

# WCA holds first town meeting of year

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About 80 people attended the first Waimea Community Association Town Meeting of 2014, held in the Waimea School cafeteria on Jan. 9. Rep. Cindy Evans, D-North Kona, South Kohala, and state Sen. Malama Solomon, D-North Hawaii, were there to report on updates for the new year.

"The legislative funding process takes 60 days with lots of deadlines," Evans explained. "A bill, idea or project may die of deadlines are not met."

Evans said there are now more people living in urban areas than rural. The hunting community is part of Hawaii Island's rural culture, and subsistence is important. By spending more time on hunting issues as well as reaching out to other island legislators, Evans said these items will be addressed this session.

Senator Solomon spoke about the need to bring affordable housing to young families. By listing statistics, Solomon showed that the median family home cost on Oahu is \$600,000, and on the Big Island, it is now at \$425,000. She also stated that the annual tax intake is declining.

"This is a problem," she said.

Community members were given four minutes each to state their concern or need for

funding. Mel Macy, community leader who helped form the Waimea Park Builders through the Waimea Community Association, reported that the Waimea District Park has been seven years in the planning and the master plan is complete with community input.

Phase I of the proposed 24-acre Waimea District Park, to be located behind Parker Ranch Headquarters off Ala Ohia Road, will probably include an access road, a regulation football, soccer and rugby field, covered play court, and baseball field, a comfort station and infrastructure, including water, sewer, drainage and power.

Principal Marcella McClelland of Honokaa High School, who has been at the school since September, said that though the school has many strengths, there are several facilities issues plaguing the school — four classrooms went without electricity last week, there is only one set of bathrooms for 400 students, and sometimes there is a lack of hot water.

"We don't want to take away from other schools," said McClelland, "There are three historical buildings on campus, so maintenance funds are needed."

Two Waimea Middle School students spoke about their experience with technology and their favorite projects.

Reading from an iPad, Celeste Souza spoke about why WMS needs funding for their planned nine-classroom Science Technology Building. Another \$7 million is required to finish the building.

"Kids do make a difference when they are provided with opportunity," said Souza.

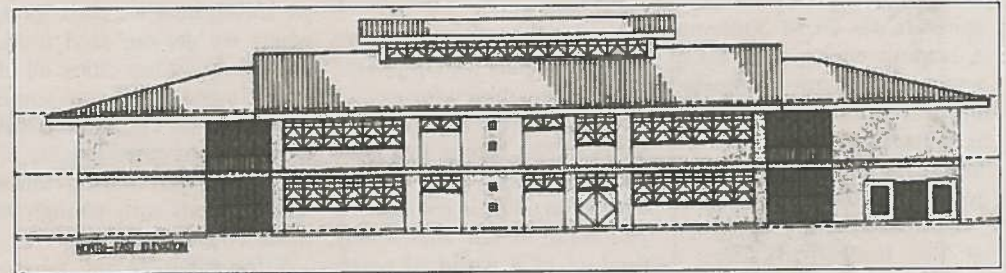
Tim Bostock, director of Kahilu Theatre, spoke about how the theater has added five shows to the line-up and that the musical comedy 'The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee' is the first Kahilu-produced musical since the Richard Smart days. There is more work to be done with the theater facilities as well. Carolyn Stewart, also from Kahilu Theatre said they have taped marked X's on the floor of the theater to show where buckets need to be positioned when it rains.

"Our fundraising efforts will focus on education and outreach," said Stewart. "We want to make the theater accessible to the community; bus in more students and put more artists into the schools."

Former state representative of the Kohala district, David Tarnas, explained the use of the Hawaii State Legislature's Public Access Room. With a new website, the public is able to keep track of various bills, have recorded hearings sent to their computers, and can input their testimonies.



Rep. Cindy Evans and Sen. Malama Solomon talk to WMS student Celeste Souza and her mother, Candice Mercado, after the Waimea Community Association town meeting on Thursday. (PHOTO COURTESY OF WMS)



An architectural rendering of the future WMS Science Technology Building. (PHOTO COURTESY OF WMS)

"Use this tool to keep up to date on this fast moving legislature," Tarnas said. "Please don't be intimidated!"

Use this forum to get involved. The website for the Hawaii Public Access Room is [lrbhawaii.org/par](http://lrbhawaii.org/par). For more information on the Waimea Community Association, visit their website at [waimeatown.org](http://waimeatown.org).