

REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON

January 05, 2023

ANA DEMAPAN-CASTRO

This report is tendered at the Sine Die session of the Sixteenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council. This report will highlight some of the Council's challenges and accomplishments in the last two years of the Council's tenure. It is my hope that this will provide as a guideline for the incoming Council members, including staff and consultants; as well as information for the community that we humbly represent and serve. Respectfully submitted, Ana Demapan-Castro, Chairperson 2020-2022.

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Our Beginnings:

The leadership of the Sixteenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council were sworn into office on January 11, 2020, with one member seat vacant, where Secretary Daniel Iwashita Aquino was appointed by the Honorable David M. Apatang, Mayor of the Municipality of Saipan to fill the third seat. Council Secretary Aquino's appointment was successfully approved by the Twenty-Second Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature's Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation and was sworn into office on April 20, 2021.

Our Mission:

To strive to provide public programs and services to all residents in the Third municipality while safeguarding public trust by ensuring the highest standard of work ethics, empower people in our community, promote and foster open, inclusive communication, practice ethical stewardship of our resources to achieve trust and accountability throughout our community. We protect our unique natural environment and the habitat it provides. We facilitate a culture of sustainable practices. And we continued to strive to maintain and preserve our municipal assets such as the historic landmark – *The Round House*.

Sixteenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council

Our Beginning

Our Mission

Our Challenges

Our Accomplishments

Our Advocacy:

To the 23rd Northern
Marianas

Commonwealth
Legislature

To the 17th Saipan and
Northern Islands
Municipal Council

To the CNMI's Office of
Personnel Management

Our Challenges:

The onset of the Coronavirus-19 or COVID-19 pandemic and the emergency declaration by Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres on March 15, 2020, on the healthcare and national emergency, our first quarter and the beginning of our term as the 16th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council members. This resulted in government shutdown, ceasing of all local, regional, and international flights to the Northern Mariana Islands, including inter-island traveling both air and ocean travel between Guam, Rota, Tinian, and Saipan.

This posed a great challenge to carry forward all, if not most of, our planned projects, programs, and services for our community, including the continued repair and renovations of the Council's memorial building (Kiosku), and the construction of the new Municipal Council building.

To add to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and national emergency, this required that the Council office be renovated and retrofitted to accommodate the mandatory shield between the patrons to the Council office and the staff, including the requirement for a separate entrance, exit and six feet distancing for the Council office to ensure the highest standards are provided for the health and safety of the employees, the council members, and visitors to the offices. But to also secure an additional office space to comply with these healthcare emergency mandates.

Further, the prices for the cost of construction and the time lapsed due to the closures of the government offices has greatly impacted the cost for the new municipal council building in moving forward to the next phase of the construction process. Adding on to the impact to being the construction phase of the building was obtaining the required permits from the both the CNMI and federal governments necessary for the construction.

Furthermore, the local revenue collection had drastically reduced because of the pandemic, which also impacted the budget for personnel, operation, programs, and services, which also impacted the timeline for the delivery of the planned programs and services for our community.

Our Accomplishments:

As established in our mission statement that we strive to provide our community with programs and services as best we could. We were only able to continue our mission with funds from the American Recovery Plan Act or ARPA that was allocated by the Governor's office and the Department of Finance, including some funds budgeted by the Legislature. The Council received an unprecedented amount of ARPA funds allocated to the Council to ensure that programs and services are provided to the community; and to maintain the Council's unprecedented number of personnel to serve the community assist in this dire time brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic; and the negative impact on the CNMI's general funds to fully support the operation of the Council office.

Despite the pandemic, myself as Chairperson and the Council staffs – Ken, Michelle, and Herman pushed forward to assist our healthcare institutions, COVID-19 Taskforce, and healthcare workers to provide health and safety gears such as face masks, hand sanitizers, gloves, identification lanyards packaged in individualized bags for distribution. The Council visited and distributed these healthcare package hundreds of students at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, the

Man Amko – Senior Citizens Center, the Maturana Retirement Home, and to the community at-large at the Council’s two locations – Courtney’s Plaza and Kiosku Memorial Building.

The Council staffs also participated as volunteers during the Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month assisting the training of the Judge and staff of the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands learning fishing techniques “*Lagua Yoti*” provided by the *Taotao Tasi - Matua Council for Native Chamorro Advancement*.

To add to accomplishments, despite the challenges, the Council members and staff engaged the community-at-large on several Townhall public meetings at the villages of Tanapag, Kagman, Garapan, and Chalan Kanoa to provide information on some of the Council’s works and projects such as the Constitutional Amendment to Article VI.

Again, despite the pandemic, and working alongside Secretary Aquino, which was under his direct supervision, the Council’s Kioski Memorial building received its beautiful and long-awaited facelift from the damage caused by Typhoon Soudelor in 2015 and Super-typhoon Yutu in 2018 – with repairs to the building and the iron fences and entry way, and new paint job to all the existing buildings and facilities at the memorial building site, including the parking structure adjacent to the Council memorial building.

To ensure the memorial building and facilities are protected at the direction of the Council Chairperson, the LRI Research and Consultants were contracted due to the COVID-19 closure and lack of Council personnel available. The consultants oversaw the entire implementation, installation and successful turn-over to the Council the Closed-Circuit Television Camera (CCTV) Surveillance System of the building, facility and perimeter surveillance and security system to protect the assets of the Council.

Adding on to the 16th SNIMC accomplishments was the opportunity and an unprecedented staff development for the office and maintenance staff sending them to on-island and off-island staff development such as training and professional development on personnel or human resources management, financial management system, historic and cultural preservation, museums, and municipal governance in Saipan, Tinian, Rota, Guam, and the U.S.

The Council continued its engagement with the community in the adoption of 16SMC-02 calling for a three-years comprehensive study on the status of the indigenous people of the Northern Mariana Islands since the signing of the Covenant that established the political union between the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States of America in 1976.

And 16SMC-03 a commemorative resolution in remembrance of the two schoolgirl who were missing since 2011 – *Maleina and Faloma Quitugua Luhk* and calling the public policymakers and the Public-School Systems to ensure safety of our school children and community by providing CCTV cameras at all school bus-stops throughout the CNMI.

The Council Chairperson spearheaded this process and contracted consultants to research the feasibility at the proposed commemorative site in As Teo (Santa Lourdes) Bus-stop. After months of research, meetings, permit applications, product research and vendor searching, the Council was able to obtain the requirements to safely secure and technologically connect with the most cost-effective module and model for the CCTV cameras and infrastructure. The Council was able to obtain the Department of Public Lands and the Department of Public Works conditional

agreements and permits. Additionally, permits were issued and secured by the Council for the Division of Environmental Quality (BECQ) and Historic Preservation Office with the assistance of the Special Project Coordinator, Council staff.

Adding on to our community engagement is in Council's Resolution *16SMC-04* a commemorative resolution to Mr. Eusebio C. Borja, a cultural practitioner, to recognize and acknowledge his contributions in cultural preservation and perpetuation of the Chamorro cultural heritage for over five decades.

The Council members also want to acknowledge members of our community who are actively participating in bettering our community in Council Resolution *16SMC-03* a commemorative resolution to Masako Ono the spouse of Japan's Consul General Kazuhiko for her ardent contributions and volunteerism to our community in Saipan during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our Advocacy:

The 16th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council members continues its advocacy through the following resolutions seeking both the incoming Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature and the Seventeenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council members, including our continued advocacy on ensuring a standard policy guideline for employees and employers of the CNMI government with respect to the inconsistency and lack thereof for policy guideline as a result of the enactment of P.L. 20-66, the cannabis act. Resolutions are as follows:

Council Resolution No. 16SMC-05: To respectfully request the incoming Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to support the intent of a Constitutional Amendment under Article V1 to allow a chartered municipality for the island of Saipan, and to amend certain constitutional provisions under Article VI for the municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan, and the municipality of Luta (Rota) through Article XVIII, §1 of the CNMI Constitution, and for other purposes.

Council Resolution 16SMC-06: To respectfully request the incoming Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to support and appropriate funds on the intent of the Sixteenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council's "*Faloma & Maleina Luhk CCTV Camera School Bus-Stop Project of 2022*" to construct and install CCTV Cameras at all existing CNMI Public School System Bus-Stop to further support the protection and safety of all public and private students, and for other purposes.

Council Resolution No. 16SMC-07: To respectfully request the incoming Twenty-Third Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to support and appropriate from the general funds including funds transferred under CNMI Constitution Article XI, Section 6 (d) on the intent called for in the Sixteenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council's Resolution No. 16SMC-02 for a Three (3) years Comprehensive Study on the status of the indigenous people, the Chamorros, of the Northern Mariana Islands; and for other purposes.

Council Resolution No. 16SMC-08: To respectfully request the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Office of Personnel Management to revisit Public Law 20-66, including the

legislative intent of Senate Bill 22-01, SD1; and to be consistent with the application of the law not to penalize employees for use during non-working hours; and for other purposes.

Council Resolution No. 16SMC-09: To respectfully request the incoming Seventeenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council members to support the Sixteenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council members' support and endorsement of a Constitutional Amendment under Article XVIII, §1 to amend Article VI, §3, §6, §7 and §8 to allow a chartered municipality for the island of Saipan, and to amend certain provisions for the municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan, and the municipality of Luta (Rota); and for other purposes.

Council Resolution No. 16SMC-10: To respectfully request the incoming Seventeenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council members to support the intent of the Sixteenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council's "*Faloma & Maleina Luhk CCTV Camera School Bus-stop Project*" to construct and install CCTV Cameras at all existing CNMI Public School System Bus-Stop to further support the protection and safety of all public and private students, and for other purposes.

Council Resolution No. 16SMC-11: To respectfully request and urge the incoming Seventeenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council members to support the intent called for in the Sixteenth Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council's Resolution No. 16SMC-02 for a Three (3) years Comprehensive Study on the status of the indigenous people, the Chamorros, of the Northern Mariana Islands; and to urge the incoming 23rd Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature to support and appropriate funds transferred under Article XI, §6 (d) of the CNMI Constitution for the study; and for other purposes.

Council Resolution No. 16SMC-12: To respectfully request and urge the 17th SMC to support the intent of the Resolution No. 16SMC-08 on seeking the CNMI Office of Personnel Management to revisit Public Law 20-66, including the legislative intent of Senate Bill 22-01, SD1; and to be consistent with the application of the law not to penalize employees for use during non-working hours; and for other purposes.

As the Chairperson of this honorable body, it is our hope and wish that our elected public policymakers, including our department heads will join us, and to recognize our requests through these resolutions in moving forward these important and impactful pieces of proposed public policies and projects that are critical to our community, our residents, our employees, and employers.

As always, I am grateful and humbled by your support in electing me as your chairperson to the 16th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council. In the same token, I extend un *dangkulu na si Yu'us Ma'ase* to you – my colleagues, and to the Council staffs for your untiring support, patience, and assistance during my tenure.

It has been an honor and pleasure to be at your service for the 16th SNIMC!

Very truly yours,

Ana Demapan-Castro