STATE OF HAWAII
LAND USE COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

July 16, 1971
10 a.m.

TO: Land Use Commission

FROM: Staff

SUBJECT: A71-277 - LAND USE COMMISSION (Waiakea Homesteads)

This petition initiated by the Land Use Commission to amend the district boundaries for approximately 790 acres of land at Waiakea Homesteads, South Hilo, Hawaii, from an Agricultural to an Urban District was publicly heard on April 16, 1971, at Hilo, Hawaii.

At the public hearing considerable testimony was presented both for and against the proposed rezoning. Basically, those favoring the reclassification to an Urban designation cited the need for more urban-zoned lands to provide for critically needed housing in the Hilo area. Those opposed to the rezoning based their arguments on the need to protect the existing agricultural activities in the area and to preserve the open spaces surrounding the non-conforming residential subdivisions in the subject area. A petition containing approximately 113 signatures, primarily of residents of the non-conforming subdivisions, was submitted requesting the Land Use Commission to "cease and desist in its efforts to rezone our area to Urban".

In recommending that the property under consideration be reclassified to an Urban designation during the 1969 boundary review, our consultants for the review, Eckbo, Dean, Austin & Williams, stated the following:

> "The Hilo area has produced more requested for additional urban lands since the district boundaries were adopted than any other urban area in the county. Although it has been documented that enough vacant urban area exists within the present Urban District, the major complaint has been that over one-half of these lands set aside for urban expansion are in public ownership. In endeavoring to satisfy this problem, we have excluded these publicly owned lands from our calculations of lands needed for urban expansion by 1978 based on the estimated population growth for the city of Hilo. With an urban expansion factor of three times this growth, we have concluded that there will be a need for approximately 900 additional acres of urban land.
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> "In determining where this additional land should be allocated, we took into consideration the areas presently zoned for one acre minimum lot size in the adjacent Agriculture Districts and the recently adopted Hilo Development Plan . . ."

Hawaii County's Housing Study which was completed last year showed that the South Hilo District will require 1,545 new residential units to accommodate an anticipated increase of 5,550 persons by 1975. In addition, 127 existing units will have to be replaced. Therefore, a total of 1,672 new units will be required in the South Hilo District by 1975.

It is clear from the above that sufficient reserve areas to accommodate anticipated urban growth are urgently needed

in the South Hilo District. However, the staff feels that urbanizing the entire 790 acres proposed under this petition is not advisable at this time because of the extent of existing agricultural activity in the area. The staff particularly notes that the Commission's concern for those engaged in bona-fide agricultural activities was twice demonstrated when initially it decided not to rezone the area to an Urban classification as recommended by its consultants during the 1969 review and again when it delayed the initiation of this petition in order to allow ample time for those farmers seriously contemplating continuing agricultural pursuits to dedicate their lands to a specific crop use for a period of 10 years.

Therefore, in order to resolve this basic conflict between Urban needs and the needs of Agriculture, the staff recommends that approximately a 410-acre portion of the subject area shown on Exhibit A be reclassified from Agricultural to Urban at this time in order to provide for Urban needs in the Hilo area. This area includes all of the non-conforming residential subdivisions within the petition area and excludes lands which are dedicated to agricultural uses, with only one exception involving approximately 8 acres.

It is further recommended that during the 1974 boundary review, the Camp 6 Urban District should be considered for reclassification to an Agricultural District by the Land Use Commission since a significant portion of the area is in agricultural use and that there is no indication of further urban-type developments.