

Meeting Minutes [DRAFT]

Date: June 5, 2025

Time: 9:00am - 11:00am

Location (Zoom):

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83211242897?pwd=Qdaa9r43RJUyKEab9DygFMPsbtIP8y.1>

Location (In Person): Hub Coworking Hawaii
1050 Queen St #100
Honolulu HI 96814

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Patrick Gartside at 9:05 am.

2. Roll Call / Attendance

Council members and attendees introduced themselves.

Attendees:

- Patrick Gartside (Chair)
- Philip Ana (Vice Chair)
- Judy Guajardo (Treasurer)
- Brian Hauser (Committee Member)
- Catia Garell (Council Member)
- Linda Lambert (Deaf Representative, former SILC Secretary - indicated this may be her last meeting)
- Amanda Lowe (Executive Director, Statewide Independent Living Council)

Guests:

- Annette Tashiro (Incoming Council Member, outgoing from State Rehab Council)

- Vickie Kennedy (Incoming Council Member, outgoing SRC Member, Board Member of Hawaii Association of the Blind, Guide Dog Handler)
- Donald Sakamoto (Soon to be SILC Board Member, President, Citizens for Fair ADA Ride)
- Jodi Asato (Executive Director, Assistive Technology Resource Centers of Hawaii; Incoming Council Member)
- Nani Watanabe (Former Commissioner with Persons with Disability for Maui County, Maui County Office on Aging Council, active with Maui Deaf Friends, Maui Wheelers)
- Valerie Janikowski (Lanai Kinaole Inc)
- Lea Dias (DVR Administrator, DSE)
- Zosimo Arista (Unofficial Ex Officio from DD Council, Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities)
- Elizabeth Delovio (DCAB Planner and ADA Coordinator)
- Kevin Peralta (Student Intern, Master's in Public Health, Thrive for Life with CAPT)
- Malaya Van Kleek (Maui County Office on Aging)

3. Approval of Minutes

- The minutes from the May 8, 2025, meeting were reviewed by the council members.

Motion: Philip Ana made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 8, 2025, meeting.

Second: Judy Guajardo seconded the motion.

Vote: All Council members in favor. None opposed.

The motion passed. The minutes for the May 8th meeting are approved.

4. Welcoming Remarks / Introductions

- Patrick Gartside welcomed all attendees and thanked the dedicated council members and community members for their participation, emphasizing the critical importance of advocacy and collaboration. He highlighted recent positive movements in the White House's Federal fiscal year 2026 Health and Human Services budget proposal,

crediting coordinated advocacy from disability and aging networks. Key victories included protection of ACL programs and partial restoration of funds for State Councils on Developmental Disabilities and Protection and Advocacy systems, and increased funding for independent living programs. He stressed that the fight continues, with critical programs like University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities still facing elimination and threats to fair housing organizations and Medicaid (HR. 1). He reiterated the need to build coalitions in Hawaii and advocate for rights and services, mentioning the upcoming 35th ADA anniversary rally as a key opportunity.

5. SILC Reports

a. Executive Committee Report

- Patrick Gartside reintroduced Amanda Lowe, the new Executive Director.
- Amanda Lowe provided background on her experience, including work with the National Disability Rights Network, as Disability Policy Director for the U.S. Senate's Health Education Labor Pensions Committee, and as an independent contractor with the National Council on Disability. She expressed excitement to build coalitions and work together, recognizing the importance of unity in light of potential budget cuts.
- Patrick Gartside expressed enthusiasm for Amanda's strong connections to national policy and experience working with agencies serving people with disabilities.

b. Advocacy Committee Report

- Philip Ana reported on the Advocacy Committee's work, including following federal cuts. He attended a Kapuna Collective meeting where the importance of personal testimonies for senators was highlighted. He stressed the ongoing opportunity to communicate with Senators regarding the "big, beautiful bill" (HR. 1) and its potential cuts. He follows "Justice for All" for updates on Washington D.C., and mentioned concerns about fair housing, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, and the LGBTQ+ community.

- Philip also attended a Town Hall meeting with Senator Hirono, noting her office's willingness to open cases for individual situations and her bill to increase the cap on social security contributions.
- The ADA 35th Anniversary event planning (July 25th) was briefly discussed, with Philip mentioning assignments for contacting agencies and communities, noting growing interest across Oahu, Maui, and potentially Hawaii Island.

c. SILC Activities Report

- Donald Sakamoto reported attending the Honolulu on Aging meeting, noting good information about city-level community services for the elderly.
- Judy Guajardo reported on her involvement with the newly reformed Falls Prevention steering committee from the Hawaii Department of Health. A statewide meeting is planned for July. Naho Aloha offers free in-home assessments for environmental hazards and has secured funding for durable medical equipment like walkers, canes, and shower benches. She encouraged spreading awareness about fall prevention.
- Nani Watanabe reported on Maui ADA celebration planning, including meetings with Maui Wheelers and Maui Deaf Friends. She is working on securing Queen Ka'ahumanu Mall as a venue for a small event. She shared a challenging case involving a deaf couple who signed housing contracts in 1991 without an interpreter and are now facing penalties. She has sought pro bono legal assistance and contacted Hawaii Disability Rights, Legal Aid Society (who couldn't take the case), and suggested Richardson Law School, and Office on Language Access as potential resources. Philip Ana suggested Hawaii Civil Rights Commission. Donald Sakamoto also mentioned the issue of language access.
- Nani emphasized the need for access to interpreters and resources, highlighting concerns about paratransit, transportation conflicts, and hospital access on Maui. She expressed hope for a forum to address these island-specific issues.

d. Financial Report

- Judy Guajardo announced the Maui Abilities Fair is scheduled for August 23rd.
- The beginning balance for May was \$209,958.51.
- Total subtractions were \$30,065.82, primarily for HR payments to the former director, related taxes, and a credit card payment of \$1,217.47.
- The monthly accounting firm charge is \$624.
- The ending balance for the SILC account is \$179,892.69. Judy believes additional funds are expected from DVR invoicing.
- Patrick Gartside noted the need to send supporting documents for invoices to DVR.

6. Unfinished Business

a. State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) Amendments

- Patrick Gartside stated the need to reconvene the SPIL Committee to work on amendments to the 3-year plan, aiming for completion by the end of the first year (September).
- The previous committee members were Patrick Gartside, Judy Guajardo, former SILC directors (Letty and Roxanne), Brian Houser, Leland Brady, and Cheryl Matthews.
- New Committee Members: Philip Ana, Annette Tashiro, and Catia Garell expressed interest in joining the SPIL Committee. Patrick Gartside and Amanda Lowe will coordinate a meeting for the committee.

b. Training & Technical Assistance & SILC Training

- Patrick Gartside announced upcoming training from the University of Montana's Training and Technical Assistance Center, with support from California SILC. This will include a "SILC 101" training at the next month's meeting and a training from the DSE on serving on Hawaii boards and commissions.

c. SILC Policies and Procedures Manual (Policy Committee)

- Patrick Gartside discussed the requirement for SILC to have its own policies and procedures manual, noting templates from California and Oregon.
- The previous Bylaws Committee members were Brian Houser, Cheryl Matthews, Judy, Leland Brady, Philip, and Patrick Gartside.
- New Committee Member: Valerie Janikowski volunteered to join the Policy Committee and offered assistance with formatting and utilizing templates, including support from her "computer whiz" team.
- The goal is to get the policies and procedures drafted and potentially approved by the next meeting to incorporate into the SILC 101 training. Philip Ana inquired about using the California model as a building block.

d. National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)

- Conference (July 21st - 24th, 2025 - Washington, DC): Amanda Lowe provided an update. Patrick Gartside, Amanda Lowe, Donald Sakamoto, and Brian Hauser plan to attend. Highlights include a legislative and advocacy update, Hill Day preparation, a march to the Capitol and rally on July 21st. An ADA celebration is planned for the evening of July 22nd. On July 23rd, attendees will meet with representatives and senators and their staff to discuss national and Hawaii-specific issues. On July 24th, attendees may meet with committee staff (Senate and House Education and Workforce Committee).
- NCIL Membership:
 - Amanda Lowe explained the importance of Hawaii SILC joining NCIL to add its voice to the larger association and collaborate with colleagues in the independent living movement.
 - Judy Guajardo inquired about the membership cost, which is \$300.
 - Motion: Judy Guajardo made a motion that SILC pays the membership for NCIL so all members have access to educational resources.
 - Second: Brian Hauser seconded the motion.
 - Vote: No opposition was noted.

- Status: The motion passed. The membership will be initiated as soon as possible.

e. Governor's Appointments

- Amanda Lowe reported that Wendy Condo from the Governor's office confirmed the appointment of six new members: Annette, Donald, Evelina (Nani), Victoria, Valerie, and Jodi. Their terms will begin on July 1, 2025, and expire on June 30, 2028.

f. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 35th Rally Event

- Annette Tashiro expressed excitement about the event, emphasizing its collaborative nature across the state and its importance as a reunion for organizations, especially after the pandemic.
- Elizabeth Delovio shared ideas for the Oahu event at the State Capitol, including potentially screening "Crip Camp" and hosting a community forum with legislators to hear direct community voices. She noted the timeliness of the 35th anniversary for education and advocacy.
- Nani Watanabe highlighted concerns from Maui groups regarding access to interpreters, paratransit, transportation, and hospital resources, advocating for a forum on Maui to address these issues. Philip Ana suggested connecting this with the SILC survey for neighbor island voices.
- The group agreed to discuss further planning for the ADA rally, including island-specific breakout rooms, at the 2:00 PM meeting. Patrick Gartside encouraged interested individuals to email info@hawaiisilc.org to join the planning.

7. New Business

a. Honolulu and Kauai Mayor's Committees on Disabilities

Donald Sakamoto reported on efforts to reinstate the Mayor's Committee for Persons with Disabilities in Honolulu and establish one in Kauai.

He attended a Town Hall meeting with the Mayor on May 8th, where he advocated for the committee's return. The Honolulu committee last met in 2012 under Mayor Peter Carlisle, and the Kauai committee in 2008.

Donald is working with Derek Arioshi and plans to engage the new Honolulu ADA Coordinator, Yoko Tomita, Denise Sukuyama (Equal Opportunity person in charge), and Glen Takahashi (City Council clerk). He believes a direct meeting with the Mayor is necessary to educate him on the importance of the committee.

Donald also noted issues with paratransit in Hawaii, particularly on Sundays, and raised concerns about Don Quixote in Kapolei having an inaccessible exit route for individuals with disabilities. He has contacted Tracy Coelho of Handy Van about this.

Nani Watanabe inquired about the Maui County Advisory Council, noting their existing Commissions on Persons with Disabilities, which focuses on county-specific issues. She stressed the importance of having individuals with disabilities on these committees for effective planning.

8. Announcements

a. Hawaii Summit on Employment First

- **Date:** June 18th, 2025
- **Time:** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM
- **Location:** Windward Community College
- **Details:** 3rd annual summit hosted by the Hawaii Association of People Supporting Employment First (HAPSEF). It will bring together providers, DVR

staff, and DD Division case managers for shared training. Two tracks will be available: one for professionals and one for people with disabilities interested in employment. Cost is approximately \$35. Contact Riley Dettman at info@hawaiiapsy.org or Patrick Gartside for more information.

b. National Council on Independent Living Conference

- **Dates:** July 21st - 24th, 2025
- **Location:** Washington, DC
- **Details:** As discussed in section 7d.

c. ADA 35th Anniversary Rally Event

- **Date:** July 25th, 2025
- **Time:** 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- **Locations:**
 - Oahu - Hawaii State Capitol Rotunda
 - Maui - Queen Kaahumanu Mall
 - Hawaii Island and Kauai are also being explored.
- **Details:** As discussed in section 7f. Flyers with a link and QR code for sign-up are available on the SILC website.

d. Maui Abilities Fair

- **Date:** August 23rd, 2025
- **Time:** 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
- **Location:** Queen Center in Kahului
- **Details:** Malaya Van Kleek provided an update. The event provides an opportunity for individuals with disabilities and their families to connect with local resources. Approximately 30 local businesses and organizations are expected to participate, offering information on health, home care, workforce development, vocational rehabilitation, legal issues, and assistive devices. Nani Watanabe

emphasized the importance of highlighting individuals with disabilities in the fair, recalling last year's successful modeling and deaf group performance.

e. Lanai Health Fair

- Valerie Janikowski shared information about the Lanai Health Fair.
- **Details:** It's the 10th annual event, inviting providers of healthcare and resources. It focuses on free services dedicated to the community, including physical fitness and advocacy. Typically attended by 2,500-3,000 people. Partnerships include Hawaii State Rural Health, United Way, and Lanai Community Association.
- The Health Fair is in November.

f. Pineapple Festival (Lanai)

- **Date:** July 5th, 2025
- **Details:** Not primarily a health fair, but a large community event with high visibility. Valerie Janikowski and Nani Watanabe indicated space for vendors is likely sold out, and it concludes with fireworks, making late transportation back to Maui a factor.

10. Open Discussions / Q&A

- Nani Watanabe shared a story about two deaf individuals affected by the Lahaina fires, highlighting their interview for a story and the joy of having an interpreter fluent in ASL and Filipino Sign Language.
- Nani Watanabe stressed the challenge of finding deaf representatives for boards due to lack of computer access and familiarity with Zoom. She has been setting up her home for deaf individuals to participate in interviews and meetings.
- Donald Sakamoto reminded everyone to wish fathers a Happy Father's Day.

11. Motion to Close Meeting

- **Motion:** Philip Ana made a motion to close the meeting at 11:00 AM.

- **Second:** Judy Guajardo seconded the motion.
- **Status:** The meeting concluded.