

**2011
HAWAI‘I COUNTY
REDISTRICTING COMMISSION**

**DISTRICT 6 – KA‘Ū
PUBLIC HEARING**

Wednesday, October 12 2011, 6:00 p.m.

Nā‘ālehu Community Center
95-5635 Māmalahoa Hwy.
Nā‘ālehu, Hawai‘i, 96772

CALL TO ORDER:

VICE CHR. KANUHA: Good evening everybody. Thank you for taking the time to attend. This is the public hearing for the Hawai‘i County Redistricting Commission for the district of Ka‘ū which is District 6. The commission consists of nine volunteer members, one from each council district. I’m going to call roll now. I’m the Vice Chair; today, our Chairperson René Siracusa couldn’t show up so I’m taking her spot chairing this meeting.

ATTENDANCE:

Present:	Mr. Joseph Carvalho, Commissioner Mr. Patrick Kahawaiola‘a, Commissioner Mr. Craig “Bo” Kahui, Commissioner Mr. Dru Mamo Kanuha, Commissioner Mr. Jeffrey Melrose, Commissioner Mr. Mike Middlesworth, Commissioner Ms. Linda Ugalde, Commissioner
Absent:	Ms. Valerie Poindexter, Commissioner Ms. René Siracusa, Chair
Also Present:	Michael Udovic, Deputy Corporation Counsel Jeanette Aiello, Committees Supervisor Karen Eoff, Secretary

VICE CHR. KANUHA: We have each shared our district's concerns with the other Commissioners, so that we are all on the same page. Based on that, plus your input, we will decide the geographic boundaries for each of the nine council districts based upon census data as well as the criteria found in the Hawai'i County Charter and Legislation passed by the Hawai'i County Council. Please note that we are only concerned here with County Council districts, and not State or Federal legislative districts.

Copies of the Hawai'i County Charter and the Laws relating to the Redistricting Commission are available for your review at the sign in table. Also on the table are the close-up insets so that you can see the actual boundary lines. The commission is first and foremost governed by the principal of one person one vote. We are required by law to adopt boundaries which make each of the districts approximately similar in resident population. Both case law and the laws applicable to the Redistricting Commission allow for a deviation of a maximum of 4.99% above or below the ideal resident population of 20,462 residents per council district. This is after extraction of non-resident military, dependants, and students. Therefore the maximum number of residents in any district can be no more than 21,483 and the minimum number of residents is no less than 19,441.

The Commission has reviewed approximately 40 suggested maps showing various configurations of the district boundaries. We have received and reviewed maps submitted by members of the public, staff at the elections office, and those produced at Commission meetings. The maps that remain suggest possible district configurations. Some of the maps contain deviations in resident population which are not acceptable because they are either slightly too high or too low, but the Commission decided to keep these maps for review because it appears that it will not be difficult to remedy the population imbalances. The Commission rejected many maps due to major population imbalances but did keep others which addressed many of the issues required to be considered by the law, such as road connectivity and communities of interest. Some of these maps are more 'friendly' to certain districts than to others. None of them are cast in stone. We may very well end up creating hybrids, combining the best of several.

We welcome your comments about the redistricting process and your suggestions about the adoption of district boundaries. We have 6 maps showing possible configurations. You are free to comment on any or all of these maps or make any other comments you wish relative to redistricting. If you wish to see boundary details not shown in these maps, they are on the table. You will be asked to keep your comments to no more than 5 minutes. The commissioners may or may not have questions to clarify your testimony at this public hearing, but please do not expect us to answer your questions or engage in dialogue, as our job today is strictly to listen to your mana'o. If you have not done so and wish to offer testimony to the Commission please fill out one of the sheets at the sign in table. Mahalo for coming out to learn about this process and to share your thoughts. I will now call the hearing to order, and call the first testifier, which is Linda Jane Irwin.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

LINDA JANE IRWIN:

(At this time Linda Jane Irwin came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. IRWIN: Thank you for all your work. I'm Linda Jane Irwin from Volcano and I saw in the paper this morning that yesterday there was testimony for Volcano to be affiliated with the Puna side, and I would like to present the other side. And I have talked to a number of people in Volcano that prefer going towards the Ka'ū side where we have been before. One of the reasons for this is that there's a very strong possibility that the International Biosphere Buffer Zone designation will happen which would include Volcano and this just makes so much more sense with our proximity to the park and the possibility that another buffer zone might happen on the other end of the park which would be in Ka'ū. And, just as things have gone on over time, it just feels like Volcano is less closely affiliated with things that go on in Puna and the needs of Puna than the kinds of things that happen in Ka'ū. So I don't think there's a strong contingent only for the Puna side in Volcano. I think there's also one for the Ka'ū side. So that's it.

VICE CHR. KANUHA: I have one question. You were talking about the Biosphere. Can you explain that a little bit.

MS. IRWIN: Well, you know the park is designated as an international biosphere, I don't remember the exact terminology, but, the International Organization for Biosphere designations now is very interested and actually recommends that parks and other international biosphere places have buffer zones in the community surrounding them. And we've been looking at this for years, but because of the push by the international organization, it seems even more likely that will happen. Hopefully if that does happen there'll be more protection of the forest and so forth within the community and things that we can do to help in that area. And it would alter in some ways in how the community functions. I'm not sure exactly how, but I think it's a really good thing because we're right next to the park. I was looking at your maps. It's kind of hard for me to tell just from the color zones where everything is, but I did notice on number 40 that the one coming, District 6 coming up from Ka'ū and including Volcano goes all the way down to Fern Forest and the people that are working the on Biosphere issue now are talking to the folks in Fern Forest as possibly being part of that. So for me, from my perspective that would be the best one.

VICE CHR. KANUHA: Thank you. Just for the record, Patrick Kahawaiola'a from District 4.

MR. MELROSE: You know, when you think about Volcano, when you use the term Volcano, close your eyes and think what are the geographic boundaries of that cause it's not just the Village, is it 'Ōhi'a Estates, is it the Country Club, does it get down to Akatsuka, I mean where are the boundaries in your head about Volcano?

MS. IRWIN: A lot of times it will go down to around the store when we're talking about the greater Volcano area, including of course the golf course.

MR. MELROSE: Yeah, okay, thank you.

VICE CHR. KANUHA: Any other questions for Ms. Irwin? Okay, moving on to the next testifier we have Rick Warshauer. I hope I said that right.

MR. WARSHAUER: Thank you folks for hanging in all those years. For the first time ever I've got confidence that maybe we'll get a product that I like. The last couple really sucked so we got a long ways to go to get something good. And I see most of the plans up there I don't really like. In fact I don't see anything I like completely yet so, I urge you to do what you said you were going to do earlier that there's a possibility to do hybrids. And the one that catches my eye the most I've seen under two different numbers, 27 modified and 40 modified. And I'm familiar with that so I won't belabor it. But basically I take a contrary view from the last speaker. I really feel Volcano belongs in Puna. I've lived in Volcano for forty years and visited for ten or fifteen years prior to that and the whole time Volcano is strongly attached to Puna and is a part of Puna. And Volcano basically as I know it runs from Volcano Golf Course down to Akatsuka's Orchids in that area.

So it's a large diffused area and to split it would be really, really bad. More importantly, or just as importantly, the County has finally gotten serious about Community Development Plans. So we've got several established on the island, the one in Ka'u is under way and one for Puna has been completed with a lot of effort. I was involved in it and those areas divided at the Volcano Golf Course. To the west was Ka'u and to the east was Puna and I know your directions are not to split communities. We shouldn't split Community Development Plan areas either and I think that's something you should very strongly keep in mind throughout this thing. And all these plans except for one of them do that. And I think that would really be bad if one arm of the County is moving one direction and another arm is going the other. I think you need to be a little more consistent. Okay.

VICE CHR. KANUHA: Thank you. Any questions?

MR. MELROSE: You know Rick, I appreciate your history in town and I mean it's clear that Puna has 45,000 residents, that's two seats at 20,000 a piece plus 5,000 other votes and you can't split them half by half cause you end up breaking the law. You're now ten percent over. If you were just to split it in half and create two districts and all keep it in Puna you'd be over your number and you would have ten percent variation in each of those districts. The particular districts that are growing and actually should be lower than at the end of their spectrum. So, part of our challenge is what we have to deal with is where do you draw those lines and do you share the Volcano vote with Kea'au or do you move Hilo into Kea'au. But from your, because somewhere along the line you have to move a district to pick up some of that vote because there's simply too many. So in your view, is it more, I understand where you live and your priorities there but there are two separate kinds of choices. If this was your choice how would you make those choices? To have Puna stay with the National Park in the Ka'u district or bring Hilo in and pick up the Kea'au central core of town? Conceptually that's a question I want to challenge you with and see what you do with it.

MR. WARSHAUER: Well those are extreme perspectives you just offered as two choices and something inter-median is more like it. The park isn't strictly in Ka'ū it's split between two districts, yeah, take a look and it is. But the park isn't the issue. The park isn't the issue, the park is federal land. Puna is Hilo side, not Ka'ū, and as you go closer to Hilo historically at least in the last couple of redistricting episodes that I tracked they would attach part of Hilo to Puna unfortunately a controlling part which isn't too good a deal. But nowadays we don't have to worry as much about that because as you mentioned the population of Puna has grown significantly. And there are sections closer to Hilo that maybe you can do your adjustments both makai and mauka and that's what some of these other proposals have done. But you know, don't split it up.

MR. MELROSE: Don't split what up?

MR. WARSHAUER: Volcano. And upper Puna. They belong in Puna district. And I know Hilo and those leaning towards Hilo interest have other ideas in mind, historically, but I don't think that we should carry on that tradition. I'm sure you have the ability to do these adjustments and keep us whole. It's a matter of will. You can juggle the numbers.

VICE CHR. KANUHA: Thank you Rick for your testimony. Did anybody else have any comments on this testifier. Well that was our last testifier; did anybody else want to testify on, have any inspiration about testifying about where you live, where you think the boundaries should be, any maps that bounce off you guys and said "that's the map I want". If not, I'm going to call for a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 6:26 p.m.,
Ms. Ugalde moved to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by Mr. Carvalho and carried by
the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Carvalho, Kahawaiola'a,
Melrose, Middlesworth, Kanuha, Ugalde
Noes: None.
Absent: Commissioners Kahui, Poindexter and
Chair Siracusa..

VICE CHR. KANUHA: Motion carries. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Eoff, Secretary

Approved on November 3, 2011:

Ms. René Siracusa, Chair
Hawai'i County Redistricting Commission