. For example, the Commission might want to have a drop-dead deadline and request that Hawai‘i would like to host the Festival in 2024. Our Pacific region is in a bubble and doing well with no cases of COVID-19. Once travel begins, the Pacific islands will be vulnerable and most likely experience spikes in COVID cases.

Ms. Hind also suggested that a fund be established to support artists to attend the Festival. The Commission (and SPC) should explore how the mission of FESTPAC gets carried out during these times of uncertainty. We do not want Hawai‘i to be the cause of spikes in the Pacific. Although we do not have intel as to when a vaccine will be available, Hawai‘i should display leadership in trying to create a fund for artists to access.

Chair English agreed that, at the moment, everything is on the table. He expressed appreciation for all the ideas shared and acknowledged that we need to bring these concepts aligned with the current world situation that would allow artists from Hawai‘i and the Pacific to thrive.

B. SUNSET DATE of the Commission:

Chair English reported that there is a bill in the Legislature related to extending the term of the FESTPAC Commission. If the Legislature adjourns before moving the bill forward, there is still time to surface the bill during the 2021 Regular Session and move it forward accordingly.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: (Submitted via email):

A. Bishop Museum

Ms. Bixel expressed continued support of FESTPAC. The Museum is working on a reopening strategy to make their campus available to the community once the COVID-19

stay-at-home order is lifted. They are looking forward to June 2021 with anticipated events/performances: Pacific Carving Village (possible June 2021)/discussions for symposium with Carvers for Summer/Fall 2020, Hawaiian and Pacific performances (possible Summer 2020 till 2021), Pow Wow! The First Decade exhibition and changing exhibition of Sullivan collection (June 2021).

CLOSING REMARKS

In closing, Chair English repeated that we must have our communities live and thrive and that these aspirations are all a part of the Arts. Planning, ideas, and options are all germane as to how we move forward to develop the Festival. Let us create a new world of happiness and prosperity. With that, our visitors will also feel the same and thrive.

The Chair suggested that discussions continue with the SPC to move FESTPAC to a virtual space during the interim. FESTPAC can be a strong force for more discussion.

Ms. de Silva shared that Hawai'i will request its intention to move FESTPAC in Hawai'i to 2024, for the sake of the region. She also mentioned that Hawai'i is fortunate to have a seat on the Council. The Chair added that there may be internal politics within the region that will drive decision-making when Ms. de Silva meets with the SPC.

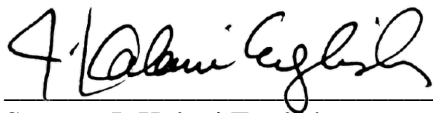
DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 22, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. via ZOOM

ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Senator J. Kalani English
Chair

May 14, 2020

Date