



HO'OU LU LĀHUI  
Regenerating Oceania  
13th Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture  
Hawai'i 2024

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSION ON THE 13<sup>TH</sup> FESTIVAL OF  
PACIFIC ARTS & CULTURE (FestPAC) MEETING

**MONDAY, JUNE 7, 2021 AT 2:30 PM**

VIA VIRTUAL APPLICATION ZOOM: VIDEO / AUDIO CONFERENCE

Commission Members Present were:

|                        |   |  |
|------------------------|---|--|
| Maenette Ah Nee-Benham | - | Governor's Designee  |
| Snowbird Bento         | - | Community Member At-Large (arrived at 2:32p)                     |
| Māpuana de Silva       | - | Community Member At-Large  |
| Jarrett Keohokālole    | - | Senate President's Designee (arrived at 2:32p)                   |
| Jamie Lum              | - | Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) |
| Richard Onishi         | - | House Speaker's Designee   |
| Makanani Salā          | - | City and County of Honolulu Designee                             |
| Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu | - | Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Designee (arrived at 2:32p)     |

Guests:

|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| John Aeto          | - | Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association     |
| Kiele Amundson     | - | Mayor's Office of Culture and the Arts      |
| Amber Bixel        | - | Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum                |
| Manu Boyd          | - | Kamehameha Schools                          |
| Maka Casson-Fisher | - | Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA)             |
| Ilihia Gionson     | - | Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association     |
| Lynn Martin Graton | - | Public Member                               |
| Monte McComber     | - | Royal Hawaiian Center                       |
| Aaron Salā         | - | University of Hawai'i/Royal Hawaiian Center |
| Malia Sanders      | - | Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association     |

Staff:

|                 |   |                         |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|
| Margaret Ahn    | - | Deputy Attorney General |
| Marlene Hiraoka | - | DBEDT                   |
| Selma Malcolm   | - | DBEDT                   |
| Timothy Tiu     | - | DBEDT                   |
| Scott Tome      | - | DBEDT                   |

Apologies:

|                          |   |  |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Kalani Ka'anā'anā, Chair | - | Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Designee |
|--------------------------|---|--|

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Makanani Salā at 2:30 p.m., who welcomed everyone present via ZOOM and Facebook Live.

Vice-Chair called upon Ms. Lum to introduce Mr. Manu Boyd who was invited to do the *wehena* (opening) on behalf of Commissioner Lum and DBEDT.

In 1985, Mr. Boyd mentioned that he was one of the performing artists at FestPAC and the youngest dancer during the event in Aotearoa. Mr. Boyd understands the purpose and meaning of the Festival and draws upon the values and history contained in the Hawaiian culture to assist and guide the work of this commission.

Mr. Boyd first shared about an upcoming holiday in Hawai‘i, Kamehameha Day which is celebrated on June 11th annually. He provided historical information and advised that although it is widely regarded that June 11 is the birthdate of Kamehameha ‘Ekahi (I), it is not his actual birthday. In 1871, Kamehameha ‘Elima (V) wanted to celebrate the birth of Kamehameha as his *kūpuna kāne* (grandfather). Kamehameha ‘Elima (V) considered using his own birthday December 11, however, because December is typically in the rainy season, he decided to move the occasion up six months to June 11 so that the weather would be more conducive to public celebrations.

Mr. Boyd next spoke about the *oli* (chant) he would share to provide context for commissioners and the public.

“*Kalani Nui Mehameha*” was written by High Chiefess ‘Ululani of Hilo in 1789-1790. This *oli* makes references to *ho‘okipa* (hospitality) which, on behalf of *kūpuna* (elders), means we must treat people with the utmost respect. He acknowledged that without the efforts of Ms. de Silva, the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, and the Kamehameha Schools, Hawai‘i would not even be considered to be included in FestPAC as we are part of the United States. The aforementioned individuals and organizations were instrumental in creating the opportunity for Hawai‘i to participate in FestPAC these many years and to now host the Festival for the very first time. Soon, Hawai‘i will be the host of FestPAC and we need to consider how we execute our *mea ho‘okipa* (hospitality style) and this *oli* shares some important reminders. The elements of *ho‘okipa* gave meaning to entering the house -- we have the responsibility to our *lāhui* (nation) to express this ho‘okipa in the most honorable and respectful way as we welcome our guests into our home. The *oli* Mr. Boyd shared epitomized the challenge given to Kamehameha ‘Ekahi (I) to pull the islands together and this is a metaphor for our commission to pull so many resources, people, and organizations together to accomplish this Festival.

Vice-Chair expressed her *mahalo* (gratitude) to Mr. Boyd and mentioned that no one tells a story like he does.

At this time, Vice-Chair Salā introduced the newest Commissioner, Dr. Maenette Ah Nee-Benham who is the Chancellor at the University of Hawai‘i West O‘ahu. Dr. Benham thanked Commissioners and feels it is an honor to be of service along with everyone on the Commission.

### **PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Vice-Chair invited members of the public to testify on the agenda items. Hearing none, she continued with agenda items.

### **APPROVAL OF MAY 17, 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes were distributed and reviewed by Commissioners. Vice-Chair Salā asked for a motion to be made and it was made by Ms. Lum and seconded by Mr. Onishi to adopt the minutes unamended. A roll call vote was requested with the following Commissioners approving the motion to approve the minutes: Vice-Chair Salā, Ms. de Silva, Ms. Lum, Ms. Wong-Kalu, Mr. Keohokālole, Mr. Onishi, Ms. Bento, Ms. Benham.

Motion was unanimously approved.

### **DISCUSSION OF FESTIVAL DIRECTOR**

Vice-Chair Salā mentioned that initially as discussed during the last meeting, Commissioners would be discussing the position of the Festival Director and possibly offering nominations at today's meeting. She clarified that she will not be calling for a vote today without the Chair present. She also reminded the Commission that this position will not be acted upon until 2022 if and when funding becomes available.

Ms. Bento asked for clarification about whether during the discussion on Festival Director, Commissioners would be fleshing out *kuleana* (responsibilities and duties) as stated in the FestPAC manual and/or also making nominations. Vice-Chair indicated that there would be no formal nominations made at this meeting and that the vote would be done at the next meeting. She mentioned that it would be good to discuss narrowing the scope of the position during this meeting.

Ms. Benham noted that since this is her first meeting, she was interested in hearing the perspectives of other Commissioners regarding the position of Festival Director. To begin, Vice-Chair asked Ms. de Silva to share her thoughts.

Ms. de Silva expressed that the Festival Director is the individual who would make sure that the Sub-Committee Chairs and their teams are following through on their *kuleana* and that all work is being completed at the direction of the Commission. The Festival Director and Honorary Festival Chair will become the spokespersons for the Festival during public forums; making requests for funding; conducting presentations; meeting with donors and sponsors; and other tasks. How Hawai'i would like to present itself and to *ho'okipa* relatives around the Pacific would be represented by the Festival Director and Honorary Festival Chair. The Festival Director is not expected to do the actual work but to follow the planning/scheduling matrix to make sure that Sub-Committee Chairs are completing work in a timely manner.

Vice-Chair confirmed that the Festival Director is the Executive Director who would receive guidance and direction from the Commission and ensure that all items in the Kuleana Matrix are done well. Ms. de Silva commented that Hawai'i will be the first host to use the Festival Manual which was created to be used as a guideline. We are able to adjust as needed to meet our needs.

The overseeing body of FestPAC is looking to Hawai‘i to see what worked from the standpoint of an actual working document.

Ms. Bento expressed that the Festival Director needed to have the knowledge, skills and experience in order to succeed in fulfilling responsibilities.

Ms. Wong-Kalu thanked Ms. Bento for sharing her thoughts. Ms. Wong-Kalu indicated that, in both cases, the Festival Director and Honorary Festival Chair would become ambassadors of our people and our islands. They would be wearing the mantel of Hawai‘i and must conduct their duties in that manner. She further mentioned that one of the most critical elements she sees is that the individual should have previous experiences of managing other festivals, hence, requiring little guidance. We need leaders who will be able to take the position and run with it. Parallel to the Festival Director’s position is being a cultural ambassador. If and when there are moments of challenges, the Honorary Chair also would be able to intervene on behalf of the Festival Director and the Commission. The “work horse” is not necessarily the one who is front and center and visible. Both individuals will need to have the level of leadership and leadership styles that have a sense of aloha. And, as Mr. Boyd mentioned earlier, it would be their/our duty to do so. Similar to what Mr. Boyd indicated, she agreed that at the end of the Festival, the technical details of money, numbers, logistics, etc. are important; however, what is most important is to treat everyone as a noble guest, at our expense. The Pacific Islands have kept and preserved their culture and Hawai‘i has struggled, however, we will rise up.

Ms. Benham expressed her thanks to everyone for sharing their thoughts. She explained that she has an idea of what the Commission is looking for in a Festival Director as someone who represents all of us and who lifts us up. That is a tall order. There is a need for a good communicator, someone who is transparent, has strong management and fiscal skills, someone who can think outside of the box and someone who can engage Commissioners in the implementation process.

#### **DISCUSSION OF HONORARY FESTIVAL CHAIR**

Vice-Chair Salā made reference to the discussion held during the last meeting regarding the Honorary Festival Chair and the Festival Director and noted that the Festival Director would be the “administration” and the Honorary Festival Chair would be similar to a diplomatic position.

Ms. de Silva stated that she would prefer to select the Festival Director before selecting the Honorary Festival Chair. Ms. Wong-Kalu agreed. At the moment, we need a working person and as the Hawai‘i delegation begins to assemble, there would be a need for the Honorary Festival Chair to step in to conduct Public Relations and Ambassador functions to build minds and hearts, to teach, reinvigorate like the wind beneath the sails of the canoe.

Ms. Bento asked if there was a set time frame for nominations. Vice-Chair indicated that as soon as there is a budget for these positions, decisions can move forward.

Ms. Wong-Kalu commented that another alternative would be selecting an individual who could assume this position with their salary being paid by their employer. The Vice-Chair agreed that is a possibility, too.

Ms. Bento further commented that there might be in-kind service offered for an individual who could do the work but paid by their employer because there may be organizations that are unable to provide monetary donations, however, might be willing to offer their staff instead.

### **DISCUSSION OF REVISIONS TO THE FESTIVAL BUDGET**

Vice-Chair Salā asked Ms. Lum to report on the festival budget.

Ms. Lum reported that she reviewed the budget and based upon the previous agenda item discussions, it comes down to securing a paid Festival Director. The Festival Director would want to shape the organization that would include individuals who would manage it. In looking at the current 2022 budget of \$3,000,000, half of that is for staffing considerations. Realistically at minimum, we need a Festival Director, an assistant and someone who would assist with development and raise funds. For 2021, we do not have any resources available. We will need to look at 2022 unless there is an individual who would be assigned to this position by an organization that would be considered as a donation. We are looking at budget figures of approximately \$200,000 for three staff members; however, we haven't considered if this is an appropriate or fair compensation level. Ms. Lum also mentioned that she and Chair Ka'anā'anā spoke about issuing a Request for Information (RFI) related to fundraising.

Vice-Chair stated that if there are other priority areas that need to be addressed, she requested the Commissioners bring it forward to Ms. Lum.

Ms. Wong-Kalu and Ms. Bento offered to have a conversation regarding individuals who might best serve as a Festival Director. Ms. Bento indicated that there is a need for someone who has charisma and who knows how to work between governments as well as someone who possesses cultural understanding. Ideally, we would like an individual who has the resources and manpower who has the capacity to have people rally around them.

Sen. Keohokālole expressed that the discussions today and from the last meeting indicate that we need an individual who can run a \$25 million event. This is a team effort and we will bring resources and *kuleana*. He agreed that the Festival Director needed to be recruited first. We would need to look at the individual's strengths and supplement accordingly. For him, he believes that ultimately, the first area of responsibility is someone who is inward looking, who can facilitate an event and properly manage Hawai'i. The Commissioners cannot write checks, execute contracts, etc. so the Festival Director must be able to handle administrative matters first and we, collectively, need to support.

Vice-Chair Salā asked about the skill set that would be desired so that staff would be able to develop a position description.

Sen. Keohokālole asked Rep. Onishi for his thoughts. Rep. Onishi commented that the discussion is interesting and that he has never attended FestPAC in the past. He was brought to the Commission at the last minute to represent the House of Representatives. He mentioned that he was not part of the discussion when the original concept was discussed three years ago. He believes that the Commission is heading in the same direction, i.e., looking for an individual who

has attended previous Festivals, understands FestPAC, understands the Pacific nations, understands the differences in cultures and the politics of the respective nations. He believes that it is going to be difficult to find someone who has those skills, resources and experiences. Both positions need to complement each other. He agreed with Ms. de Silva that the Festival Director has to be involved in the selection of the Honorary Festival Chair and that the relationship needed to be complementary. He expressed that the Commission should not have the same perspective as in 2020 and that the Commission needed to take time to raise funds, etc. He also agreed with Ms. Lum that a fund development manager would be needed. He also believes that we need to see if there are community resources available to assist, too.

Ms. de Silva commented that, in her opinion, the Festival Director did not have to possess all knowledge but must have a complete understanding of FestPAC. Commissioners will oversee, however, will not do the work. It would be great if the Festival Director has *'ike* (traditional knowledge), however, the individual needed strong assistants. Also, each Commissioner has their bucket of *kuleana*, too, so the Festival Director must have strong organization skills and will need to assist Commissioners in following through with Sub-Committee Chairs.

Ms. Benham stated that she appreciated comments from Rep. Onishi and Ms. de Silva. She asked whether it would be possible to have a couple of Commissioners meet and develop a proposal as to what the Festival Director's position could be. Vice-Chair deferred to Ms. Ahn regarding this matter. Ms. Ahn agreed that only two Commissioners would be allowed to meet outside of a public meeting. Vice-Chair indicated that in addition to Ms. Benham, the Chair might be the second person to participate in this discussion.

### **VENUE FORMS UPDATE**

Vice-Chair reported that as mentioned previously, the Convention Center layout is noted on the website. She also reported that the City and County of Honolulu agencies have submitted their venue forms, and these have been circulated to Commissioners for review. Bishop Museum forms are still pending at this time.

### **DISCUSSION OF FESTIVAL VENUES FOR THE FOLLOWING EVENTS**

#### **A. *Wa'a* Ceremony**

Ms. Bento stated that when looking at 2020 FestPAC, she realized that in selecting a site such as the Ke'ehi Lagoon, coordination and approvals are required from several jurisdictions including the State Airports Division, the U.S. Coast Guard, etc. She suggested that the Commission needed to be aware of these considerations. She also mentioned that the Hikianalia and Hōkūle'a will be away from Hawai'i on voyage in 2024. She suggested the possibility of using smaller *wa'a* (canoe) and those from canoe clubs.

Ms. de Silva reported during the past five festivals, six- or eight-man canoes were used for the *Wa'a* Ceremonies as opposed to using voyaging canoes. We will need to decide what the ceremony will entail and decide its purpose. Usually, the head of state and the heads of delegations met at a designated location, boarded the *wa'a* and were paddled in with a ceremony by the hosting delegation. Usually, there is a stage set-up, gift exchanges and a program as part of the symbolic ceremony. Once the Commission

decides upon how we want to present the *Wa‘a* Ceremony, we will be able to select the proper venue.

Rep. Onishi stated that in preparation for the 2020 Festival, participation from other countries did not materialize for the *Wa‘a* Ceremony. As the search for venues and opportunities were conducted, the *wa‘a* was to come through the Ala Wai Canal and the ceremony was to have been held at the Hawai‘i Convention Center (HCC). The Commission needs to determine the presentation of the ceremony if we are looking at participation from other delegations who would need to prepare to participate.

Ms. de Silva mentioned that all ceremonies in the past have been held at sunrise and participants were picked-up at 3:00 a.m. That was how it was done in the past; however, we have the option to modify it as needed.

Ms. Bento reminded Commissioners that in 2020, the suggestion for the *Wa‘a* Ceremony to be held in the Ala Wai Canal was followed by a ceremony to be held at HCC. They knew that it would not be the best location, however, at the time, Ala Moana/Magic Island was undergoing construction and renovations. Kualoa and Ke‘ehi Lagoon were also considered. We would need to reach out to the canoe clubs if we are looking at their participation because they will need to prepare and check the conditions of the beach, etc. Also, regarding the ceremony, consideration needs to be made regarding parking availability, facilities, food and beverage offerings, etc.

Ms. de Silva asked if it was decided to invite racing and practicing canoes, could Ala Moana be a possibility? Or, Mākaha or Kailua? It would be nice to consider communities outside of Honolulu such as Waimānalo, Mā‘ili or Mākaha, too. Regarding breakfast offerings, there is no need to offer a full breakfast since the participants will be transported back to their housing venues where breakfasts will be served. The *Wa‘a* Ceremony lasts for approximately one to two hours.

Ms. Bento added that for notes, consideration is being made for the following venues: Magic Island; Ke‘ehi (Ms. Salā said the City is using the parking lots for the homeless); Kailua; Kālia. Sen. Keohokālole likes the idea of going out to the community, however, there will be parking challenges, for example, in Kailua. Ms. de Silva indicated that reserved parking would be available for dignitaries and that we would need to request the use of schools for public parking. These individuals would need to be bussed in from those locations. For Kālia, we could approach Waikīkī area schools. Vice-Chair Salā asked Ms. Bento to provide a listing for the next meeting and that she will research parking and other logistics necessary for each location.

B. ‘Awa Ceremony

Ms. Bento indicated that previously, conversations were held at University of Hawai‘i West O‘ahu and included Mr. Kamana‘opono Crabbe, Mr. Aaron Salā, and others. At the time, the ‘Awa (ceremonial drink) Ceremony was going to be held at Kūkaniloko for dignitaries and *ali‘i* (chiefly) families. University of Hawai‘i West O‘ahu was willing to host the delegate leads and the *ali‘i* families.

C. Opening Ceremony

Ms. Bento noted that usually, the Opening Ceremony was not held on the same day as the *Wa'a* Ceremony. Usually, the *Wa'a* Ceremony would be held the weekend before the opening of the Festival. However, we have a shortened Festival, and a venue in discussion has been 'Iolani Palace who has already submitted the venue form. We are still leaning towards 'Iolani Palace as the venue for the Opening Ceremony.

D. Main Festival Village

For 2020, the locations considered were the Kaka'ako Waterfront Park at Coral Street – *mauka* (mountain-side), HCC, and Magic Island.

Ms. Bento stated that although there are funds located at HCC, there are opportunities to engage the community and ask for their support. For the most part, people would agree that everyone would like to be outdoors, however, we need to be mindful regarding permits, lighting, sound, etc. that would be required. We will need to see the extent of community support that can be achieved. If we are looking at proximity, Ala Moana would be the ideal location for the Festival Village.

Ms. de Silva said that her first choice is Ala Moana/Magic Island. Although we have funds at HCC, there will be opportunities to schedule other events there. Magic Island is in walking distance to HCC. She received information from Ms. Lynn Martin Graton who organized a Smithsonian Festival for two weeks at Magic Island so there is precedent established to request Magic Island.

A suggestion was made to prioritize locations as Magic Island and Kapi'olani Park.

E. Closing Ceremony

A suggestion to use Kapi'olani Park was made. Ms. Bento also suggested that if the Opening Ceremony was held there after the *Wa'a* Ceremony at Kālia, that might be a strong possibility. If it was held at HCC, there would be more security, however, there are many who strongly feel that dancing on earth is preferable.

Sen. Keohokālole said that there is still time to decide and to reach out to the community. The Okinawan Festival and Makahiki events are held at the Kapi'olani Park so he would imagine that the Festival's Opening Ceremony could be held there, too. He indicated that he would be willing to engage in whatever protocol was necessary to make presentations to the neighborhood boards and other officials/groups.

Commissioners felt that the Closing Ceremony held at Kapi'olani Park would be a good idea.

The Chair and Sen. Keohokālole could team-up to conduct presentations to the Department of Parks and Recreation, the neighborhood boards and to other officials/groups. Discussion of financing can be considered after that.



**DISCUSSION ON FESTIVAL SUB-COMMITTEES**

- A. Defining Sub-Committees
- B. Organizational Chart
- C. 2021 Workplan
- D. Objectives, Timeline & Milestones
- E. Development Workplan Templates for Sub-Committees
- F. Development of Sub-Committee Progress Reports Template

Vice-Chair Salā deferred this agenda item to next meeting.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Vice-Chair Salā invited the public to again offer comments. Hearing none, she continued with the next agenda item.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Vice-Chair Salā invited Commissioners to share announcements.

Ms. Sanders indicated that in August, Ms. Lum will follow-up on new letters to be issued to three Commissioners to extend their terms of office to August 31, 2025. She confirmed that letters would be issued for Ms. Bento, Ms. de Silva and Ms. Benham.

Ms. Lum indicated that Governor Ige has until June 30, 2021 to sign the legislation that extends the Commission's end date.

**NEXT MEETING**

Vice-Chair Salā confirmed that the next meeting will be held on June 21, 2021, at 2:30 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Vice-Chair Salā adjourned meeting at 4:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Makanani Salā  
Vice-Chair

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07/08/2021  
Date