



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

DATE: MARCH 20, 2014
TIME: 10:00 am
PLACE: Leiopapa A. Kamehameha Building
Office of Planning, 6th Floor Conference Room
235 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

AGENDA ITEM 1: Call to Order

Mr. Kamañao Mills, Chairperson of the Hawai'i Board on Geographic Names (HBGN or Board), called the meeting to order at 10:10 am.

The following were in attendance:

MEMBERS: Kalani Akana (Office of Hawaiian Affairs), Joan Delos Santos (Office of Planning), Betty Kam (Bernice P. Bishop Museum), Holly McEldowney (Department of Land and Natural Resources), Kamañao Mills (Department of Hawaiian Home Lands), and Ryan Morales (Land Survey Division)

ABSENT: Noenoe Silva (University of Hawai'i)

ADVISOR: Renee Louis, PhD., Naomi Losch (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa–retired)

OTHERS: Melia Lane-Kamahele (National Park Service)

AGENDA ITEM 2: Approval of Meeting Minutes of February 20, 2014

Ms. Holly McEldowney, HBGN Secretary, explained that the February 20, 2014 meeting minutes are not ready for distribution although a draft is complete. It will be distributed to the Board by email in the next day or two. A portion of the draft minutes, that pertinent to today's main discussion, was distributed earlier.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Status of HBGN Names Database Organization and Publication Initiative

Ms. Joan Delos Santos announced that huge progress was made in efforts to reorganize and standardize the place names database and to prepare it for posting on the HBGN website. She thanked Ms. Renee Louis profusely for helping with this process. They developed a coding scheme for the 3,000 Hawai'i Island names on the spreadsheets which includes six categories of actions taken by the Board. The categories are: 1) not a Hawaiian name; 2) name not reviewed, 3) name needing more research, 4) name was corrected; 5) name was

already correct; and 5) a name was changed. Each category was assigned a color code so users would know actions taken at a glance. Ms. Louis clarified that “already correct” means that the name is in the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) in its correct format. With this coding complete, she believes the Hawai‘i Island list will be ready for posting on the HBGN website soon.

Ms. Delos Santos pointed out that this coding will not tell users if a name has been entered in the GNIS or if the Board of Geographic Names (BGN) has processed a HBGN recommendation. She hopes to include codes for these actions as well. During this process, they were able to determine which names reviewed by the Board still need to be submitted to the BGN. She will not, however, submit any until the Board’s discussion on combining names is complete and names can be revisited if needed.

Ms. Delos Santos asked the Chair if she could make a couple of announcements and he agreed. Mr. Jesse Souki, Director of Office of Planning, has left to become a Deputy of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Mr. Leo Asuncion was appointed Acting Director until the position is permanently appointed. Mr. Asuncion is currently manager of the Hawai‘i Coastal Zone Management Program.

One bill at the legislature could affect the HBGN if amended. Senate Bill 2682 requires financial disclosures from individuals serving on certain boards and commissions. At first the bill only addressed the Public Utilities Commission. The State Ethics Commission recommended that five additional boards be included in the bill. In the latest draft, 15 boards were included. Some agencies are concerned that the language could be amended to include all boards and commissions. The Office of Planning may submit testimony expressing concern if the bill passes out of the next committee. The measure could discourage volunteers from serving on boards if they are hesitant to have their financial statements made public.

Ms. Melia Lane-Kamahele noted that these kinds of disclosures, such as those done for the federal government, are usually very general. Ms. Delos Santos explained that normally board members just need to state that they have no conflicts. Ms. Betty Kam recalled that disclosure forms she has completed only ask that you identify your earnings and obligations within ranges. They do not ask for specifics. Ms. McEldowney pointed out that HBGN members are not really volunteers because they are assigned by their employers to represent the agency or institution on the board. All serve in that capacity and not individually. Also, the Board’s decisions have little financial impact so members have nothing to gain personally from their decisions. Ms. Delos Santos said the initial bill applied only to Boards with spending authority exceeding 1 million dollars. That language was removed after the Ethics Commission pointed out that it did not know which boards exceed that threshold and the measure would be difficult to police effectively. Some financial statements are not made public which means the Ethics Commission would need to determine if there may be a conflict. It is not feasible for them to review the financial statements of every board. The intent of the bill is to encourage open government and transparency.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Discussion on Decision-Making Criteria for Combining Names from Two Words to One Word (e.g., Mauna Kea to Maunakea, Kipuka Kekake to Kipukakekake, etc.)

Mr. Mills began by referring to the spreadsheet Ms. Delos Santos distributed to Board members by email in March. Listed on the spreadsheet are all Hawai'i Island place names the Board previously decided to combine or not combine. It was prepared by Ms. Louis to assist the Board in devising a policy on when place names should be combined. After reviewing these names, Mr. Mills said he realized that creating this policy would not be simple. He hoped to deduce a policy that encompassed all board decisions over the last five years and then amend that policy to reflect the current Board's perspectives. The policy could be amended in the future if needed. As a start, he had a suggestion. All place names would be compressed with the exception of the following: (1) place names that include Hawaiian and English (e.g., Kawaiaha'o Church); (2) names that incorporate numbers (e.g., Honua'ino 4, Honua'ino 1 and 2); and (3) two or more places having descriptors and similar initial place names (e.g., Hilea Iki and Hilea Nui). He thought the third criterion would be easy but he found many exceptions on the list. For example, the larger place name is Hilea and Iki and Nui describe two separate places within a larger place. The two would then be written separately. Unfortunately, this would affect names such as Ko'olauloa and Ko'olaulopoko which are usually combined. It would not resolve the issue of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa.

Mr. Kalani Akana explained that he prefers calling these guidelines instead of policies. He believes the Board should go back to the original and traditional usage of names, such as those recorded in newspapers and *Place Names of Hawaii (Place Names)*, and that this should be the standard. When there is a need to differentiate, there are various ways to do so. For example, Ko'olauloa is combined in newspapers so the decision would be to combine it. When the Board has no specific reference or basis for a decision, then it can apply steps set out in guidelines. Mauna Kea is not a hard issue because Kea is personal name and it should stand apart from Mauna. Loa was also a personal name as Ms. Noenoe Silva pointed out at the last meeting. The name was Mauna a Loa. For names such as Ko'olauloa, there is no dispute. When the Board needs guidance, it should go through step one, step two, etc., of the guidelines.

When Ms. Naomi Losch arrived, Mr. Mills explained that the Board was discussing how to formulate Board policies or guidelines for deciding when to combine or not combine place names. The hope is to have something in writing to help guide the Board. Ms. Losch recalls being uncomfortable with some of the name-combining recommendations being made in the 'Ahahui 'Ōlelo guidelines when she participated in their development in 1978. There will always be exceptions to rules. She also emphasized that if you really go back, the place names were all spoken and not written. Mr. Mills reiterated that he was trying to devise a policy that reflects the Board's past decisions by reviewing the lists created by Ms. Louis. He realized that it was difficult to deduce clear patterns because there were already many exceptions to the general rules. Mr. Akana's repeated his suggestion. Rule number one should be that the Board follows standard, recorded practices as represented in

Hawaiian newspapers. When past practice cannot be established, then the Board applies the guidelines. He would add that personal names should remain separate. Mr. Mills agreed that the document should be called guidelines to imply that they can be amended as needed. Ms. Kam noted that there are often differences in the way names are spelled or presented in written sources. Mr. Akana believes that *Place Names* was based on how names appeared in newspapers.

Ms. Kam pointed out that many names are not in *Place Names* and these names are generally thrown into the “more research” category. She appreciates the emphasis on looking to multiple sources when making these decisions. The question then becomes what sources does the Board use? The number of place names in the “more research” category is high, in large part because the Board did not have access to many of the references it does now. Ms. Louis emphasized that it is problematic using sources such as *Atlas of Hawai‘i* or the UH Press maps because the research methods used in preparing these publications is not known and cannot be confirmed. These sources were noted in the spreadsheet when the Board determined more research was required. Many of these were pu‘u names.

Mr. Mills raise another potential approach. The Board first follows what is in *Place Names* and then the ‘Ahahui ‘Ōlelo guidelines if the name is not in *Place Names*. Mr. Akana noted that it is differences between *Place Names* and the ‘Ahahui ‘Ōlelo guidelines that tend to be the major source of the Board’s confusion. Ms. Louis recalled that someone who participated in developing the ‘Ahahui ‘Ōlelo guidelines told her that it was not the group’s intent to combined names automatically. The names should be combined if that is the name of the place. The Board tended to combine names automatically. She agrees it is important for this Board to clarify how the ‘Ahahui ‘Ōlelo guidelines should be applied. The approach should reflect the greater availability of resources. Ms. Losch agreed that with the advent of the computer and the digitizing of so many documents, the Board is now able to do much more research on individual place names than was possible in the past. These will be very valuable sources. She noted that it bothered her having all the kīpuka names combined.

Ms. Kam suggested that it would help to prioritize a list of authorities for people like her who do not know the Hawaiian language well. If a place name is not in any of those sources, then the Board follows the guidelines. Ms. Louis recommended adding to any hierarchy the community or what is considered common usage. She noted that most of what this Board has done is based on archival sources. Initially the Board wanted to reach out to communities, but she is not certain how best to accomplish this. With the technology available today, it could be asking OHA to post something in the *Ka Wai Ola* newspaper that would ask people interested in place names to go to a designated website and contribute what they want to share. The notice could designate particular areas being reviewed at that time. This might be the easiest approach although it would take time to deal with conflicting information. When names were initially marked as needing more research, the Board hoped to receive grants to pay for Board meetings in different communities. Ms. Kam asked what having access to more resources means for the Board’s past decisions. Should there be another review or does the Board just move on? Ms. Louis said that, fortunately, a majority of names needing more research are on Hawai‘i Island.

Oahu names had to be reviewed quickly because the USGS was in the process of recasting the quads for that island.

Ms. Delos Santos noted that in May 2012 a large number of names were submitted to BGN and it included names from all islands. She has asked the BGN to suspend processing any of these until the HBGN decides how it wants to approach combined place names. She does not know which names on this list have been approved and processed by BGN. Ms. Louis suspects that BGN would do them all at one time. Ms. Delos Santos thought they might do them in batches because there were so many. Ms. Louis added that the BGN may only address certain name types, such as natural features, which are the current priority. This approach is in response to funding cuts.

Mr. Mills reiterated the point raised by Ms. Kam. The HBGN made decisions on thousands of names in the past decade. He asked if the Board thought it should go back and review past decisions or continue on and leave the review of past decisions to future Boards. Ms. Kam said she sees the current the Board as establishing different procedures for reviewing place names which go beyond just combining names. It includes place name authorities and sources. She agrees that the question is do we move forward and not worry about the past or do we address past decisions. Ms. Delos Santos suggested that the feasibility of reviewing past decisions could be assessed by looking at how many place names have been submitted to the BGN and how many have not. The Board could then focus only on those that were not submitted. If these numbers are low, it is feasible to revisit those decisions.

Ms. Louis raised a problem with the way the BGN has approved some HBGN actions. When the HBGN thought a name should be combined but also believed it needed more research, the combined name was entered in the corrected column. The BGN thought this "corrected" name was the Board's final decision and approved the name. When she reviewed Hawai'i Island names entered in GNIS, she realized that this kind of information should be in the notes column, not the corrected column. She is correcting this as she goes through all the spreadsheets as part of the database organization effort. The BGN takes anything in the corrected column as a final decision. Ms. Kam stressed that this is a problem because people will begin to use names listed as final decisions. Ms. Louis noted that these names went in prior to the 2012 submittal. Ms. Lane-Kamahele recalled that names reviewed for the quad recasting were submitted as a huge block. Those names are accepted as official and legal unless the HBGN wants to go back and revise those at some point. Federal agencies should be using these names. Ms. Delos Santos noted that State agencies should, by law, be using them as well although most are not. Ms. Louis does not know how Craig Tasaka, the previous Office of Planning staff assigned to the Board, submitted the names. He may have submitted the working spreadsheets or just the names by themselves without the full spreadsheet. Ms. Lane-Kamahele recalled that they did not need to go through the full process for minor revisions during the recasting effort. Ms. Louis remembers that this process only included about 20 names. Ms. Delos Santos thought the HBGN submitted every name considered even if it were a resubmitted. She thinks that all names on the spreadsheet involving a change were submitted without checking to see if they had been submitted previously. Ms. Louis said she may be able to look into this once she finishes the database organization effort. It is a valid concern.

Mr. Mills concluded that the Board was not ready to address the question of reviewing past decisions. It is important to assess the immensity of this effort before choosing a strategy on how to proceed. Ten years of work would have to be reviewed. Mr. Akana asked if the practice was always to combine place names. Ms. Losch recalled that the Board did not combine all place names from the very beginning. It became a practice later. Ms. Louis said it became accepted practice after the subcommittee was formed to bring more consistency to Board decisions and it decided to follow the 'Ahahui 'Ōlelo guidelines. She noted that there is a distinction between the specific name and the generic name. Kīpuka is the generic Hawaiian name added to a specific place name. The BGN wants to have a generic name with a specific name so that it knows what kind of feature it is. The Board decided to combine kīpuka names because it had been doing it with pu'u, etc. She then became an advocate for combining kīpuka names. Every time there was a new board, the past practice was followed. Also, there were not as many Board members with the language and cultural background as there are now. Even if a kīpuka name is separate in *Place Names*, the decision was to combine it. Mr. Akana pointed out that most of the kīpuka names in *Place Names* are combined but with a hyphen between the name components. It is separated if it involves a personal name. Ms. Losch explained that Ms. Mary Kawena Pukui used the hyphen to indicate that the place name includes a feature and proper name. The 'Ahahui 'Ōlelo decided that no hyphens would be used.

Mr. Akana believed that most past decisions would stand if revisited. Only those including personal names would be reassessed. Mr. Mills reiterated that previous boards combined kīpuka names even if they were not combined in *Place Names* so these would still need to be revisited. Mr. Akana pointed out that most of the pu'u names are combined in *Place Names* as well. Ms. Louis highlighted the example of Puukūlua. It is not in *Place Names* but Kūlua is and is described as being a hill. Pu'u was probably added as the generic feature type. There are only two pu'u names on the spreadsheets that are not combined. Ms. Kam asked if pu'u needs to be added if the place is a hill but the source does not include pu'u as part of the place name. Is this being done to comply with what the BGN expects and, if so, is the Board creating a new name? Ms. Louis confirmed that this was true in this case. It would have to be submitted as a name change because only Kūlua is recorded. Ms. Kam thought this was getting away from the sense of Hawaiian place names. Ms. Delos Santos noted that to address this issue the Board would only need to revisit pu'u names listed as having been corrected and then check to see if pu'u was added without it having been in the source document. Ms. Louis said that a total of 168 pu'u names have been combined.

Mr. Mills asked if *Place Names* separates the feature type and name when that name is a personal name. Often the Board will not know if a place name includes the proper name of a person. Ms. Delos Santos asked how long it would take to check feature names on the spreadsheet against what is in *Place Names*. Ms. Louis stressed that natural feature names are of greatest concern. She did not sort wai names because most have always been combined. If the Board just reviews natural feature categories identified for Hawai'i Island, it would probably take six meetings. She suspects the other islands combined have as many as Hawai'i Island so that could be a total of 12 meetings or a year's worth of work.

Mr. Akana suggested, and Mr. Mills agreed, that the Board develop guidelines first and address the issue of past decisions afterward. Mr. Mills believed the Board has reached a loose consensus that the first rule of the guidelines would be to follow *Place Names*. Perhaps rule numbers four or five would be common usage. Mr. Akana added that this should also include other resources and archival documents. Ms. Kam suggested that the Board determine which sources are primary. Mr. Mills asked if the Board wanted to specify sources other than *Place Names* or John Clark's work. Ms. Lane-Kamahele mentioned *Sites of Maui*, *Sites of Moloka'i*, and *Sites of O'ahu* as well as original maps and field notes. Mr. Akana stressed the importance of newspapers because they were in common circulation and many have been digitized and are in searchable formats. Ms. Losch added that newspapers are valuable because people would have spoken up if place names in the newspaper were wrong.

Ms. Kam noted that when this project began, it focused primarily on adding diacritical marks to names and older sources did not have diacritical marks. They do, however, convey the sense of the name. Ms. Louis stressed the importance of knowing original sources when possible, including knowing who conducted the surveys and recorded the place names. Ms. Losch pointed out that even today when people talk about going to the community, those in the community are several generations away from that knowledge. She said it is scary that now we are the kupuna and we certainly do not have the knowledge of our kupuna. Ms. Kam stressed that while many of these sources are valuable, it takes time to use them effectively. Mr. Akana believed it is important to qualify what is meant by community resource. Individuals should have been born and bred there. It is like saying someone is a native Hawaiian speaker without specifying whether they were raised speaking Hawaiian. It makes a huge difference. There are not many left. Ms. Delos Santos reiterated that community outreach is likely to be the last phase because of cost.

Mr. Mills said he has noticed that deliberations begin with the Board looking at available sources, but about 50% of the Board's work deals with esoteric place names which are not in *Place Names* or John Clark's books and may not be in Hawaiian newspapers. Short of going to the community for input, he asked if the Board wants the guidelines to cover those 50% of names. For example, they are little hills that no Board member has heard of before. Should the Board have guidelines for these? If not, 90% of these would be more research. Should the guidelines for combining names apply to these or should they remain untouched? Half of the Board's work involves names that are not in any documented resource. He does not want to just skip over them. He offered to draft guidelines for these situations in a way that is hopefully not confusing. He will also include the various other sources and factors mentioned in today discussion. Once it is outlined, the Board can review and suggest changes. If the Board reaches a point where it agrees with the guidelines, then they can be adopt and use going forward. The Board agreed. He offered to have something ready by the next meeting. He asked Board members to let him know if there are resources which might be useful in preparing the guidelines or if there are people he should contact.

Ms. Delos Santos proposed to devote the next meeting to this topic and to add review of Maui place names in case there is time. She also reviewed some of the legal restrictions that apply to Board members discussing pending issues with each other outside the official meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 8: Adjourn

Mr. Akana moved to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Kam seconded the motion, and the Board approved the motion unanimously. The next meeting will be on April 24, 2014 at 10:00 am. The meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Holly McEldowney