

**2011
HAWAI‘I COUNTY
REDISTRICTING COMMISSION**

**DISTRICT 8 – KONA
PUBLIC HEARING**

Monday, October 17, 2011, 6:00 p.m.

West Hawai‘i Civic Center
74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy. Bldg. A
Kailua-Kona, Hawai‘i 96740

CALL TO ORDER:

CHR. SIRACUSA: Good evening everyone. Thank you for taking the time to attend. This is the public hearing for the Hawai‘i County Redistricting Commission for the district of North Kona, District 8. The Commission consists of nine volunteer members, one from each Council district. We have here tonight from my far left, will you please introduce yourselves.

ATTENDANCE:

Present:	Mr. Joseph Carvalho, Commissioner Mr. Craig “Bo” Kahui, Commissioner Mr. Jeffrey Melrose, Commissioner Mr. Mike Middlesworth, Commissioner Ms. René Siracusa, Chair Ms. Linda Ugalde, Commissioner
Absent:	Mr. Patrick Kahawaiola’a, Commissioner Mr. Dru Mamo Kanuha, Commissioner Ms. Valerie Poindexter, Commissioner
Also Present:	Michael Udovic, Deputy Corporation Counsel Jeanette Aiello, Committees Supervisor (Hilo) Stephanie Tsunezumi, Committees Staff (Hilo) Maile David, Legislative Research Branch Karen Eoff, Secretary

CHR. SIRACUSA: 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. Thank you very much for coming out to learn about this process and to share your thoughts with us. I will now call the meeting to order, and call up the first testifier.

STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

CHR. SIRACUSA: Our first testifier is Margaret Willie of Waimea testifying on her own behalf.

MARGARET WILLE

(At this time Margaret Wille came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. WILLE: Margaret Willie, Waimea. I submitted testimony which you may have gotten a copy of. This is a revision of map, Plan_40. It's identical to Plan_40 adjusted that Friends of Puna's Future submitted last week, or Saturday. Other than that it adjusts the lines for District 6/7 boundary, and District 7/8 boundaries. It also extends District 2 all the way along Saddle Road instead of having a portion of District 6 extend up to Saddle Road in the center section of that road. We have been trying to work with different community groups around the island on this, and let the different local areas work on it, and even since this plan came up, been working on further adjustments for the 7/6 boundary because what I've submitted splits Hokuia community and so we've worked on that. The idea of this plan is that it is not perfect for any district, but it's not terrible for any area, that's the point. It's not as you say, some maps are really good for some areas and bad. We have been trying to just get a lot of community input on it and working with the neighborhoods and shared visions and interests that are coming up over the next decade, particularly in the way of water issues and road issues and those other shared issues besides just neighborhoods.

There is one concern that has been expressed to me or one criticism that I don't agree with, so I just wanted to mention that; and that's perhaps the rural districts, large ones should be a higher population under the principle that if practical, areas that may be low sort of the high growth areas, should be kept on the low end and the low populations that may not move should be kept high. I consider that, if practical, criteria to often be in conflict with the shared interest; and I think that where you need to make a choice between those, you should go where you're keeping the shared interest together. I also think that in terms of practicality making say the Ka'u or Hāmākua areas larger, is also impractical in terms of one person representing that area as well, so I bring that up.

Lastly, I just want to say that I think in terms of maps that I'm concerned about would probably be map 17 in terms of how it splits the different North Kohala with South Kohala and makes a large portion of Hāmākua would become combined with Downtown Hilo; and I could go around the map on that. I do think there is a question in terms of Waimea, there are other maps that might be better if I only looked at Waimea, and what's best just for Waimea, and how does one deal with keeping North and South Kohala versus say whether we include Lakeland. I came down on that; I feel that you either knock out Waikōloa, or the bottom half of South Kohala, and bring in Lakeland, which isn't in part of District 9 right now. Or, you leave Lakeland, get as close to that area, Mud Lane area as you can, and leave it in District 1 as part of the rural Hāmākua district so Hāmākua doesn't go into or doesn't need to go into Hilo. I think that Lakeland's interests are very similar to the rest of East Waimea and are generally taken into account. When we worked on the shuttle bus, we did it from Lakeland, we include

them, but yet they also have a lot of strong ties with Hāmākua. It's where the Hāmākua Ditch starts, it's where all the water interests are, aligned to Hāmākua, so versus say Puakō or Waikōloa, those are distinct interest, we're all working on infrastructure, water things together, and in terms of the CDP, keeping that together would be useful. Just so you know, that's how we came to have a map that maybe is not great for anyone but is not terrible for any particular area.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you Margaret. The next testifier is Mary Ann Faulkner of Waikōloa representing herself.

MARIANNE FALKNER

(At this time Marianne Falkner came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. FALKNER: Good evening, thank you for letting me testify. My name is Marianne Falkner, I am a registered voter and home owner in Waikōloa Village. I'm against splitting Waikōloa Village into 2 council districts as I believe this would not benefit the community. The greatest benefit to this community is not to become a house divided, and I have my telephone number and email address on the testimony. Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. Our next testifier is Cheryl King representing herself.

CHERYL KING

(At this time Cheryl King came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. KING: Again Commissioners thank you for coming, I know it's a long dark road back from where you come from, and we appreciate it. I did look at all of these plans other people have gone to the work, so I did try, and now I'm just tempted to chuck it, because there's always something wrong with everything. The plan that got my hackles most was Plan_17. Three different districts are found between Keauhou and the Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park. I didn't like using Queen Ka'auhumanu as a boundary between District 8 to the West and District 9 to the East starting at Kealakehe Parkway and heading South to Palani as I thought it was fragmenting our town. This fragmentation continues to the South where a point of District 7 extends into District 8 using Kamehameha III as a boundary from the South to where it intersects Kuakini and then takes this wedge of District 7 down South along the Kuakini Highway. I understand now that that's just a weird census block, and you really couldn't help it. But what I would like to see, I think districts on our coast should be as contiguous West to East as possible respecting the idea of the ahupua'a.

The only good thing I see about this plan in my area, and I live here in Kailua-Kona near Lako, I like the way it kept the main business areas together in Kailua. I'm not a businessman so I don't know if that's a good thing for a business or not, but I just liked the idea, I feel like downtown Kailua is a community of interest, and we should keep it together as much as we can. I like the fact that Plan_17 kept Kealakekua and Captain Cook in the same district, without splitting them but then again, they're lumped in with Ka'u, which doesn't seem right, maybe times have to change, I don't know. I didn't like the fact that Volcano is lumped with Ka'u and not Puna in Plan_17. Anyway that was my thoughts on Plan_17. I didn't think it was right for our area at all.

My favorite plan of the 5 first ones presented, not including Plan_40, I liked Plan_28 the best in terms of how it dealt with the Kailua area. Downtown is relatively together, there is a fairly good Northern boundary between Districts 7 and 8 and the boundaries on the West side normally go West to East enough to keep most towns and communities together. A negative for Plan_28, Volcano is not with Puna, but Ka'u. See I've been indoctrinated by these Puna people but I am looking to see if that's been done. Again, too much of the Kona coast I think, Kealahou and Captain Cook are lumped in with Ka'u but if that's good that they're together, if they want to be together, and I'm beginning to realize there is probably no help for it, that we just can't consider them ours anymore probably the way the lines go.

Plan_40, I have been looking at the revisions to Plan_40, and there are little things I don't like, little areas that are East and West in two different districts, but I know the effort that's gone into it and I've looked at these little things, I like the way some of the boundaries go through uninhabited areas so that you don't split neighbors from one side of the street or another, which you do if you follow a main street because of the way the census blocks are divided. So I do hope you will give Plan_40 close consideration, I thought the Kona area in the new revision was acceptable and as Margaret said, it's not perfect but it's pretty good, actually. I hope you'll consider looking at it carefully to see how things were done. Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you Cheryl.

MR. KAHUI: Cheryl, just for clarification, all the plans that you mentioned, which one would be your first preference?

MS. KING: Plan_40.

MR. KAHUI: Plan_40.

MS. KING: Just because of all the effort. Like I said I liked Plan_28 just for the downtown areas and the main parts. It was very smooth and together, But I liked Plan_40, the adjusted plan, the newest version, because of the attention that was given to every district and trying to reach out to everyone and I could see why things were in that particular plan and the effort that had been made.

MR. KAHUI: So to the point then, Plan_40 would be your first preference.

MS. KING: I think so.

MR. KAHUI: Thank you.

MS. KING: Because I think it has the most chance of pleasing more people.

MR. KAHUI: Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. Our next testifier is Zack Kennedy of Waikōloa, representing himself.

ZACK KENNEDY

(At this time Zack Kennedy came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MR. KENNEDY: My name is Zack Kennedy I am a resident of Waikōloa, and I have a comment and two supporting comments to that. I do not feel that it's in the best interest of Waikōloa to split Waikōloa in any way, shape or form. It doesn't make sense, and it's very divisive for Waikōloa as a whole. Waikōloa constitutes almost exclusively bedroom. We have no industrial, no farming, no agriculture, etcetera. It does not make sense to split it. Furthermore, Waikōloa should stay with Waimea, that is where our resource, that is where Waikōloans go for the most part to shop, etcetera. To keep those together makes the most sense of any claim. Thank you for your time.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. Our next testifier is Cindy Kennedy, also of Waikōloa, testifying on behalf of herself.

CINDY KENNEDY

(At this time Cindy Kennedy came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. KENNEDY: Good evening, thank you; I don't envy you this job trying to please everybody. Again, I am a resident of Waikōloa Village. I believe very strongly that the village should not be split, we are kind of like a cul-de-sac, we're just there isolated, little community. Mr. Kennedy didn't mention but he is on the Board. We have a Board of Directors, I can't imagine what it would be like if the village was split into two districts. I tend to like Plan_40, but the problem with Plan_40 is it splits Waikōloa Road between North and South, that doesn't make too much sense so maybe one of the revisions, I've heard rumors of a 40-c, maybe one of the revisions of Plan_40 that would include both sides, so that all of Waikōloa Village, that is all in the same homeowners association, could be united. We feel very strongly about that, as does much, much of village. Thank you.

MR. MELROSE: Can I ask a question?

CHR. SIRACUSA: Yes.

MR. MELROSE: It reminds me, at the southern edge of Waikōloa is a little bulb in the census tracks; I think it's on the South side of the Village where there used to be preschools out there and a church, but isn't there a housing facility, like a Jack Hall housing unit out there?

MS. KENNEDY: I don't know about Jack Hall. We have the subsidized housing, is that what it's called?

MR. MELROSE: Yeah.

MS. KENNEDY: Yes it's still there.

MR. MELROSE: Okay, and that's on the South side of that road right?

MS. KENNEDY: Correct.

MR. MELROSE: So in order not to split Waikōloa you actually need to include that piece in it?

MS. KENNEDY: Yes, and part of

MR. MELROSE: And I don't think Plan_40 does that, but I think just that's to keep in mind that there is one other significant housing unit out there, on the other side of that.

MS. KENNEDY: And between Waikōloa Road and that housing development, we have planned light industry and that would be all be hopefully all together with the village.

MR. MELROSE: Okay I just wanted to make sure that what I was remembering is actually in the map. Thank you.

MS. KENNEDY: Thank you for thinking of that.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. Our next testifier is George Robertson, representing Puakō Community Association.

GEORGE ROBERTSON

(At this time George Robertson came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MR. ROBERTSON: George Robertson: Good evening folks, I guess you've heard my pitch before for keeping Puakō in with Waimea and North Kohala, and connected to those areas. We feel very strongly that we don't want to break that bond, and we've been so well represented by Pete Hoffman, who really has taken good care of us. And driving here tonight, I live in Wailea Bay, Beach 69, which is next to Puakō. I drove all this way and I thought, I can't imagine not being connected with Waimea and represented by the same council person that takes care of Waimea and our surrounding areas; so I mean, when you guys drive that road, think about it. It's just a long haul of nothing in between. The resorts are there but you know the resorts are so unique, it doesn't matter who represents them in my estimation. So anyway, keep us in mind, try to keep us connected with Waimea. I know the trade off seems to be looking at Lakeland, what do we do with Lakeland, like Margaret expressed, the Lakeland community is well represented and well connected with Waimea already, so I don't think they'd be damaged by staying the way they've been. I just want to acknowledge Margaret for the work she's done on Plan_40, and that's our preference; that keeps us in with South Kohala and Waimea. I want to acknowledge the hard work you folks are doing, this is a really tough job. Thank you very much.

MR. KAHUI: You just stated that your preference would be Plan_40 given the Puakō connection and also fitting in with District 9, I believe.

MR. ROBERTSON: Yes.

MR. KAHUI: So your preference would be to stay in District 9?

MR. ROBERTSON: Correct.

MR. KAHUI: Okay, thank you.

MR. MELROSE: Robby, kind of a similar question. Have you looked at the maps in the software that we have to use?

MR. ROBERTSON: Yes, I have.

MR. MELROSE: There is one census block that kind of runs along the coast line, kind of in an oddly shape, and I just want to make sure that that census block catches all of Puakō and when you think of Puakō you're really talking about from the Mauna Lani border back through Hapuna Beach. Is that what your definition of what Puakō is?

MR. ROBERTSON: Yes, and Puakō would include Puakō Road which runs down to Paniau, and George Zimmer's house is the last house on that road, and that's where I would say would be the boundary, but it's very difficult. I played around with the maps, and I couldn't keep it together, it seems like grab on to like parts of Mauna Lani so somebody's gotta, who really knows that process, I couldn't separate it out properly so.

MR. MELROSE: I just wanted to make sure that when you say Puakō which you're talking about is Paniau to Hapuna.

MR. ROBERTSON: Correct.

MR. MELROSE: That's below the road essentially, but it doesn't even have to be below the road, it's just the last house on that one lane road on either side?

MR. ROBERTSON: Right.

MR. MELROSE: Okay, and there is nothing else out there that we should be thinking out there where you would count at Puakō?

MR. ROBERTSON: Correct.

MR. MELROSE: Okay thanks.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you George. Our next testifier is Charles Flaherty representing himself.

CHARLES FLAHERTY

(At this time Charles Flaherty came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MR. FLAHERTY: Aloha members of the Redistricting Commission. I also wanted to thank you all for your hard work and dedication to this very difficult process. I guess what I wanted to share with you all, I have been looking at the different maps and the different issues with the different maps, but I haven't really come to an opinion at this time. I hope to be able to share that when you all go to Yano Hall in South Kona, where I am currently residing, in Hōnaunau, in South Kona. One of the things that I wanted to share with you all when we drew our maps back in 2001, was that we looked at the what was the driver of the different economies, because the economy is something that would be continuing into the future; like agricultural, resort, transportation, urban. In addition to that, and with regard to those strange census blocks on the coastline, I think the representative of the conservation district, the SMA area that runs along the coastline--and you see that in our plans--as far as like there is a proposed shoreline park that runs along the North Kona shoreline, and there is one proposed for Ka'u and for South Kona as well.

Then the other thing I wanted to ask you, and you probably have done this. and maybe someone has already testified about it but, I think it would be important to look at the County General Plan. since that is how growth is supposed to be directed for us and also at the different community plans. I will say that when the Kona Community Development Plan, which was the first community development plan that was done, I had asked the Mayor at that time, Planning Director Chris Yuen, to split South and North Kona because I felt that they were different as far as their economic base. They didn't agree, and kind of lumped us together, but what I wanted to share with you all is if you look at the Kona Community Development Plan and the General Plan, you'll see that the mauka South Kona area along the highway is considered like a contiguous rural village area. I realize that given the needs of other areas that it might not be possible to prevent this particular area from being split. On that I would hope that you would consider that just from being my home place that you all consider that as well, as I'm sure you will. I did want to just reiterate that we do have the development plans and the general plan processes that have been vetted by testimony. And in prior testimony, and what not, and Bo's very intimately involved with that for sure Thank you for your dedication to that process as well. So, thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. I have no more testifiers, however if any of you in the audience now feel moved to come up and have a word, it is not too late. You can go up to Karen over there and quickly fill out a sign in sheet. We do want to hear what you have to say, we want to get as much input as possible. You know your areas much better than most of us. If you wake up in the middle of the night with a flash, this is not the end. You can submit email testimony, and Karen will tell you how to do that. You can submit snail mail testimony, and there is a Yano Hall public hearing coming up Thursday, and there will be more opportunities to testify and to provide your input, so please avail yourselves of all those opportunities and if there is nothing else, then I need a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 6:40 p.m.,
Ms. Ugalde moved to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by Mr. Melrose and carried by
the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Carvalho, Kahui,
Melrose, Middlesworth, Ugalde,
and Chair Siracusa.

Noes: None.

Absent: Commissioners Kanuha, Kahawaiola‘a
and Poindexter.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Motion carries. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Eoff, Secretary

Approved on November 3, 2011:

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