

THE GARDEN ISLAND

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Council backs Black Pot expansion

Nonprofit seeks \$2 million to buy undeveloped parcel

Nathan Eagle

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LIHUE — After hearing a pitch from three Kaua'i Public Land Trust representatives, Kaua'i County Council members on Wednesday said they would send to Mayor Bernard Carvalho's administration a communication supporting the proposed expansion of Black Pot Park on the North Shore.

The nonprofit wants the county to provide \$2 million to help buy an undeveloped parcel adjacent to the park near the pier at Hanalei Bay.

Kaua'i Public Land Trust Executive Director Jennifer Luck, who was joined by board members JoAnn Yukimura and Bill Chase, underscored that the time to act is now. She noted that the property owner, John Hodge, is willing to sell the parcel for a "bargain" \$3.3 million even though it was appraised at \$4 million.

The trust has \$750,000 to put toward the acquisition and anticipates receiving \$500,000 from a federal land and water conservation program, Luck said.

"The stars have aligned," she

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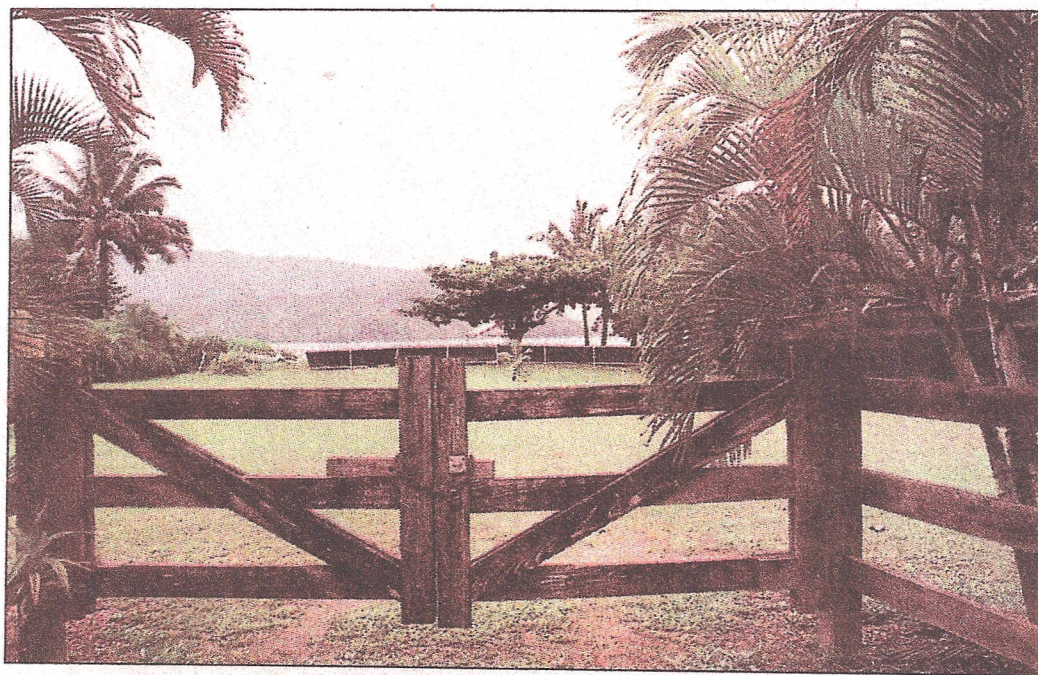


Photo contributed by Kaua'i Public Land Trust



Top: The Kaua'i County Council on Wednesday voiced its support for a proposal to expand Black Pot Park in Hanalei by providing \$2 million in funding to help Kaua'i Public Land Trust buy an adjacent parcel, pictured here recently. If approved, the funding is expected to come from the voter-created Public Access, Open Space, Natural Resources Preservation Fund.

Dennis Fujimoto/The Garden Island

Left: Jennifer Luck, Kaua'i Public Land Trust executive director, uses a PowerPoint presentation before the Kaua'i County Council, Wednesday morning at the Historic County Building. In the background is Bill Chase, KPLT board president.



Nathan Eagle/The Garden Island

The sun sets on Hanalei Bay in this photo taken at Black Pot Park on the North Shore. The Kaua'i County Council on Wednesday said it supports a proposal to expand the park by spending \$2 million to help the Kaua'i Public Land Trust purchase an adjacent property that would be given to the county.

Expansion

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said.

The expansion of the park, which is popular among residents and visitors, has been in the works for 10 to 15 years, Chase said.

If the funding comes through, Luck said the plan is to hand the parcel over to the county to officially become part of the park. The nonprofit envisions the county going through a park planning process to decide how to best use the land.

"This is a place beloved by the community," Yukimura said. "It hasn't been expanded in years. It's an investment in the future of our island."

The director said there is a six-month window to take action because Hodge's building permits will expire.

"There's an urgency sur-

rounding this property," Luck said.

This would be the next piece of the Black Pot expansion puzzle, Councilman Jay Furfaro said.

On either side of the county's 2.47-acre parcel are properties that the state and private entities have agreed to contribute to the expansion under certain conditions.

Montage Resorts has said it would be willing to donate a parcel after the park has a master plan, Luck said.

The trust will later try to acquire Michael Sheehan's three lots for further expansion of the park, she added, eventually doubling the current size of the park.

The Black Pot expansion is the top priority project of the trust and the county Open Space Commission.

Voters on Nov. 5, 2002, approved a charter amendment

to establish the "Public Access, Open Space, Natural Resources Preservation Fund" and stipulated that each year a minimum of one-half of 1 percent of the county's certified real property taxes would be deposited into the fund.

Luck said there is currently \$4.7 million in that fund and it is anticipated that the \$2 million the trust is seeking to buy Lodge's parcel would come from that source.

Council Chair Bill "Kaipo" Asing said the council will be sending a communication to the administration supporting the request and then it will pursue a money bill.

There are some legalities that will have to be worked out, such as the transfer of the money to the trust, he said.

"You can be assured that the council is in support of the acquisition of that plot," Asing said.