

PLANNING COMMISSION
COUNTY OF HAWAI'I

HEARING TRANSCRIPT
APRIL 23, 2004

A regularly advertised hearing on the application of **CENTURY 21 ALL ISLANDS PLAZA (KSV 04-001)** was called to order at 9:50 a.m. in the Ohana Keauhou Beach Resort, Kahaluu Ballroom, 78-6740 Alii Drive, North Kona, Hawai'i, with Chairman Fred Galdones presiding.

PRESENT: Fred Galdones
C. Kimo Alameda
Earl Fujikawa
Bill Graham
Jeffrey McCall
Hannah Springer
Francis Smith
Bill P. Thibadeau

Patricia O'Toole, Deputy Corporation Counsel
Chris Yuen, Planning Director
Norman Hayashi, Planning Program Manager
Phyllis Fujimoto, Staff Planner
Jeff Darrow, Staff Planner

And approximately 12 people from the public in attendance

APPLICANT: CENTURY 21 ALL ISLANDS PLAZA (KSV 04-001)

Sign Variance to allow deviations from the requirements of Chapter 3 (Advertising and signs), Article 2 (Kailua Village Signs), Division 1, Sections 3-73 (Number of signs) and 3-74 (Sign height), Hawaii County Code, as amended. Specific deviations would apply to the number of signs and sign height. The property is located on the southeast corner of Kuakini Highway and Hualalai Road and consists of the existing Village Professional Plaza building, Hionaloli 1st, Kailua-Kona, North Kona, Hawaii, TMK: 7-5-8:15.

GALDONES: Next is an application by Century 21 All Islands Plaza (KSV 04-001). This is an application for a sign variance to allow deviations from the requirements of Chapter 3 (Advertising and signs), Article 2 (Kailua Village Signs), Division 1, Sections 3-73 (Number of signs) and 3-74 (Sign height), Hawaii County Code, as amended. Norman?

HAYASHI: Thank you, Mr. Chair and Members of the Commission. The subject property where this particular sign would be involved is located at the corner of Kuakini Highway and Hualalai Street; and that would be indicated by this blue dot at this particular location.

On this particular map, this would be Kuakini Highway. So it's a different orientation from this particular map, Kuakini Highway running towards Keauhou, and this would be in the Kailua Village direction. This would be Hualalai Road running up mauka.

The property is the existing village professional building; and this was constructed back in, several years ago. The Century 21, the owner of the property is now asking, would be renovating this particular building; and there are currently two signs on the building, which is consistent with the Code. The applicant would like to erect a third sign, and that would, the third sign would exceed the Sign Code. And this particular sign reads "Century 21 All Islands Plaza would be located at this particular location, which is where the clock tower is situated, or will be situated. So the sign would be erected at this location.

As far as the size of the sign, this would meet the Code requirement. The applicant would need to, for this particular sign, ask for two variances. One is to have the third sign instead of the two signs permitted for this particular property. And the second would be to have this particular sign at a height exceeding the current height limit of 5 ½ feet. The sign would be constructed at a height of approximately 15 ½ feet from the ground. The second signs that the applicant is requesting a variance for are located on the, this particular, on the second floor of the structure; and I believe it's noted in your handout. There are two signs that are being proposed; and these are called projecting signs; and the applicant would like to have these signs be constructed or erected at a height of approximately 20 feet from the ground level. The code requirement is that these signs, projecting signs, can be constructed at a height of maximum of 9 ½ feet. So they're asking to exceed that particular height requirement.

So there are basically three things that the applicant is requesting a variance for. One would be to have the world clock sign be the third sign instead of two that is allowed under the Code, to erect this sign along this clock tower to be constructed at a height of 15 ½ feet rather than the maximum requirement of 5 ½ feet; and to have these projecting signs at a height of approximately 20 feet in lieu of the maximum requirement of 9 ½ feet.

The Director is recommending that world sign on the clock tower be allowed; however, the Director is recommending that these two signs located on the second floor be denied.

The Kailua Village Design Commission had reviewed the proposal and has recommended that the sign on the clock tower be approved; however, that these two signs on the second floor be denied. The reasons for the denial are listed in the staff's background report. And some of the things that we looked at was whether there were alternatives in providing these two projecting signs for identification of the establishment. And one of the things that could be done would be to have a directory sign listing all of the establishments within this proposed building to accomplish the applicant's proposal. Are there any questions at this time?

SPRINGER: Yes.

HAYASHI: Yes?

GALDONES: Commissioner Springer.

SPRINGER: Thank you. Norman, in Exhibit D, a letter clarifying the Kailua Village Design Commission's recommendations, there's reference to a free-standing ground sign and also a sign on the Hualalai Road side of the building. Have those requests been removed?

HAYASHI: Those are consistent with the code requirement. See, what happens is that all signs that are proposed within the Kailua Village Special District goes to the Kailua Village Design Commission for their review. Those include codes, signs that meet the code requirement.

GALDONES: Commissioners, any further questions of Norman? Hearing none, is the applicant or a representative present here today?

THOMPSON: Yes, sir.

GALDONES: Could you please step forward. Could you please raise your right hand. Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth on this matter now before the Hawaii County Planning Commission?

THOMPSON: I do.

GALDONES: Could you speak into the microphone. Please state your name and residence address.

THOMPSON: Certainly. My name is Kimbal Thompson. My residence is 46-160 Nahiku Street in Kaneohe, Hawaii.

GALDONES: Mr. Thompson, have you received a copy of the background report and the recommendation, and do you have any comments on those documents?

THOMPSON: Yes, I have, thank you.

GALDONES: Please proceed.

THOMPSON: No, I would agree with the report that has been made. I would further add the lower sign that is on the clock tower is just to be embossed. In other words, it's letters that would be recessed in relief in the fascade. There's no color or painting to it. So it's mainly an architectural feature.

The only other comment I might make, and we're not taking exception to the recommendation at all, it's a clarification. The upstairs two signs, that is a recessed corridor that's about 8 feet deep, and I don't think it's clear, those were to be hanging inside. I think about, I think the plans showed approximately maybe a foot to 2 feet, looking from my drawing here in inside that corridor. The reason they were added is because the sign toward the center of the building, it's a physician who has been an existing tenant of the building prior to this new owner taking it over. He had a sign, I really don't know if the sign he had was legal or illegal; but, apparently, as an afterthought he wanted some kind of a sign that was consistent, which is why we added that. And then there's another tenant in that corridor who asked if they could have a sign. It's a real estate related business. So that's why we added those. The intent, again, being that the signage be consistent with the other tenant signs, which we are redoing to replace banners to bring them into conformance with the Code. That's all I have.

GALDONES: Thank you, Mr. Thompson. Commissioners, any questions of Mr. Thompson?

FUJIKAWA: I have a question.

GALDONES: Commissioner Fujikawa.

FUJIKAWA: How many neighbors do you have on the upper floor?

THOMPSON: I believe there will be four businesses. They're all together. One is a data processing organization who really wants no signage. They're sort of anonymous. They have a large part of the, the back part of the floor. And then the tenant is going to take his operations and be in a good part of the floor. So the other two tenants that have visibility are separate from those operations.

FUJIKAWA: And you people are asking for a signage over there by your office, right?

THOMPSON: Right. There are two. The doctor's office is directly behind, just to the right of the clock tower, and the, I believe, it's a vacation rental is just to the right of that.

FUJIKAWA: Do they have a sign?

THOMPSON: The doctor has had a sign previously, yes.

FUJIKAWA: A large sign?

THOMPSON: I think it's about that size.

FUJIKAWA: And yours would be how much larger?

THOMPSON: I would think about 1 ½ times if my memory serves me correctly.

FUJIKAWA: Thank you.

GALDONES: Commissioners, any further questions of Mr. Thompson? Otherwise, we do have Ms. Puri who has signed up to testify. Could you please come forward. Ms. Puri, you have already been sworn in and you still are under oath.

PURI: Right.

GALDONES: You may proceed with your testimony.

PURI: Okay. I did attend the Kailua Village Design Commission hearing on this sign variance as well. First of all, I just want to say the building is looking great; and they've done a nice job in upgrading it. Again, we're concerned about the signage. There is a ground sign that is, complies with the Sign Code. There's a sign on the building that complies with the Sign Code. Then there's the third tower sign that we just discussed. And then there'll be additional signs with all the other businesses. That seems to be excessive. And if you're familiar with that corner of Kuakini and Hualalai, it's extremely congested, extremely busy; and one too many signs makes it pretty confusing, let's just put it that way. We would like to keep the sign numbers down as much as possible.

Right now if you drive by there's a sandwich board sitting out in the front, too; and we'd like to get those signs cleaned up. Let's just get it down to what is acceptable to both of us. Thank you.

GALDONES: Thank you, Ms. Puri. Commissioners, any questions of Ms. Puri?

SPRINGER: No, thank you.

GALDONES: Thank you very much. Mr. Thompson, you have any closing remarks that you would like to make?

THOMPSON: No, I do not.

GALDONES: Commissioners, any questions? Commissioners, the recommendation is to recommend that the request for a sign variance for the embossed sign on the clock tower above the main entrance to the building be approved and the two tenant signs on the second floor common walkway be denied. The wishes of the Commission? Commissioner Fujikawa?

FUJIKAWA: May I make a motion to accept the sign variance at the request of the Planning Director, the tower sign to be approved and the tenants' signs on the second floor on the common walkway be denied.

SPRINGER: Second.

GALDONES: It has been moved by Commissioner Fujikawa, seconded by Commissioner Springer, that Century 21 All Islands Plaza's Sign Variance Application Number 04-001 be approved, the recommendation that the request for the sign variance for the embossed sign on the clock tower above the main entrance to the building be approved and the two tenant signs on the second floor common walkway be denied. Commissioners, any further discussion? The motion comes along with the accepting of the background report and the recommendations as stated by the Director. Hearing no further discussion, Norman.

HAYASHI: Commissioner Fujikawa?

FUJIKAWA: Aye.

HAYASHI: Commissioner Springer?

SPRINGER: Yes.

HAYASHI: Commissioner Thibadeau?

THIBADEAU: Aye.

HAYASHI: Commissioner Alameda?

ALAMENDA: Aye.

HAYASHI: Commissioner Graham?

GRAHAM: Aye.

HAYASHI: Commissioner McCall?

MCCALL: Aye.

HAYASHI: Commissioner Smith?

SMITH: Aye.

HAYASHI: Chairman Galdones?

GALDONES: Aye.

HAYASHI: Motion carries.

GALDONES: Thanks, Norman. Mr. Thompson, you will be informed of today's actions in writing.

THOMPSON: Thank you.

GALDONES: You're welcome.

The discussion ended at 10:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Nomura, Secretary