

PUBLIC HEARING

OCTOBER 23, 2019

A public hearing of the Council of the County of Kaua'i was called to order by Mason K. Chock, Chair, Planning Committee, on Wednesday, October 23, 2019, at 1:34 p.m., at the Council Chambers, 4396 Rice Street, Suite 201, Historic County Building, Līhu'e, and the presence of the following was noted:

Honorable Mason K. Chock
Honorable Felicia Cowden
Honorable Luke A. Evslin
Honorable KipuKai Kualii
Honorable Arryl Kaneshiro

Excused: Honorable Arthur Brun
 Honorable Ross Kagawa

The Clerk read the notice of the public hearing on the following:

“Bill No. 2745 – A BILL FOR AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 10, KAUAI COUNTY CODE 1987, AS AMENDED, RELATING TO THE LIHU'E TOWN CORE URBAN DESIGN DISTRICT,”

which was ordered to print by the Council of the County of Kaua'i on September 25, 2019, and published in The Garden Island newspaper on October 2, 2019.

The hearing proceeded as follows:

SCOTT K. SATO, Deputy County Clerk: We have one (1) registered speaker, JoAnn Yukimura.

Committee Chair Chock: Thank you. This is for Bill No. 2745.

JOANN A. YUKIMURA: Thank you, Committee Chair Chock and Councilmembers, I am JoAnn Yukimura. I speak today in opposition of Bill No. 2745. It will allow Additional Rental Units (ARUs) in the Līhu'e Town Core. It will bring the effective density to R-80 or eighty (80) units per acre.

I oppose this Bill for the following reasons: one, eighty (80) units per acre is too much for an island community whose main goal is to retain its rural character. It is

a density that Kaua'i has never experienced before. We have rarely experienced R-40 residential densities. Until last year, the highest residential density allowed by our Zoning Ordinance was R-20. The forty (40) units per acre density has mainly been reserved for resorts. As you know, I strongly support more compact development, and I voted as a member of the previous Council to up-zone the Līhu'e Town Core to R-40. However, R-80 is too much. Please remember, if you approve the R-80 and it does not work or turns out to be a bad idea, we will not be able to go back. Giving too much zoning without careful thought is the reason today's resort dilemma. Residents and the visitor industry are saying we are at our tourism limit in terms of infrastructure and the balance between visitor and residents. However, there is zoning on the books for three thousand (3,000) more resort units that could be built. Whether we need them or not, this was made by the previous Councils and Mayors that gave out the zoning; which is virtually impossible to take back. From the planning standpoint, you will be giving away the planning tools of bonus densities and transfer development rights. With density across the board, these tools will be meaningless. Secondly, Bill No. 2745 will push us beyond the protected need for housing units in Līhu'e. Up on the screen you will see that even without Bill No. 2745, we have over one thousand (1,000) more units in Līhu'e than the new general plan says we need. Third, R-80 will artificially increase the pressure to increase the height limit in Līhu'e. I can hear landowners saying, "I want to get the full potential of my entitlement and the only way to get it is if the County increases the height limit in Līhu'e." If we increase the height limit on R-40 densities, that alone will allow more units to be built. Let us see what scenarios that will do before considering R-80 densities. Rather than giving out R-80 entitlements, it would be better for the County to work on infrastructure for the existing R-40 densities and other residentially zoned vacant lands in Līhu'e to encourage more housing.

Committee Chair Chock: Wow. That was on the spot, three (3) minutes, you are getting good.

Ms. Yukimura: Well, you folks disciplined me.

Committee Chair Chock: Is there anyone else in the audience wishing to testify on this item? Mr. Hart.

BRUCE HART: I was not going to testify. However, in light of Ms. Yukimura's testimony I am not sure if she heard earlier, but I spoke to you about density. I have been speaking to you about density dated back to the meeting she is referring to. With qualifications, I support the increase in density, I have expressed my concerns numerous times. I agree with Ms. Yukimura. I have already stated that R-80 is a lot. Increasing density is not the only solution. We need to come up with other solutions. I have stated before...are we at that point that we are going to have to accept rezoning land in order to be able to build? Are we going to take land that

does not have houses to put houses on it? That is something that this Council has to wrestle with. I have to wrestle with this, too. You are in my prayers.

Committee Chair Chock: Thank you. Is there anyone else wishing to testify? Anyone for a second time? Ms. Yukimura, no?

There being no one present to testify on this matter, the public hearing adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



SCOTT K. SATO
Deputy County Clerk

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