

CERTIFIED MAIL

December 14, 1982

Mr. Christopher Robb
Watanabe Floral, Inc.
P. O. Box 775
Kamuela, HI 96743

Dear Mr. Robb:

Variance Application (V82-47)
Variance from Maximum Allowable Height Limit
Tax Map Key 6-6-05:2

After reviewing your application and the information submitted in behalf of it, the Planning Director by this letter hereby certifies the approval of your variance request to allow the construction of a windmill tower with a height of ninety-six and one-half (96'-6") feet in lieu of the maximum allowable height of fifty-five (55) feet in the Agricultural zoned district.

The approval is based on the following:

1. There are special or unusual circumstances applying to the subject property which exist to a degree that interfere with the best use or manner of development of the property. Today's energy conscious society and world focuses on alternate energy systems such as windmills as viable energy options. This is evidenced by the fact that there are ongoing National and global efforts in becoming less dependent on oil and diversifying the dependence of energy to other resources. The concerted efforts being directed into fields of solar energy, biomass, wind energy, geothermal and ocean thermal systems, etc. are strong evidence as to the viability and need for these systems.

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The subject property is situated within the Lalamilo Farms Lots subdivision developed by the State of Hawaii. In the General Plan's Agricultural element, it is stated that "South Kohala's Waimea region contains the most extensive truck farming area in the County. Certain flowers and foilage are also grown in this region". "Land in the Waimea area has been identified as some of the most productive in the County". The Land Study Bureau's overall master productivity soil rating for the subject property is Class "B" or Good. The subject area has also been classified on the State Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Lands of Importance to the State of Hawaii (ALISH) map as "Prime Agricultural Land". In addition, Act 24, SLH 1980, dealing with wind farms allows commercial and private wind farms in the State Land Use "Agricultural" district ... provided that the facilities/structures are compatible with Agricultural uses and cause minimal adverse impacts on agricultural lands. The petitioner is also utilizing the windplant in their "agricultural" activity on the property.

In "A Siting Handbook for small Wind Energy Conversion Systems by H.L. Wegley, J.V. Ramsdell, U.S. Department of Energy, March 1980", it is stated that "The surface over which the wind flows affects wind speed near that surface. A rough surface will produce more friction than a smooth surface. The greater the friction the more the wind speed is reduced near the surface. Choosing a site in flat terrain is not as complicated as choosing a site in hilly or mountainous areas. When siting in flat terrain, only two primary questions need to be considered. These are, what surface roughnesses affect the wind profile in the area and what barriers might affect the free flow of the wind."

"Surface roughness describes the texture of the terrain. The rougher the surface, the more wind flowing over it is impeded. The only way to increase the available power in the uniform terrain is to raise the machine higher above the ground".

"Wind rose information can also guide the user in determining the influence of nearby terrain. For example, suppose a 400 foot high hill lies 1/2 mile northeast of the proposed site, (this classifies the terrain as non-flat).

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Also, assume the wind rose indicates that winds blow from the northeast quadrant only 5% of the time with an average speed of 5 mph. Obviously, so little power is associated with winds blowing from the hill to the site that the hill can be disregarded. If there are no terrain features upwind of the site along the principal wind power directions, the terrain can be considered flat".

All of the above information provides evidence that there are off-site influencing factors in the siting of a windmill system. This is so with the Watanabe Floral, Inc. area, as indicated by the wind gauging tests done by Wind Power Pacific at the subject site.

In this particular application, while there are no special or unusual circumstances which relate to the subject land, the uniqueness of the wind resource, in this particular case, is the off-site influencing factor relevant to the request for the additional height. Because of the above-site wind characteristics, these factors do apply to the subject property as they affect the way that alternatives have to be looked at in terms of establishing a windplant on the property.

Based on these foregoing conditions, the special circumstances relating to the wind patterns in conjunction with the maximum allowable height in the Zoning Code interfere with the best manner of development of the subject property in that the available wind power above the site cannot otherwise be more fully utilized.

2. There are no other reasonable alternatives in resolving this difficulty. The alternative of denying the variance is not a reasonable one in that the efficiency of the facility would be further diminished and its utility would be voided. As such, because the requested additional height is needed to ensure or increase the efficiency of the facility to serve the existing agricultural activity and related uses on the farm, we have determined that the most reasonable alternative is in granting the variance. Any other solutions would cause excessive or undue hardships on the petitioner in enhancing the efficiency and utility of the windmill, when a more reasonable solution is available.
3. The approval of the request would be consistent with the County General Plan's "Energy" element and with State and National goals which encourage the development and use of

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alternate energy sources. The proposed windmill will be utilized in assisting in the agricultural development practices of the Kawamata farm.

In assessing the requests of height variances for windmills, the three basic elements that are primarily evaluated are the visual impact, the physical impact and the need for the additional height. The proposed windmill must be reviewed in terms of its visual and physical impact in the area to ensure that the spirit and intent of height limits are not violated. The location of the proposed windmill is located towards the rear of the existing green-houses, approximately 400 feet from the access road, 100 feet from the east side property line, and approximately 870 feet from Mamalahoa Highway. The lands surrounding the property are vacant and are basically flat with minimal undulations. The height of approximately 96 feet for the windmill would make it prominent in its location and particularly in its relationship to the surrounding area's character. However, the area is basically "agricultural" in nature as the subject property is situated within the Lalamilo Farm Lots subdivision. As such, while it can be conceded that the additional height being requested is one that is valid, it should not compromise the other visual and physical impact issues. The central location of the windplant on the property and the distance of the windplant from Mamalahoa Highway will serve to minimize any physical or visual impacts in the area. As such, the granting of the variance will not compromise the physical and visual issues for this area. This distances from the visual corridors will ensure that the both visual and physical impacts will be minimized to the point where it should have a minor rather than a major impact in the area in light of the additional height being granted in this variance.

Based on the foregoing, we have determined that the granting of the variance shall be consistent with the general purpose of the Zoning District, the intent and purposes of the Zoning Code and the General Plan. The analysis of the above issues also has concurred that the granting of the variance will not be materially detrimental to the public's welfare nor cause any substantial or adverse impact to the area's character or to adjoining properties.

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The variance request is approved, subject to the following conditions:

1. That the petitioner or authorized representative be responsible for complying with all the stated conditions of approval.
2. Plans and construction of the total structure must be approved by a structural engineer or architect registered in the State of Hawaii.
3. That plans for the proposed windmill be submitted to the Planning Department for Plan Approval within one (1) year from the effective date of approval of the Variance Permit.
4. That the petitioner or authorized representative secure approval for the building plans and specification for the proposed windplant from the Chairman of the Department of Land and Natural Resources prior to the granting of Final Plan Approval.
5. The petitioner or authorized representative shall be responsible for providing the appropriate safeguards on their system to prevent TV and/or radio interference to the adjoining property owners notified through this variance application.
6. The petitioner shall comply with all other Federal, State and County Rules, Regulations and Requirements.

Should the petitioner or authorized representative fail to comply with the above conditions, the variance shall automatically be deemed void.

If you have any questions on this matter, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,



SIDNEY M. FUCE
Planning Director

RHY:db

cc: Mr. John Crouch