STATE OF HAWAII
LAND USE COMMISSION

Kahilu Hall
Kamuela, Hawaii

November 15, 1968
11 a.m.

STAFF REPORT

A68-200 - LUI KALANI STONE

A request to amend the district boundaries from a Conservation classification to an Agricultural classification has been submitted by attorney Richard I. Miyamoto on behalf of Lui Kalani Stone. The property in question comprises 284.5 acres and is described as parcel 3 of TMK 1-1-01. It is situated at Pulama, Puna, Hawaii, at the southeast entrance to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The Rural District of Kalapana is approximately 4 miles east of the property under consideration.

In justification of the request, the petitioner submits that:

1. The land is usable and adaptable for agricultural purposes.
2. The County General Plan designates the area as an agricultural zone.

In support of the first item, a report by appraiser Gordon T. Shigeura has been submitted indicating that:

1. In the now unaltered condition the land can only be considered at best, as poor grazing land, probably able to sustain about one head of cattle per 25 acres.

2. Land development by bulldozer rooting, mulching with mill ash and bagasse, and planting to grasses and legumes can substantially increase the grazing potential of area to perhaps one to two heads of cattle per 5 acres.

Soil classification of the subject property by the Land Study Bureau indicates that three land types are involved with an overall productivity rating of "E", indicating "very poor" overall suitability for agricultural uses. These land types contain slopes of 20% or less, no soil material, and are generally unsuited for machine cultivation. However, it is significant to note that for grazing purposes, about two-thirds of the subject parcel is rated as "B - good" to "C - fair". The median annual rainfall in this area measures about 50 inches. The elevation ranges between 20 to 80 feet above sea level.

Lands within the surrounding Conservation District, including the property under discussion, are comprised of vacant lava flows sparsely overgrown with native vegetation. Abutting the property to the north and situated in the Agricultural District is the Royal Gardens Subdivision. This is a non-conforming residential subdivision of 1-acre lots which is presently vacant.

County Recommendation

A recommendation for approval of the request has been received from the Hawaii County Planning Commission based upon the following:

1. Land is usable and adaptable for agricultural purposes.
2. Area is designated as agricultural land under the County General Plan.
3. Land adjoins an existing Agricultural District under State Land Use designation.

Analysis

Approximately 50% of the property boundaries of the parcel under consideration abut the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. In fact, the property once comprised a portion of the National Park and for that reason was duly included within the State's Conservation District in August, 1964. However, ownership of the parcel reverted back to the petitioner in April, 1967, together with several other parcels in the vicinity.

An evaluation of the Conservation values accruing to the property under consideration indicates a significant lack of the historic, cultural, and scenic features which are to be found in the Conservation District extending just beyond the Park boundaries to the east. This area which extends makai of the Kalapana-Chain of Craters Road, contains the well known Queen's Bath plus several ponds and ancient heiaus and is therefore appropriately districted for preservation purposes.

The withdrawal of the parcel from the National Park no longer makes a Conservation classification purposeful or imperative.

In addition, the problems of watersheds, steep topography, soil erosion, etc., are not the considerations in this instance.

On the other hand, the County General Plan designates the area for agricultural purposes, and the petitioner has submitted evidence that the land is suitable for this use. This evidence is supported by the findings of the Land Study Bureau.

Recommendation

Therefore, on the basis of the analysis outlined above, it is recommended that the petition be approved.