

**MINUTES  
FOR THE MEETING OF THE  
HAWAI'I BOARD ON GEOGRAPHIC NAMES**

DATE: August 8, 2018  
TIME: 10:00 a.m.  
PLACE: Leiopapa A Kamehameha Building  
Office of Planning, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
235 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order**

Mr. Marzan called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

The following were in attendance:

**MEMBERS:** Marques Marzan (Bishop Museum)  
Kaleo Manuel (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands)  
Meyer Cummins (Land Survey Division)  
Holly McEldowney (Department of Land and Natural Resources)  
Brad Ka'aleleo Wong (Office of Hawaiian Affairs)  
Leo Asuncion (Office of Planning) arrived 10:41am, left 11:56am

**ABSENT:** Noenoe Silva (University of Hawai'i)

**ADVISORS:** Arthur Buto (Office of Planning staff)  
Renee Pualani Louis

**GUESTS:** Kalani Makekai-Whittaker joined the meeting by Skype for Business

**AGENDA ITEM 2: Review of Meeting Minutes for June 13, 2018:**

**MOTION:** Mr. Manuel moved to approve the minutes; Mr. Cummins seconded the motion.

*The members present voted unanimously to approve the meeting minutes of June 13, 2018.*

**AGENDA ITEM 3: Public Comments**

No public comments were received.

**AGENDA ITEM 4: Announcements**

No announcements.

**AGENDA ITEM 5: Establish regular meeting day and time**

Mr. Asuncion has had a conflicting meeting for the past several months. With a new semester starting, Ms. Silva may have conflicts with her class schedules.

After some discussion, the members present tentatively scheduled the meetings on the third Thursday of the month from 10am-12pm.

Mr. Marzan asked if the members want to select a new Chair as his travel schedule recently and continuing in the near future may mean that he may be unavailable.

**AGENDA ITEM 6: Discuss new feature naming process and activities with respect to “Fissure 8”**

With the increased interest in naming features resulting from the ongoing lava event on the island of Hawai‘i, this is an opportunity for the board to reach out to the community and decision makers to raise awareness about the HBGN, its responsibilities and its processes.

In July, Councilwoman Susan Lee Loy introduced a resolution to the Hawai‘i County Council urging that HBGN “*consult with community members who have direct traditional, cultural, and familial ties*” to the areas impacted by the recent volcanic activity to establish names for features associated with the eruption. OHA submitted testimony in support of the resolution and used the opportunity to make the Council aware of HBGN’s role in naming decisions. The board considers community input very seriously, sometimes carrying more weight than the board’s usual references (e.g., PNH) on which the board relies. The recent example of changing the name of ‘Iao Stream to Wailuku River was cited. The board received a written request from community members along with supporting evidence to restore the historical name of the waterway. The board also traveled to Maui to hear testimony directly from the community before making its decision.

Dr. Makekau-Whittaker, who joined this meeting remotely, indicated that he and Pi‘ilani Ka‘awaloa, Keone Kalawe, and Leialoha Kaleimamahu are coming together to talk about naming some of the new features created by this lava event. He is acting as a messenger for the group today. Although he is from Hilo, he has been working with the community in Puna and has been to the eruption sites, speaking with cultural experts. There is a strong feeling that the local community should be giving names to the features, and that the names should capture the feeling of the spiritual events and ceremonies that have been conducted. They already have names for several features – some have come through dreams – and they’re preparing for cultural ceremonies to name the features. The board recognizes that inspiration from dreams plays an important role in the naming process and is among the ways that names come to life – that inspiration should be noted in the proposal that the group eventually submits to HBGN.

The board is proceeding cautiously and wants to make it clear that it is not rushing to name the features – the board wants to take as much time as is needed. However, if name

proposals have been developed they can be submitted now. There's no clock that starts once an application is received – there's not a mandated timeframe in which a feature has to be named.

The board will make its naming decision based on the rationale attached to the proposals – “designate” in the statute means choose from among the proposed names, not necessarily to come up with the names. Some board members are concerned about HBGN's role in this process, especially if there are multiple names proposed for the same feature with no clear consensus from the community.

Dr. Makekau-Whittaker noted that it may not be “smooth sailing” for HBGN with respect to acceptance and support by the entire community (he cited the Pele versus ‘Ailā‘au interpretations). He asked that the board consider from whom the name comes and not just the genealogical ties, practitioners or not, and to consider their personal experiences and interactions with the flow.

Dr. Louis noted that the board has reviewed contentious proposals in the past, but this is different, because this is an active event. She suggested that in the event of multiple name proposals there be a kūkākūkā prior to the board making its decision.

The board considers it the community's responsibility to name the features. Mr. Asuncion stated that consultation with community is important; reach out as broadly as possible will lead to better decision making. In the case of Wailuku River, a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) was employed to facilitate gathering more information. The loudest applicant is not always the one whose application is approved.

Mr. Cummins asked how the board plans to communicate and make itself available to the community in a more active role? Because of the interest and awareness of the lava event, the board should proactively develop a plan for reaching out to the community (including roles and responsibilities). Mr. Asuncion will provide a first draft of a plan to move forward and clarify the role of the board to make it clear that it is supportive of the inclusivity of the process.

***The Office of Planning will draft a communication plan to reach out to the community and other stakeholders (e.g., County Council, legislators, etc.).***

Dr. Louis recalled that for Wailuku River there was a deputy attorney general present at the community meeting who also helped with the PIG. One of the steps should be to check with the Attorney General's office about how to do outreach to Puna community.

Mr. Cummins suggested working with the Hawai'i County Council, since the resolution is coming from them; they may be able to help find a suitable location for a meeting. Mr. Asuncion noted that the community meeting on Maui was held at the Wailuku Community Center and led by Kamana'o Mills, the HBGN chair at the time. The PIG reported, the community spoke, and the board discussed the issue and was able to make its decision (there was quorum present). The community expressed its appreciation to the board for holding the meeting in Wailuku.

Dr. Makekau-Whittaker requested that he be added to the HBGN distribution list.

*Dr. Makekau-Whittaker left the meeting at 11:12am.*

***Mr. Buto will add Dr. Makekau-Whittaker to the HBGN distribution list.***

**AGENDA ITEM 7: Discuss new decision category, “Alternate name.”**

Mr. Cummins proposed some guidelines around the designation of an Alternate Name: “if its use and spelling are as widely or nearly as widely accepted by community as the Primary Name. In addition, it should have reliable and verifiable historical evidence of its use and spelling in an amount equal to or nearly equal to the Primary Name. Or its use by the local community is prevalent despite its origin (e.g., non-Hawaiian, like “Barber’s Point”) and despite historical evidence from reliable sources espousing the Primary Name as being predominant (i.e., while there’s historical evidence that says this is the Primary Name, the community generally uses the Alternate Name and it’s known by the Alternate Name).”

The idea is that an Alternate Name gives state agencies an alternative to the primary name that’s in the GNIS. Federal agencies are still required to use the Primary Name.

Mr. Manuel noted that if you continue to use the popular name rather than the historical name, you’re contributing to the reducing the value of the mana of the original place name. Do you want to perpetuate the incorrect name rather than just “cutting it out” and saying this (Primary Name) is the name? We should give preference to the Hawaiian name. Traditional names are usually place or feature names, not built structures.

Some other considerations:

- What have naming authorities in other states done? Ms. Louis suggested looking at Alaska and some Western states;
- An additional column should be inserted into the current spreadsheet used for review;
- Does the board make the determination if a name is an Alternate Name or does it go back to the community?
- Should the board review the Variant Names to identify Alternate Names or wait until issues come up during the review? The consensus was to wait.

***Mr. Cummins will draft some criteria and usage guidelines. Mr. Buto will incorporate Mr. Cummins’ draft into the submittal from earlier meetings and circulate to the board for discussion and decision making at the next meeting.***

**AGENDA ITEM 8: Discuss removing unnecessary descriptors/qualifiers (e.g., “Fishpond”).**

Ms. Louis provided some historical background. Before the introduction of Feature Class in the GNIS database, the feds wanted a feature to have a specific name and a generic name (e.g., “stream”, etc.). The US BGN has since recognized that you don’t need the generic name. In cartography, these categories may be differentiated by symbology or different fonts (e.g., italics for a water feature).

Ms. Louis would like to see feature class listing for Hawaiian features (e.g., pu‘u, mauna, kahawai, etc.). It would need to be reconciled/mapped to the USGS Feature Classes for integration into the GNIS.

Mr. Manuel noted that in the case of “heiau,” by including it in the Feature Name, you’re exposing it to potential looters; by not including it, you’re concealing and even diminishing its cultural and historical significance and exposing it to potential damage/destruction by landowners and developers, since in an environmental assessment, it won’t be clear that it is a culturally significant site. Who gets to say it’s a heiau or not; there are also different layers of heiau in Hawai‘i.

Mr. Cummins suggested that generally, if a feature doesn’t share the name with other features, then it can stand alone without a descriptor. But if it shares the name with other features, the Feature Name should include the descriptor.

***Mr. Cummins will include these guidelines in the draft for Alternate Names.***

If guidelines for Alternate Name(s) and Descriptors are adopted by the board, they should be incorporated into a revised HBGN Style Guide/Decision Guide.

Ms. Louis is working on an article for *Ke Ola Magazine* and would like to give an overview of HBGN. There were no objections from board members.

*Mr. Asuncion left the meeting at 11:56am.*

**AGENDA ITEM 9: Review proposed new place names on the island of Hawai‘i (Ala Kahakai National Historic Trail)**

HBGN did not review these place names.

**AGENDA ITEM 10: Review selected place names on the island of Hawai‘i (Bobby Camara)**

HBGN did not review these place names.

**AGENDA ITEM 11: Adjourn**

Mr. Marzan adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 20, 2018, at 10:00 a.m., at the Office of Planning Conference Room. The meeting day and time will be confirmed by email for the benefit of members who were not present at this meeting.