

**2011  
HAWAI'I COUNTY  
REDISTRICTING COMMISSION**

Public Hearing  
Monday, November 21, 2011

County Council Chambers  
West Hawai'i Civic Center  
74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy. Bldg. A  
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

**CALL TO ORDER:**

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you for taking the time to attend. This is the West side public hearing for the Hawai'i County Redistricting Commission. The Commission consists of nine volunteer members, one from each council district. The commissioners will now introduce themselves to you.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Present: Mr. Joseph Carvalho, Commissioner  
Mr. Patrick Kahawaiola'a, Commissioner (*Hilo*)  
Mr. Craig "Bo" Kahui, Commissioner  
Mr. Dru Mamo Kanuha, Commissioner  
Mr. Jeffrey Melrose, Commissioner  
Mr. Mike Middlesworth, Commissioner  
Ms. René Siracusa, Chair  
Ms. Valerie Poindexter, Commissioner  
Ms. Linda Ugalde, Commissioner

Absent: None

Also Present: Michael Udovic, Deputy Corporation Counsel  
Pat Nakamoto, Elections Program Administrator  
Cori Saiki, Elections Assistant  
Shyla Ayau, Senior Elections Clerk  
Nora Avenue, Administrative Assistant to County Clerk  
Maile David, Legislative Specialist in Kona  
Dave Hirt, Legislative Assistant in Waimea  
Barbara Lively, Legislative Assistant in Pāhoa  
Karen Eoff, Secretary

CHR. SIRACUSA: As representatives of our districts, we have each shared our district's concerns with each other, so that we are all aware of the local issues around the island. In addition, we had eleven meetings and nine public hearings in each of the current council districts and listened carefully to your input. Based on that, we have come up with a final draft plan that we are presenting to you this evening. This plan determines 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. There are also blow-ups of each proposed district, as well as the map of the whole island that you can see the actual boundary lines and the streets. I hope you had a chance to look at those.

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, dependents and students. Therefore, the maximum number of residents in any district can be no more than 21,483 and the minimum number of residents no less than 19,441. Following all of these sometimes competing guidelines has been a real challenge. We attempted to create the fairest map possible with the least amount of negative impacts to any given area.

The Commission has reviewed just about 50 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. From those maps and public testimony, our final draft plan has been distilled. Please look carefully at the close ups of you district, and when you testify, let us know if you want to suggest any minor changes. You, the public, have had an important role in the creation of this map, and we hope that you approve of the result. We thank you for all your suggestions and acknowledge your civic mindedness and your willingness to help us create the map that will be fair not only to your own neighborhood, but island wide.

You will be asked to keep your comments to no more than five minutes. Dru has the little timer box, and you can see the lights will change from green to amber. Amber is the warning, and then red will cut you off. 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 to 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. You can continue to do that until we close for the evening. Mahalo for coming out to learn about this process, and to share your thoughts with us.

## **STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS**

CHR. SIRACUSA: Pāhoa, do you have any testifiers over there?

MS. LIVELY: Hi, good evening, and thank you. Yes, we do have three testifiers this evening.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Waimea?

MR. HIRT: Good evening, we have three testifiers tonight.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Hilo?

MS. AVENUE: Good evening, madam Chair, we don't have any testifiers in Hilo.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Okay, I guess they are all saving it up for tomorrow night. I have five testifiers here right now. Let's start with number one, Brenda Ford, representing herself.

BRENDA FORD

(At this time Brenda Ford came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. FORD: Can we get one of the big maps up on the screen?

CHR. SIRACUSA: Shyla, can we get the map on the screen?

MR. KANUHA: She is saying no, we cannot.

MS. FORD: Okay, we'll survive. Good evening, I'm Brenda Ford, I am testifying for myself. Thank you for holding this meeting. I know it is required by law, but I appreciate the fact that you are holding it anyway. I wanted to let you know that I have looked at the map online. You do already know, I'm sure, that you have some islands floating around that are not in the right district. I could see one in District 7, I can see one in District 8, and there a couple more floating around, especially on the boundaries towards the center of the island; some of those little islands are not even populated. They need to be addressed, and I'm sure that you will. So I'm not going to talk about those any longer.

The biggest issue that I have is with the boundary between District 9 and 8; that little finger projecting down. The reason it is a problem is because historically, Pohakuloa Training Center, which has almost no population that is permanent, is part of District 8, but you will see that the little finger projection actually makes you drive from District 8 up to the V in the pink area and then back down Saddle Road to Pohakuloa. So you are crossing from District 8 into 9 and back into 8; which you know is a violation. However, there is hardly anybody up there, and this is easily corrected. What you need to do is everything on what I will call the East side of Saddle Road, above Saddle Road---If you cannot reach anything up in that area on the very eastern side of District 8 without going up Saddle Road, it needs

to be in District 9. It will make your district non compact; but you know what, you can't do compact on an island on ours. So, I would not worry about that, but you need anything that is accessible from Saddle Road, needs to be in District 9, all the way down to the District 7 border. It is very easy, and will not make much difference in population. If you get more than five people, I'll be shocked. So don't worry about that one.

The second issue, I don't know if you will be able to see this one, so I'll just talk about it, is Kealakekua Bay. We are having massive problems with the State because it is a State owned park. The Captain Cook Monument on the west side of that has been split off of the park, and it has this awful census district that follows up the coast; you know how that goes. My understanding is that the reason that was done was to keep the shoreline that belongs to Hokulia in the same district with most of Hokulia. While that is a nice concept, you are splitting our park, which we are having major problems with the State, dealing with the issues. So, those of us who live around that area would prefer, if it is possible, for you to put the park all back together again. There is almost no population in those areas, but it is going to make a difference when we have to deal with the State.

I also noticed a problem down in the Kalapana area, but it was explained to me that you have got a lava flow that cut the road; so don't worry about that one; that is easily explained. Anything you do, like Kalapana, that is going to look a little bit strange, just deal with it in your Final Report. Explain why you did what you did, that it is not accessible anymore because of thirty feet of lava flow. Nobody is going to go after you for that kind of stuff.

Overall, it looks like a really good plan. I am really, really pleased with this. I had no hope going into this entire process, and I've come out completely, 180 degrees from where I started. You have done a great job; I know not everyone is happy; not possible to make everyone happy. But you have done a great job; thank you very much.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Brenda. I would like to go to Pāhoa now.

MS. LIVELY: Thank you. Our first testifier is Hope Cermelj.

HOPE CERMEJ

(At this time Hope CERMEJ came forward via videoconference from Pāhoa to address members of the Commission.)

MS. CERMEJ: Aloha. This is my first teleconference in the state of Hawai'i since I moved here from Fairbanks Alaska. We have had this teleconferencing for over ten years, but they have a lot more money in Alaska. The map, the way I was given by this nice lady, René Siracusa, is different from the 11.10.11 beginning boundary lines. The map that I see behind me looks fantastic. I agree wholeheartedly with everything Brenda Ford said. She did a great job; thank you Brenda, God bless you. There are other people here that want to speak; this has been a very tough, difficult situation. I commend all you people who volunteered to do this; God be with you as well. Mahalo nui loa, God bless Hawai'i.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Waimea.

MR. HIRT: Good evening, Chair, our first testifier tonight is Mike Price, representing himself, to speak in support of the Final Draft Plan.

MIKE PRICE

(At this time Mike Price came forward via videoconference from Waimea to address members of the Commission.)

MR. PRICE: I want to thank the committee for their hard work, their ability to listen to the public, and all the work that it took to get to this final draft. Overall, the plan is a good one. It maintains Hāmākua district, it kept Puakō, Waikōloa, all together with Waimea in District 9. There was a compromise, we all recognize, in Puna, and we really appreciate that compromise in consideration of a fair plan for all of the island at this point in time. There may be small groups of people here and there that are naturally dissatisfied, but there wasn't a big impact to large population areas. They remained as communities; they didn't get split up. I think you did a fantastic job in that regard. At this point, a lot of these communities that have Community Development Plans, can rest assured that they can move forward with some of that planning in their Action Committees and the proposed projects, with one representative representing them. An obvious consensus of the community is maintained. The plan also provides in these districts that you have drawn up, road connectivity. It obviously took into consideration the water supply, the hospital districts and some other services. So, all in all, as myself, I am pleased with it. I'm hoping that all you need to do is do a little tweaking and there are no surprises in the final plan. So, I want to thank you again for your hard work, your integrity, and your fairness.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. Thank you for coming out to share with us. Our next testifier here in Kona is Cheryl King, representing herself.

CHERYL KING

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

MS. KING: I just wanted to thank you all for coming out tonight. I wish to testify in support of the Commissioners Draft Plan, and I hope that you can incorporate Brenda Fords's suggestions. I am aware of the effort you have put into this plan, and of the compromises that have had to be made to reach agreement on this plan. Thank you, Commissioners, for your service. As a Kona resident, I would like to say a special thank you to our own Kona Commissioners, Dru Kanuha and Bo Kahui. They have worked well together, and they always spoke up when they needed to; and I appreciated that. Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Cheryl. Let's go to Pāhoa again.

MS. LIVELY: Thank you, our next testifier is Joyce Folena.

JOYCE FOLENA

(At this time Joyce Folena came forward via videoconference from Pāhoa to address members of the Commission.)

MR. FOLENA: Thank you Madam Chairman, and all members of the Redistricting Commission. Thank you for your work; I am in full support of the present draft of 11.10.2011, in that it gives our Puna, two Puna voting districts in the County Council; which is as it should be; which it has to be by law. So, thank you again for the rather grueling meeting sessions. Thank you for your energy and your time.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Joyce. Is there any body else in Waimea?

MR. HIRT: Yes we have two more. Our next testifier is Robert Green, here to make comment, representing himself.

ROBERT GREEN

(At this time Robert Green came forward via videoconference from Waimea to address members of the Commission.)

MR. GREEN: Good evening. My name is Robert Green, and I have testified before. I have given you my background as to my interests and why I am here, and how I am looking at the whole island as a whole. I would like to kind of go back to the whole island as a whole. I look at it 600 years ago, and the Hawaiians being very, very intelligent people, they divided the island into six moku, or areas of common interests, or homogeneous interests. I think this should be the basis of everything and all the redistricting that we do today. I think what they did then, is still valid today. The populations within these areas throughout history has risen and dropped, but the boundaries remain pretty constant.

These boundaries were basically used to establish how tax districts were looked at. We look at the tax districts and we have Kohala broken in two, Kona broken in two, Hilo broken in two; and I think Puna needs to be broken in two, giving us some very homogeneous groups. From then, we start looking at, and have to decide census districts and when I look at the census districts, I find a real problem of someone in Washington establishing the districts that we have to use to develop our representatives from. I have some concerns. I think that is a major issue. From then, we go to our Council districts. Our Council districts, we then modify our areas and this last grouping seems to stray from the original concept of our past districts and our moku, especially when you look at the interior of the island. I think this is something we need to look into. I think everything you do in your planning should have our original moku or district boundaries superimposed, so when you look at the modifications you make now, we can see how they affect the island and basically in the 2020 census we can move back. But those original Hawaiian moku are a fantastic basis from which we need to stay within.

Now, I feel that one of the problems that we have, and I think that this should be a major recommendation, and one of the things that you should stress, is the fact that the difficulty

that you have had in designing the districts, not that you didn't have information, have interest, but the Census Bureau's census tracts did not give you the proper common interest areas. I think your recommendation should be that prior to the next 2020 census, that the County make an effort to work with the Census Bureau to provide data so in our next go around in 2020 we can provide much better representation within the common interest areas. Again, I think the whole moku districts that the Hawaiians established 600 years ago should be superimposed on everything that we do today to see how we can affect. Thank you very much for listening to me. Thank you all.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. We now come back to Kona. Marnie Herkes, representing herself.

MARNIE HERKES

(At this time Marnie Herkes came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. HERKES: Thank you very much. I am going to agree with Mr. Green, but we are going to have to wait for a Charter Commission and maybe we can go back to Judicial Districts and then talk to the Census people. I want to thank you so much. In these times of dysfunctional political processes, and when people can't cooperate and collaborate to come to a conclusion; it is really wonderful to see a Commission like this work your way through some problems. You all come from different perspectives, but you all got together to come up with a solution. It give all of us a little bit of hope that maybe some of these things can be solved and some people can learn to work together to solve some problems. So thank you very much for your graciousness and for all of your time. I know, I have sat through some of your day long meetings, and thank you; we appreciate it.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Marnie. We have another testifier in Pāhoa.

MS. LIVELY: Thank you, our last testifier this evening is Greg Smith.

GREG SMITH

(At this time Greg Smith came forward via videoconference from Pāhoa to address members of the Commission.)

MR. SMITH: Aloha folks. Again, I can't tell you how much I appreciate the change that I have seen in this process, particularly how much better it was than the last two processes I have been through in this redistricting. I do have one concern or question; if it is possible to include Kea'au into one of the Puna districts. The maps that we have hanging out here in Pāhoa show that Kea'au is now in District 3, the way it is proposed. If that could be changed, that would be wonderful. If not, I guess we have to go with it. But in any case, this overall plan and the maps look very, very good and there is fully good representation for everybody around. I am very pleased with it. I am very pleased with your conduct and the openness of this process. Please continue; this has been one of the best functions, governmental functions that I have witnessed since the 23 years that I have been on the island. So, again, to all of the Commissioners: mahalo, and continue the good work. Aloha.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Greg. Now we move to Waimea.

MR. HIRT: Our last testifier is Margaret Wille, representing herself, here to make comments.

MARGARET WILLE

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

MS. WILLE: Good evening Commissioners, and thank you very much for all you have gone through and all your workings with myself, and all of the communities to come out with something that is overall fair and works to do the best for the most communities. Clearly, with the 5% deviation, that was very restrictive; and I think that is one question that you might consider in your report. If it were 7% or 8%, would have been mathematically possible to have included Volcano in Puna or Lakeland in Waimea? A lot of those choices may not have been what is best, but those minimum restrictions of 5% is what made it impossible to address some important community concerns.

I do think, given that, that Council members need to have a new consciousness of these boundaries, and that those communities or those individuals that live perhaps closer to another district center, or consider themselves closer to that other community, or say the east portion of Waimea is largely cut off, that they consider themselves welcome in any district office that they enter. I don't think that anyone should ever be sent and told you are not welcome in this district office because my line stops before your house.

A couple of things; I want to say to Greg, who just testified about Kea'au. I have toyed with this map, and have worked with it, just to see---I was a little concerned that District 4 was cut off. Rather than going down Kalapana 130, I know that Commissioner Siracusa had mentioned that; if you shift 4 so that it does go all the way down that road 130, and you then shift 5 to incorporate Kea'au; you can maneuver those. If someone wanted to do it, that is possible to do. That issue is adjustable, and I think that partly not looking at how to extend it was just a matter of time. It takes some maneuvering and moving that area of the homestead so that all of it is included in District 5. If you don't follow what I have said, I would be happy to explain it to someone. It can all be shifted a little to do a little better job, in my mind, over there.

Lastly, I just want to say that I think there was more attention paid here to the mauka areas; the areas that don't have population. And what is significant and who is running along Saddle Road; there is a shift here; the top of Mauna Kea is now in District 2 rather than in District 1. In a way I think all of those areas, we all share that interest. On what Brenda Ford said about Saddle Road and the Waiaka [sic] area. The people that I have spoken to are very happy that they are in District 9 with Waimea; and I know that was the intent. I understand what Brenda was saying; but there is a road there. I don't know if it is called trail or jeep; the connectivity is not illegal there. You can include more along the Saddle Road in District 8, but I would be very upset if you were to move Waiaka [sic] out of Waimea. Waimea bled quite a lot in order to get an overall fair map to ensure there was a

Hāmākua district, so I would not like to see Waiaka [sic] community being put into District 8, rather than staying with District 9. Thank you again very much. I appreciate all of your efforts and willingness to work with all of us. Thanks again.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Margaret.

MR. MELROSE: Point of clarification, Margaret. You kept saying Waiaka. Did you mean Waiki‘i?

MS. WILLE: Yes, I did. You are correct.

MR. MELROSE: Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Our next testifier here in Kona is George Robertson, representing Puakō Community Association.

GEORGE ROBERTSON

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

MR. ROBERTSON: Good evening, folks. I just want to thank you for the great work you have done. It was a really hard job, and I’m really thankful that you listened to me; mostly from Puakō, but representing the Puakō community. That has been my job for the last two months, so I’ve been pretty faithful at it. I don’t know what you can do with Mauna Lani. If you can move Mauna Lani, say include the whole resort; that would make them happy. Maybe that can be done, I don’t know. Maybe take a few of Val’s folks, and push them in her direction; I don’t know. Anyway, there might be some flexibility there. Anyway, I just want to thank you so much for the great work that you have done.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, George. Our last testifier, unless someone else decides to get inspired and run up and fill out a form, is Ruth Smith representing herself.

RUTH SMITH

(At this time Ruth Smith came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. SMITH: Aloha, and good evening. It is nice to see you guys again. Thank you so very much for your hard work. This has been a difficult job; our population didn’t grow nicely, and things popped out. So it was not easy to do, and it has taken a lot of time on a lot of people’s part, but I appreciate your tenacity on this and your openness. We are very grateful in Waikōloa and Kawaihae and Puakō to be in District 9; keeping South Kohala together. So we appreciate that. I also appreciate that Hāmākua is staying a rural area because I think that is most representative. We are deeply grateful to you guys in Volcano for being so gracious and helping us out. Because this was a difficult one to sort out; and there had to be some give somewhere. I think probably one of the most important things--and you have heard it again repeatedly tonight--is the way the process was done allows us to move into the future in a healthy way; in a healthy political way, where we are not about pay back or upset, or people really ticked off. We are only beginning the many things we

have to deal with as a County in the future, and I appreciate the graciousness with which you have set the stage for the things to come. So, thank you very much.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Ruth. Does anyone else wish to testify at this point? In that case, before we adjourn, I would like to thank all of you for coming out and helping us in this exercise. It hasn't been easy, there have been a lot of criteria that we have had to balance against each other, and we couldn't have done it without the really good community support and turnout that we got. So I think you can give yourselves a good hand here.

MR. KAHUI: I, too, would like to commend all of you that are here tonight because if not for you we wouldn't have known the voices of your districts. The last Kona district hearing that we had here, I recall, brother coming up and really voicing your opinion about Puakō and the Waikōloa residents really voicing their opinion. And it is those things that really resonate what has happened with this Commission to establish district boundaries that best suits our communities. So, with that said, I applaud you guys for being here. Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Bo. Do any other Commissioners want to make a comment before we adjourn?

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Eoff, Secretary

Approved on November 30, 2011:

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