

**2011
HAWAI‘I COUNTY
REDISTRICTING COMMISSION**

Public Hearing
Tuesday, November 22, 2011

County Council Chambers
25 Aupuni Street
Hilo Hawai‘i 96730

CALL TO ORDER:

CHR. SIRACUSA: Good evening. Thank you for taking the time to attend. This is the East 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 (*Waimea*)
Mr. Patrick Kahawaiola‘a, Commissioner
Mr. Craig “Bo” Kahui, Commissioner (*Kona*)
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
Manu Hanano, Council Aide 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 ten 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.

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 you comments to no more than five minutes. A buzzer will go off and there will be a warning buzzer, and Nora will let you know, in case you didn't notice it when it went off, when it is time to wind up and summarize. 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 hear what you have to say. 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: Our first testifier is Zendo Kern, testifying on his own behalf.

ZENDO KERN

(At this time Zendo Kern came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MR. KERN: Good evening, I will be pretty brief here. Aloha Commissioners, my name is Zendo Kern, as you all know; born and raised on the Big Island, I live in Puna. This is more of a thank you. Thank you all for the hard work you have done; for the willingness to compromise and work together, for the respect you have shown for the process, and the respect for our communities. I'm not going to comment on any map or boundaries because I am a political candidate now, and I don't think that is the place to do that. I am going to withdraw from that and just say thanks. So that is it; mahalo.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Zendo. Our next testifier; do we have anyone in Kona?

MR. KAHUI: We have no testifiers at this time.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. Do we have any testifiers in Waimea?

MS. HANAO: Yes, madam Chair we have two testifiers here.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Okay, let's hear the first one.

MS. HANAO: My first testifier is Anika Glass from Waikōloa, representing herself as well as Mālama Waikōloa Nightingales. She is speaking in support and commenting.

ANIKA GLASS

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

MS. GLASS: I want to thank you, Commissioners, and especially the people of Puna for recognizing that Waikōloa has a real sense of place. If you can't see the big smile on my face right now, I am very happy with what you have done. Taking us from South Kohala would have set back all the progress we have made together; especially on roads. It would have hurt on a personal and emotional level. We have lived together, survived disasters, fought, celebrated, and lost kupuna together here. On behalf of Mālama Waikōloa Nightingales, which is in the process of re-homing 600 feral donkeys from South Kohala, I also thank you; the donkeys thank you. And they also thank Puna and its neighbors for adopting so many of our beautiful feral donkeys into loving homes. I want to let you know that I will not forget the compromise you made for us; and look forward to heeding your call, when you ask. Mahalo.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you very much for your testimony. Now we will go to Pāhoa.

MS. LIVELY: Thank you, good evening Madam Chair. We have three testifiers tonight. Our first testifier is Hope Cermelj, and she is commenting in support of the redistricting, and she claims that she is representing poor voters of Puna district, like herself.

HOPE CERMEJLJ

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

MS. CERMEJLJ: Aloha, good evening. Thank you again, Redistricting Committee. What a hard task you had. And to listen to public comment like every state in the union should be doing. To help the people have the right decisions, the right amount of federal law as well as federal counting. I did the census in Hilo; that was not an easy job. But it is done; now you have done the redistricting. Here is my comment, which means everything to me; because I will be running for a state representative position myself. There is a lawsuit pending. It is unconscionable what is going on. I hope and pray that the State Districting Committee can do as good a job as we did on the Big Island. Thank you all for all of your hard work and again, like I mentioned last night, every comment that Brenda Ford made was very valid and I believe in what she said, and I support her wholeheartedly, especially taking apart a State park where there might be conflict; or a funding problem. So again, God bless all of you and thank you Big Island; we are FBI here, we are from the Big Island.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. We will come back to Hilo now and take our second testifier.

SANDRA PATTON

(At this time Sandra Patton, Executive Director Mauna Lani Resort Association, came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MS. PATTON: I also submitted a larger copy of the map that was distributed to you electronically. And I will be very brief. Aloha, Madam Chair and Commissioners. My name is Sandy Patton, and I am the Executive Director of the Mauni Lani Resort Association, which is the master association of all property owners at Mauni Lani Resort. Mauni Lani master planned community currently includes approximately 1200 residential units, two hotels, a commercial retail center, two golf courses, and various other commercial entities. Mauna Lani Resort Association's only comment regarding the Commission's Draft Redistricting Plan relates to the proposed boundary between District 8 and District 9, and just the portion that crosses over Mauni Lani Resort. This is the portion illustrated in the Commission's Draft Map which is captioned Western Towns, Waikōloa Beach details.

The Commission's draft proposes that the bulk of Mauna Lani's 1200 residential owners would reside within District 9, and just 194 of our residents would reside in District 8. The effect of the proposed boundary alignment is that all but three of Mauni Lani's 18 residential neighborhoods would be located in one district, and the remaining three neighborhoods comprising only 194 residents would be located in a different district. We respectfully request that the segment of the district boundary that crosses Mauna Lani

resort be adjusted slightly to align with Mauna Lani Resort's southern property boundary. This would keep our 194 residents who would be affected by the proposed boundary change from being placed into a district that is separate from the district in which the bulk of our residents reside. Thank you very much for your time and we ask for the Commission's kind consideration of this matter. If you have any questions, I would be able to answer.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. Jeff, did you have a question?

MR. MELROSE: You understand that we can only move boundaries by census tracts.

MS. PATTON: I understand.

MR. MELROSE: So, is there a census tract between those two pieces of property?

MS. PATTON: There is not.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. We will see what we can do. Sometimes the numbers get in the way, and that is the highest priority; and we don't have flexibility there. But we will try.

MS. PATTON: We appreciate your consideration.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. Let's go back to Waimea.

MS. HANANO: Our final testifier here this evening is Pete Hoffmann.

PETE HOFFMANN

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

MR. HOFFMANN: Thank you, Madam Chairman. It is my pleasure once again to provide just brief testimony and to once again tell you on behalf of certainly the residents of our district, how much we do appreciate the work of the Commission. We do know how difficult it has been all along. I just wanted to comment, though, as we near the end of this process, to remind all the Commission members, if it is at all possible, that the final Commission report, I think needs to really try to capture the essence of what you have been through over the past seven or eight months. I would hope that it is not simply an historical report of the ups and downs and the ins and outs and some of the problems that existed; but a good compilation of proactive measures and recommendations. That you provide, not just for the County Administration, but more importantly for the County Council. I know that the Madam Chairman and I discussed this very briefly when she passed through Waimea yesterday. I did want to stress how important it is to us as Councilmembers, now, to take some action and to make any alterations, changes, or suggestions that you might have, and try to implement them before this whole process goes away.

I have to tell you that it is important, as I see it, as we move ahead into the next five or ten years, that we don't lose the important work that you have done and make certain that we capture those comments and recommendations that could be key to make this process easier; to eliminate even further problems or questions that might arise from other communities in the next redistricting process. I urge that the Commission members take some time; I know you have spend an awful lot already, but please, take a little time on behalf of the County Council to make certain that you provide us with good, useful, and effective recommendations as we move ahead; and we read with pleasure, and with appreciation, the Final Report that is submitted by the Redistricting Commission. Thanks once again for all the effort that you have made in this process.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Pete; and thank you for your support all through the whole process. There were times when we really felt like we needed some support. Let's go to Pāhoa now.

MS. LIVELY: Thank you Madam Chair, our next testifier is James Weatherford, he is commenting on Redistricting and he is representing himself.

JAMES WEATHERFORD

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

MR. WEATHERFORD: Aloha. Again, I want to thank you Commissioners individually and as a team for your good work that you have been doing. I do want to have a comment on one item that I have been looking at and contemplating a bit. That is the boundary between District 4 and District 5; as it now runs straight through on Pāhoa Village Road. I want to encourage the Commission to consider changing that, and making that on the Pāhoa Bypass that goes just makai of Pāhoa Village. As far as the numbers, District 4 is already more than full, so losing a few to District 5 would not be a problem. It certainly doesn't create any problems as far as travel in either district. So I would encourage you to have a look at that. Thank you. It couldn't be more than 100 or 200 people involved there.

CHR. SIRACUSA: For clarification, I would like to ask you what you see as the difference; what difference it would make to have it on the Bypass or to have it on Pāhoa Village Road. What are your concerns that you are looking at here that we should take into consideration?

MR. WEATHERFORD: Thank you, René, for the question. It just makes sense, to start with. And one of the things that I have observed; most people don't keep track of where their voter registration is, and I do foresee some confusion over the years with people living on opposite sides of the street. And you know we don't need to do anything that is going to stop one person from being certain where they are going to vote. To me, I know, over the years from working on various campaigns, I have seen people who did not vote because there was confusion about where they should vote. To me, that is the sort of thing that as the years go by over the next ten years, we'll come to wish we had. Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. Let's come back to Hilo now. Yen Chin, representing Friends of Puna's Future.

YEN CHIN

(At this time Yen Chin, President of Friends of Puna's Future came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MR. CHIN: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Yen Chin; I am the President of Friends of Puna's Future. Friends of Puna's Future knows that you all have walked a long and difficult road in order to arrive at the Draft Plan you present today. I personally witnessed your struggles and the mutual respect you shared among yourselves, and so have my colleagues, who join me tonight, but who may remain silent. We have been here all along; all along the way. And all along the way we have testified to the wants and needs of Puna and we have submitted plans of our own. So we understand the challenges you faced. I doubt that I could have shown the patience you all have displayed; nor could I have followed that sage advice to always be sincere, whether you mean it or not. But seriously, I have also witnessed the sacrifices that you have made in order to serve the greater good. Puna has been part of those sacrifices; sacrifices which the rules required in some form.

The number of Puna residents more than fills the allowance for two council districts, so some of our population needed to be assigned elsewhere. Volcano made a big sacrifice, because it must remain a minority part of District 6. So Volcano remains tied to Ka'ū, rather than join with its more logical mates in Puna. We should all express our gratitude to the people of Volcano, and their representative, Linda Ugalde, for seeing the need to make this sacrifice and act in good faith; in good conscience. We should all remember that sacrifice does not mean simply loss. Rather it means a willingness to give up something of value in the hope of gaining something of greater value. Friends of Puna's Future believes the greater value lies in the Draft Plan we consider tonight. We know that it is not perfect; that it has flaws. But these are necessary flaws that make for honest and fair resolution of this very difficult task of redrawing the council lines.

Therefore, we support acceptance of this Draft Plan, as it now stands. We believe that now is not the time to pick at the warts that certainly dot the landscape of this plan. We believe that now is the time for gratitude and celebration; gratitude for the hard work that you Commissioners have all done, and celebration that we are close to the end. Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Yen. Do we have another testifier in Pāhoa?

MS. LIVELY: Yes, thank you Madam Chair, next we have Elizabeth Weatherford and we just had another testifier join us.

ELIZABETH WEATHERFORD

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

MS. WEATHERFORD: Good evening everyone. Thank you very, very much for your work. I appreciate that you took so many puzzle pieces and put them together in a mostly comprehensible and useful way; and there are lots of pieces to your puzzle. I also became aware that Pāhoa is being divided along the main street, and I am wondering if now makai of the Bypass, it will be zoned differently from the dense residential area in Pāhoa and that would be one reason to keep all of Pāhoa together. It shouldn't be a problem finding polling places for the new 5th district makai of there. There is a Fire Station and a school. There are lots of opportunities for good polling places. The main thing for me is because I asked and asked and asked about keeping Hawaiian Paradise Park a community together, it would really be inconsistent for me to not want you to keep Pāhoa together if you can; because that is a community of mutual interests; shared interests. I think they deserve to be together. Thank you so much.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you.

MR. MELROSE: Elizabeth, in Pāhoa Town, is there a Main Street program that works with the core of town; or a business association, or what. There is actually an organization in Pāhoa that works on the old portion of Pāhoa town; is that right?

MS. WEATHERFORD: Main Street Pāhoa.

MR. MELROSE: Is there still a Main Street organization in Pāhoa?

MS. WEATHERFORD: Yes.

MR. MELROSE: So that body represents businesses that kind of tie together the overall interests of Pāhoa Town?

MS. WEATHERFORD: Yes, indeed.

MR. MELROSE: I was just looking to see if there was some type of organizational unity that was already there.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Actually there are several organizations, with different agendas. Okay, let's see, we have Richard Bidleman here in Hilo.

RICHARD BIDLEMAN

(At this time Richard Bidleman came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MR. BIDLEMAN: Good evening. Well, the end is near here, isn't it? And we've all worked real hard; including the public, with this process. And what I want to point out to you, as a person who has been working in the computer industry for pretty close to 50 years; what we have here is a level playing field. And the thing that leveled the playing field is the internet. It has been often said in recent years that the internet is leveling the playing field in many areas in our society. And this effort is exemplary in that manner. The other thing, and I know Pete mentioned it; this has been a real arduous process. What I

would hope that you folks might do, is after this is done, we still have the software, we still have the maps; and I'm sure that we all feel that maybe some of the rules that you had to live with to do this process would merit some change. I think that one of the ways that you could lend credence to that, is to manipulate the software, change one of the rules, hypothetically; and then manipulate the maps and the software and say, gee, it could have been better; could we have come up with a better solution? I really hope that somehow that can happen so that at the next census period, maybe we will even have a better result; not to say that we don't have a good one. But as René has pointed out from the beginning, whatever we do, it will be a compromise. And thank you very much for your effort.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you very much, Richard. We have another testifier in Pāhoa.

MS. LIVELY: Thank you Madam Chair, we actually have one more after our next testifier who is Joyce Folena; and she is speaking in support of the Draft, and representing herself.

JOYCE FOLENA

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

MS. FOLENA: Thank you very much Madam Chairman, and all members of the Redistricting Commission for the opportunity to speak to you. I want to make this comment on record. I understand from speaking to my representative, René Siracusa, by telephone today, that Kea'au Shopping Center is in District 5. I'm just saying that for confirmation on the record, that's all. Again, I support the Draft in place, and except for a few clean up pieces here and there, I support passing this draft and naming it your Final Plan on November 30th. Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you, Joyce. You realize, I hope---You are aware, are you not, that there is no population in the Kea'au Shopping Center? Thank you. Do we have one more testifier in Pāhoa?

MS. LIVELY: Yes, our final testifier tonight is Greg Smith. He is speaking in support of the Draft in place, and representing himself.

GREG SMITH

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

MR. SMITH: Thank you again for allowing us to speak; the public input and public participation. Do accept this draft as is except for minor clean ups and I suppose running it through the legal beagles and make sure there is nothing outlandishly lawless. Anyway, it looks good to me; thanks. Again, just a few little minor things. It is great; I have to commend everyone of you in this process. We have gone through three day long meetings so far; I hope the County Council can take a few lessons from this as far as cooperation and how to get things done; even difficult things such as voting redistricting.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Now that we have finished those testifiers, is there any one out there who is inspired to come forward and offer some testimony? Okay, yes, come; and please state your name, because we don't have a sign in slip for you.

CONRAD HOKAMA

(At this time Conrad Hokama came forward to address members of the Commission.)

MR. HOKAMA: My name is Conrad Hokama, and I am with the Piihonua Community Association. I would like to extend our appreciation for the opportunity at the last meeting at Kamana Senior Center. We got to provide input to the Commission members. Seeing the results that it has been taken into consideration, we would like to acknowledge the hard work that you folks that you have taken into consideration every body's concerns. On behalf of our community association, we really appreciate your consideration of our input and putting that into the draft. We would like to acknowledge that. Thank you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Thank you. We tried; I must say, we tried, and I think we made a pretty good map too. Before I ask for a motion to adjourn, I would like to ask the Commissioners if any of them have any comments they would like to make at this point.

MR. MELROSE: I would like to ask a question, just so we prepare for our next meeting. I would like to think in front of every body for a second. On the 30th, we are going to take another look at this and see what we can do to take into account, like if we can fix Mauna Lanī, and other things. So we will take public testimony at that one more time, right?

CHR. SIRACUSA: Yes, we will take public testimony at that because it's a meeting; and we always take public testimony at the meetings.

MR. MELROSE: So that is one more opportunity to provide public testimony. Then there is an opportunity for us to kind of clean it up a little bit. When do we start talking about the Final Report? I've heard some good suggestions and I've heard Mike say he is going to help draft that process. Are we, at that meeting, going to process some of that?

CHR. SIRACUSA: Yes, that is on the agenda also.

MR. MELROSE: Okay, I'm just checking. I haven't seen the agenda yet.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Karen has to put it out there tomorrow.

MR. MELROSE: So I just encourage the members to think about what we want to say about the process.

MR. KAHAWAIOLA'A: Will the 30th of November be the drop dead deadline?

CHR. SIRACUSA: For the map, yes.

MR. KAHAWAIOLA'A: So a decision has to be made on the 30th ?

CHR. SIRACUSA: That is correct; then we start working on the narrative.

MS. LIVELY: Madam, Chair, we do have a final comment if that is okay.

CHR. SIRACUSA: We haven't had a motion to adjourn, so you can do it.

HOPE CERMEJ

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

MS. CERMEJ: Aloha Madam Chair, and Committee members, Hope again, from Kalapana, Black Sand Beach Subdivision. We, as a people, appreciate all your work and again, I can't reiterate enough that if the State practice could be as good as you folks have made it for us on the Big Island, maybe it would go smoother for the State Representatives and Senators that will be running in 2012. Mahalo, God bless you.

CHR. SIRACUSA: Do I have a motion to adjourn?

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 6:40 p.m.,
Ms. Poindexter moved to adjourn the meeting.
Seconded by Ms. Ugalde 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: Thank you all; and I would like to say that we couldn't have done it without you. Thank you; I applaud you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Eoff, Secretary

Approved on November 30, 2011:

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