



## HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY

### NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR

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### **COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETING SCHEDULED TO DISCUSS REHABILITATION OF VACANT PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS IN HILO**

HILO – Hawaii County and the Hawaii Public Housing Authority invite nonprofit, volunteer service organizations, businesses and others interested in fixing uninhabited vacant units at Lanakila Homes, Hilo to a demonstration project planning meeting on Thursday, August 7, 2008 from 10:30 a.m. at the Lanakila Homes Community Center, 600 Wailoa Street, Hilo.

Of the original 230 Lanakila Homes, 136 were torn down and replaced in previous years. Another 32 are currently being dismantled and will be replaced with new townhouse buildings and with a new Hawaii County fire station. Hawaii Public Housing Authority believes that most, if not all, of the remaining 62 units are in good condition and can be repaired for public housing again. The original units were made with one-inch thick redwood that the Hawaii Public Housing Authority believes is still solid and can last for many more years.

"The housing needs may be even greater in the near future for some in our community. We need to pursue all possible means to meet those needs. This is one way," said Mayor Kim. "We need these units back in the housing inventory to help the neediest in our community."

"It is in the best tradition of Hawaii County that nonprofit, volunteer service organizations, businesses, and others can partner with government to help rebuild these homes as community resources," added Carol Ignacio, Hawaii Public Housing Authority Board member and executive director of the Office of Social Ministry.

HUD, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, approved the demolition of all 230 units nearly a decade ago. "We believe that if we come up with a viable plan to repair the units HUD will allow HPHA to repair these units rather than tear them down or let them sit vacant any longer," noted Chad Taniguchi, Hawaii Public Housing Authority executive director. "Although we don't have all the funds needed to repair all 62 units immediately we would like to ask the people of Hawaii County to help rebuild at least one unit to demonstrate that this is viable." Hawaii Public Housing Authority has funds to pay for materials, supplies, and infrastructure.

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Those interested in attending the demonstration project planning meeting are asked to call Carol Ignacio at Office of Social Ministry, 933-6006, by August 5 so organizers can gauge space needs.

The planned agenda is as follows:

10:30 a.m. Discuss demonstration project possibilities and interest

11:30 a.m. Walk around vacant units to assess conditions

12: 30 p.m. Summary discussion regarding next steps

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