

**2011
HAWAI‘I COUNTY
REDISTRICTING COMMISSION**

**DISTRICT 4 - HILO
PUBLIC HEARING**

Saturday, October 15, 2011, 9:00 a.m.

County Council Chambers
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo, Hawai‘i 96720

CALL TO ORDER:

MR. KANUHA: Good morning everybody. Thank you for taking the time to attend. This is the public hearing for the Hawai‘i County Redistricting Commission Public Hearing for the District of Hilo, District 4.

ATTENDANCE:

Present:	Mr. Joseph Carvalho, Commissioner Mr. Patrick Kahawaiola‘a, Commissioner Mr. Dru Mamo Kanuha, Commissioner Mr. Jeffrey Melrose, Commissioner Mr. Mike Middlesworth, Commissioner Ms. René Siracusa, Chair (9:40) Ms. Valerie Poindexter, Commissioner (9:30) Ms. Linda Ugalde, Commissioner
Absent:	Mr. Craig “Bo” Kahui, Commissioner
Also Present:	Kyle Chang, Deputy Corporation Counsel Stephanie Tsunezumi, Committees Staff Liz Bonnell, Committees Staff Karen Eoff, Secretary

MR. KANUHA: We have each shared our district's concerns with each other, 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 green light on the timer will change to amber to alert you to the upcoming beep. 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 already 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 first testifier. The first testifier is Ray Robinson.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

RAY ROBINSON

(At this time Ray Robinson came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MR. ROBINSON: Good morning. I am Ray Robinson; I am the President of the Hilo Downtown Improvement Association. We felt it was important to come down and talk about the importance of keeping downtown Hilo as one district. It is a vital asset to the community, the importance of it historically, and there is a lot of common interest and everything so we don't want to see Hilo divided into more than one district. All the common goals and interests of all the people in downtown Hilo; so we would prefer something along the lines of Plan_40, or with a natural boundary like the river, just to keep the vitality of the downtown in one area, with one district member. That's it, thank you.

MR. MIDDLESWORTH: How would you define downtown Hilo? If you start with the river on the north, how far south do you go as downtown?

RAY ROBINSON: For the Downtown Hilo Improvement Association it is kind of limited, but we kind of accept others; but basically, it is pretty much the river to just about Coconut Island and up to Kapiolani or above. But, we try to help all of the economic areas.

MR. MIDDLESWORTH: I understand that, but just geographically. So you are including the soccer field and all the way down to the Iron Works Building.

MR. ROBINSON: Basically, all of the historic downtown area.

MR. KANUHA: Are there any other questions? Thank you. The next testifier is Cory Harden.

CORY HARDEN

(At this time Cory Harden came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. HARDIN: Hello, thank you all for serving on the Commission. I am pretty ignorant about mostly everything about Redistricting, so I am just offering some thoughts. One is that I appreciate that you are not counting the military. They can move in so many people, so fast; they can really change the whole dynamic in an area. Second, just quickly looking at the maps, I see on some of them that some areas are really geographically huge and some are really tiny. But you know when there is a huge undeveloped area, someone always has their eye on it and wants to put a big development in here or put this military project in here or a government project or something and that comes in and changes the whole dynamic and changes how many people are there, so that in ten years while we are waiting for the next Redistricting, then the population can end up being really out of balance island wide. Also, from new projects coming in there can be tremendous impacts and the people really need good representation. The plan that seems to have the most kind of same, same geographic areas is Plan_30. Thank you again for your work.

MR. KANUHA: Thank you very much. Do any of the Commissioners have any questions?

MR. MELROSE: Thanks for coming Cory. You raised the military question. When you get up in to the middle of island this vast area of space makes large areas of color for a district, there is very little population up there. I ask myself this question; what district should cover PTA (Pohakuloa Training Area)? Where is the linkage for PTA? Is it a Hilo linkage, is it a Kawaihae linkage, does it link into Kona? Is there a natural answer for that? I frankly don't know, and I'm wondering if you have any thoughts on what is the linked community of interest that might take the central area of the military under its district. Not that we have much County control in the military, I'm not saying that, but I'm just wondering if you have a thought on that?

MS. HARDIN: Interesting question. They use Kawaihae quite a bit, of course. They also come up from Hilo and everything runs downhill from there geographically. So whatever they do affects the whole island. I don't know at the moment. If I have any further thoughts I'll let you know later.

MR. MELROSE: It's kind of a trick question, but I thought I would ask you anyways because you are thoughtful, thanks.

MR. KANUHA: I would just like to note that Ms. Poindexter from District 1 just showed up. I know it is raining and pretty wet outside, so thank you for coming. That was our only testifiers. Is there anybody else who heard what we were saying and wanted to jump up and testify about this? Do you want to fill out a paper? Councilman Dennis "Fresh" Onishi.

DENNIS "FRESH" ONISHI

(At this time Dennis "Fresh" Onishi came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MR. ONISHI: Thank you, but I am representing myself, as a resident of Hilo, and not as a councilmember. Thank you very much, Commissioners, for volunteering your services to be on this Commission. I have looked at the maps and I have read in the paper about how Paho'a's meeting went. I look at all of the six maps that we have here and I think that Plan_40 would suit what Puna wants, and what Hilo wants. The representation in District 3 would come out to Kea'au, taking care of Paradise Park and also taking up upper Puna side, whereas District 5 would take care of lower Puna where you have Kalapana, Poho'iki, Hawaiian Beaches, Pāho'a and then it kind of comes towards certain sections of Nānāwale and so forth. The problem is, if you guys don't accept that, is that because the other maps you put District 4 into Puna, when, right now there is a problem about the PMAR, which is the Puna Makai Alternative Route. If you have that one council member representing both those areas, I don't think something will happen. You will have pros and cons from one section and pros and cons from the other section. So if you have separate council members then things can be maybe negotiated. I think that is the better way of how the maps are set up. If you look at the other ones, they are more or less the same, where they are representing their areas.

Like Mike Middlesworth mentioned, what is Hilo. To me, I am born and raised in Hilo, I look at Hilo being the whole area like from Kaumana, going out to Waiakea Uka, coming down to Keaukaha, Panaewa. To me, that is Hilo because if you look back, there was only one High School; and that was Hilo High School. And everyone in that district, and also people in Kea'au used to go to that High School. But as the population grew, then we started to get more high

schools, which Waiakea High School became involved. Then, they used the boundary line, Mohouli, where anyone on the Hāmākua side of Mohouli would go to Hilo High and anyone from the other side would go to Waiakea High School. Then what happened was that Kea‘au started to grow so the population at Waiakea High School started to increase. What they did was they constructed Kea‘au High School, so then they did another boundary. But basically, if you look back at history, all that whole area that I just mentioned earlier, was Hilo, because everyone went there. I thank you folks for coming this morning. I just hope that if you folks can really look at Plan_40, and I think that will really take care of the whole island. Thank you.

MR. KANUHA: Thank you very much. Commissioners, does anyone have any questions?

MR. CARVALHO: I’m from District 9, and the dilemma we have in District 9 is that everyone that we have talked to so far comes up with this “community of interest,” which is like Hawaiian Paradise Park, Keaukaha; which is terrific. In the last redistricting there were 2,000 people out of Waimea put into Hāmākua. Do you have any ideas how we could take care of that?

MR. ONISHI: Well to my understanding, I guess, of why it happened was because they couldn’t go more south, so they had to go more north. In this Plan_40, will that affect them still yet?

MR. CARVALHO: Yes, there is no change in Plan_40.

MR. ONISHI: So it’s still the same lines. But then now, in District 1, are they headed more south towards Hilo?

MR. CARVALHO: That’s where they are headed.

MR. ONISHI: Well, then to me, it would have to be adjusted where you would need to---I guess the bottom line is where you start from, that is where you draw the lines. So, if you want to have where the 2,000 people that was in Waimea to be in District 9, then you need to draw the lines and start from Hawi. So I think that is what everything comes down to; where you want to start from.

MR. CARVALHO: Thank you very much. I just wanted to get some other input.

MR. MELROSE: Fresh, just a question. I appreciate your historical view. Growing up in Hilo, are there, in your mind, subsets of communities within Hilo that we need to be mindful of. You mentioned some of them; Kaūmana community, or downtown Hilo area, or certainly Keaukaha has the Hawaiian Homes Community perhaps, but when you get out into Waiakea, are there differences that you see within that body of settlement that we need to be mindful of in some sense? Or, can we see them pretty much as a unit, that if we do have to draw a line through them, that is okay. Are there separate communities of interest in your mind?

MR. ONISHI: I think that in the Hilo area, where you have Kea‘au, Waiakea Uka, Waiakea House Lots, Keaukaha, Panaewa, Kaūmana; I think the base of the residents there are kind of like the same interests. It is not like where if you start going in other districts, like living is differently. Did that kind of answer?

MR. MELROSE: Essentially, that you didn't see that there are significant differences. There are places that we refer to like House Lots, like Waiakea Uka, Waiakea Makai, but basically what you are saying, and I would agree with you, is that the distinctions among them are ones we make, but that we share broader community, which won't affect so much where the lines are drawn.

MR. ONISHI: That is true. Like in other districts the way you draw the lines could affect, depending on like urban, rural.

MR. MELROSE: Or subdivisions, for instance, where we have more identifiable subdivisions in Puna and Waimea.

MR. ONISHI: That's why I mentioned like in certain maps here you have like District 4 going all the way out to Shower Drive. Now, you are putting like two different kinds of cultures, or values differently.

MR. KANUHA: Thank you very much.

MR. KAHAWAIOLA'A: For clarification, Hilo had two high schools, Hilo High and the "other" high school. I attended the "other" high school. People from Honoka'a and Paauilo and Kohala and Kea'au, they all attended the "other" high school too. That is the historical fact of Hilo. The school I'm referring to is Saint Joseph's. That is the school that was there as a high school. Just another point is Waiakea High School existed only because of the tidal wave. The 1960 tidal wave took Waiakea town away because the gravitation, transition of we growing up along the coast is that we went from Keaukaha, went to Waiakea Kai School, and then from there to Hilo High. And it was coming in from the Country, because as the Councilman aptly mentioned, there were no other high schools out there. But, for the record, there was two high schools. I do appreciate--I must say that Fresh is my councilman. He represents the district that I live in. We hope to continue to be sure that his service to the people out here continues. Thank you.

MR. ONISHI: I didn't mention Saint Joseph because, I guess, it was a private school, and I figured we were looking at public schools.

MR. KANUHA: Thank you. Are there any other questions? I would like to mention that our Chairperson, René Siracusa just showed up. Thank you very much. I know it was raining and probably a long drive. Do you want to take over the Chair?

CHR. SIRACUSA: I'll take over now, but I want to apologize for being late. I had this down on my calendar for 10:00 a.m. and I thought I was half an hour early. So I apologize to everybody and thank you for being here and covering for me. Does anyone else who hasn't signed up yet wish to testify now? Okay, so we have no more testifiers, I came in at the very end.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 9:40 a.m.,
Mr. Melrose moved to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by Mr. Middlesworth and carried by
the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Carvalho, Kahawaiola‘a,
Kanuha, Melrose, Middlesworth,
Poindexter, Ugalde, and Chair Siracusa.

Noes: None.

Absent: Commissioner Kahui.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Motion carries. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Eoff, Secretary

Approved on September 23, 2011:

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