

**CULTURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
COUNTY OF HAWAII**

**MINUTES
August 13, 2025**

MEETING LOCATION:

Hybrid in-person and interactive video conference through Zoom with live observation through YouTube. The in-person location was held at the Hilo Planning Department Conference Room, 101 Pauahi Street, Suite 3, Hilo, HI 96720.

The full YouTube video of this hearing can be found here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7T_6yrCD7A

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT VIA ZOOM: Matthew Clark (Chair), Desmon Haumea (Vice Chair) (arrived at 10:11 a.m.), Darde Gamayo (left at 10:28 a.m.), Roberta “Ku‘ulei” Keakealani, Kealohanuiopuna Kinney (arrived at 10:05 a.m.), Janet Six, and Aaron Spielman.

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: Nicole Lui.

ALSO PRESENT: Jean Campbell, Deputy Corporation Counsel; Bethany Morrison, Planning Program Manager; Kim Tanaka, Planner IV; and Ashley DeVera, Board Secretary.

Chair Clark called the Cultural Resources Commission (CRC) meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. A quorum was established with five members in attendance. It was announced that pursuant to Act 220, Session Laws of Hawai‘i 2021, which amended the Sunshine Law to allow meetings to be remotely conducted online, effective January 1, 2022, the Cultural Resources Commission meetings will be held online, with an in-person location for the public to provide testimony. The meeting can be viewed live online, and a link to YouTube can be located on the County website, as well as links to reports and surveys reviewed at this hearing. Commissioners were reminded that only one person may speak at a time and were asked to raise their hands to be recognized before speaking.

Commissioners were asked to introduce themselves and in accordance with the Sunshine Law, identify any member(s) present within the household. All members reported being alone in their location.

Staff introductions were made.

There were no addendums or supplemental agenda items.

STATEMENT(S) FROM THE PUBLIC

At 10:04 a.m., Chair Clark opened the floor to receive public testimony. Procedures for testimony were provided. There is a three-minute time limit on each agenda item; statements must relate to items on the agenda.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 3:23*] No testifiers were present on Zoom or in person.

Public testimony closed at 10:04 a.m.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 3:27*] Chair Clark requested staff updates.

Ms. Morrison provided an overview of recent legislative changes. She reported that Act 293, which revised the definition of historic property and streamlined review processes, became effective on July 3rd, 2025. However, staff were still awaiting guidance from the State Historic Preservation Division (SHPD) regarding its implementation.

She further reported that Act 160 went into effect on July 1st, 2025. This legislation modified response deadlines for various types of projects reviewed by SHPD. Ms. Morrison noted that SHPD was still working through its internal processes and would need to revise its administrative rules to implement the changes. She anticipated that there would be future opportunities for the Commission to review the proposed rule changes, should they choose to engage.

Additionally, Ms. Morrison reported that three National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultations related to telecommunication improvements had been handled administratively.

Ms. Morrison also informed the Commission that Kevin Sullivan, who had previously served as staff to the CRC, had transitioned to another division within the department. While recruitment efforts were underway to fill vacant positions, she would be stepping in to serve as staff to the CRC in the interim. She noted that she currently serves as the Long Range Planning Program Manager within the department's Long Range Division.

Commissioner Kinney joined the meeting at 10:05 a.m., and quorum was confirmed with six commissioners.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 6:14*] Commissioner Kinney introduced himself and stated that he was alone at his location.

BUSINESS OF THE COMMISSION

1. Discussion of Kawaihae's Significance to Hawai'i's History and Concerns Regarding Potential Loss of Historic Resources

Location: Ahupua'a of Kawaihae 1 & Kawaihae 2, District of South Kohala, Hawai'i Island

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 6:33*] This agenda item was called to order at 10:07 a.m. One

Long Range Planner, Maryam Palma, and one Kawaihae community member, Jojo Tanimoto, were in attendance. There were no members of the public present, and no public testimony was provided.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 7:03*] Ms. Palma reported that at a recent South Kohala Community Development Plan (CDP) Action Committee meeting, the committee had voted to support committee member Ms. Tanimoto in pursuing preservation efforts within the Kawaihae community. Ms. Tanimoto had identified various sites throughout the area.

Ms. Palma shared a screenshot of historical and cultural sites located in Kawaihae. The list included nine sites, and one of Ms. Tanimoto's goals was to identify and add other sites that may currently be missing.

Ms. Palma also shared a screenshot of a regional map and invited Ms. Tanimoto to speak about some of these locations and to share with the Commission her areas of interest. She concluded by requesting that the Commission consider forming a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) to further investigate the identified sites, assess their current preservation status, and explore potential needs or actions to support their preservation.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 9:15*] Ms. Tanimoto reported that she had recently attended a community meeting hosted by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, where one of the key topics discussed was the need to advocate for cultural sites in the Kawaihae area.

Vice Chair Haumea joined the meeting at 10:11 a.m., and quorum was confirmed with seven commissioners.

She expressed concern that the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) had recently completed a regional plan update for the area but had not included a conservation designation for Kawaihae. She noted that the State Department of Transportation was conducting an inventory of bridges but had chosen not to include the bridges in Kawaihae as historic resources. Similarly, a historic fishpond and other significant features such as conservation sites, burial sites, and church sites were also being excluded.

Ms. Tanimoto highlighted that a crypt associated with the Kawaiaha'o Church site was no longer included in any official inventory. Currently, only three sites in Kawaihae are listed in the National Park Service registry, and this list does not include important features such as the Queen's Bath.

She expressed concern over these omissions and stated that development by DHHL posed a serious issue for the community, particularly due to the potential for increased traffic and other impacts. She noted that many beneficiaries in the area had not been able to register cultural and historic sites due to a lack of funding.

Ms. Tanimoto concluded by expressing her desire for support in advocating for the recognition and protection of Kawaihae's cultural sites, historic landmarks, and traditional practices,

emphasizing that without action, these resources could soon be lost.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 13:35*] Ms. Palma noted that Ms. Tanimoto had shared a preliminary list of locations to begin with, which included burial sites, historical sites, cultural sites, and mauka-to-makai trails, although the current status of many of these sites remained unclear.

Ms. Tanimoto also spoke about the area's sugar plantation history, explaining that sugar was historically transported from Kohala to Kawaihae Harbor, but there are no visible trails or markers indicating where the train tracks once existed. She added that the Puakō-Lālāmilo line likely extended to the Puakō small boat harbor, but that area has since been lost as well.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 15:01*] Chair Clark stated that the Commission could consider making a motion to establish a PIG.

Two members of the public joined the meeting at 10:15 a.m. in person and did not provide any public testimony.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 15:43*] Commissioner Six stated that she had conducted a Hawai'i Cultural Resource Information System (HICRIS) search and found that over thirty documented sites exist within a two-mile radius of Kawaihae, including Forbes Cave and several large heiau. She noted that such data sets are often incomplete, as they are typically derived from formal Archaeological Inventory Surveys (AIS) or academic research conducted by colleges or universities.

She acknowledged the presence of both pre-contact and post-contact sites in the immediate area and expressed her understanding of Ms. Tanimoto's concerns. Commissioner Six stated that she would volunteer to participate in the proposed PIG. She also noted the presence of two burial caves within half a mile of the harbor, as well as a large heiau located within the national park.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 17:21*] Chair Clark asked how the Commission could assist Ms. Tanimoto in her efforts, noting that she had already begun identifying sites with the CDP action committee. He recommended checking with SHPD on the current status of site listings and working with the County to flag properties that may contain historic resources, so that appropriate considerations could be made during future development reviews.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 17:52*] Ms. Tanimoto explained that one of the main issues is that many of the sites are not registered with the State or National Historic Registers. She noted that, first, funding is being requested to support preservation efforts. Second, she emphasized the importance of preserving these sites, as many remain viable and serve essential functions—such as the bridges leading to the harbor, which are the only means of access. She also highlighted broader access issues within the Kawaihae area.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 21:25*] Chair Clark agreed with Ms. Tanimoto's concerns and stated that, to better understand how the Commission could provide support, it would be

beneficial to create a PIG, meet with Ms. Tanimoto, and conduct a site visit.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 21:58*] Vice Chair Haumea motioned to form a PIG to visit the Kawaihae area with Ms. Tanimoto; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Keakealani.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 22:35*] Commissioner Keakealani offered to be part of the PIG and participate in the site visits. She acknowledged the importance of Kawaihae, noting that it had once been the seat of government, a landing place, and an excursion site with considerable cultural heritage.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 24:53*] Vice Chair Haumea mentioned funding and recommended establishing nonprofit status to assist with securing funds. He also noted that he was familiar with the area, as his family were there for many generations.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 26:14*] Commissioner Gamayo offered to be part of the PIG and expressed a willingness to learn more about the issues and sites discussed.

Commissioner Gamayo left the meeting at 10:28 a.m., and quorum was confirmed with six commissioners.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 28:32*] No further discussion occurred. The motion to form a PIG was approved with a unanimous aye voice vote.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 30:45*] Ms. Tanimoto mentioned that a previous site visit had been conducted with six individuals who have lineal ties to the burial sites and expressed a desire to include them in the upcoming visit. CRC staff would coordinate the date and time of the visit with all parties involved. Ms. Campbell recommended that up to four commissioners be identified at this time to serve on the PIG. All commissioners agreed that the PIG would include Chair Clark, Commissioner Gamayo, Commissioner Keakealani, and Commissioner Six.

This matter concluded at 10:35 a.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. Approval of minutes for the meeting held on June 18, 2025.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 34:50*] Commissioner Spielman motioned to approve the minutes as circulated; seconded by Vice Chair Haumea. No discussion occurred. The minutes were approved without opposition with a unanimous aye voice vote.

2. Next meeting tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, September 10, 2025.

[*SEE YOUTUBE TIMESTAMP – 35:59*] Ms. Morrison noted that staff would be setting up a meeting with Chair Clark and Vice Chair Haumea to review potential agenda items. She mentioned that a

few nominations might be forthcoming, although none had been received yet. Staff would also coordinate time commitments for the PIG.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Six and seconded by Commissioner Spielman. The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m. with a unanimous aye vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley DeVera, Board Secretary

A T T E S T :

Matthew Clark, Chairman
Cultural Resources Commission