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n 1938

Report of the Activities of the "Honolulu City Planning Commission

For Year Ending December 31, 1937.

During the year 1937 the City Planning Commission has functioned under the following continuing personnel:

Appointive Members:

J. D. McInerny, President
Arthur R. Keller
John Mason Young
C. W. Dickey
Vincent Fernandes
M. B. Carson
C. J. Pietsch
James Gibb
L. P. Dickinson
A. A. Wilson
Robert O. Thompson
Charles R. Welsh, Engineer
Grace M. Bartlett, Secretary

Ex-Officio Members:

Mayor George F. Wright
Engineer B. F. Rush

A change in the City Planning ordinance in September has made possible the permanent appointment of Mr. A. A. Wilson and Mr. Robert O. Thompson, both of whom served during a portion of the previous year on a temporary basis, substituting for two absent members who have since returned. Membership is now thirteen, with authorization for an increase to fifteen when such increase is deemed advisable.

Engineer Charles R. Welsh has been returned to the Planning Commission on a part time basis by Mayor George F. Wright, replacing Engineer H. L. Powell, now with the Traffic Bureau.

The commission has held twenty-six regular meetings and several public hearings during the year 1937. The major activities of the year are briefly outlined below:

ZONING:

Zoning problems have continued to hold first place in meetings of the commission during the year 1937. While the actual number of changes have not been many, the areas involved have been large and important in their relation to our general zoning plan.

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Within the City of Honolulu, two Industrial Districts have been created, six Business Districts, and two Hotel and Apartment Districts, listed as follows:

Industrial Districts:

1. Kalihi-kai. An area bounded by Republican Street, Kalihi Street, Auiki Street and Puuhale Street. This area will provide a home for some of our infant industries, many of which were started in the home in an experimental way, and have now reached the stage where it is essential that they be operated in a legally authorized industrial district.

2. Kakaako. A portion of Fire District No. 2, bounded by Ala Moana, Punchbowl, Halekauwila and South streets, was changed from business to industrial classification thru action of the Territorial Legislature, on recommendation of the Planning Commission.

   Because of its location in the fire district, the boundaries of which cannot be decreased except thru legislative action, this district, which was originally developed for industrial use before the passage of the zoning ordinance, has in recent years deteriorated into a blighted district thru the restrictions of construction applicable to a fire district. This change will encourage the removal of many of the dilapidated buildings now on the land, and their replacement with new buildings of a type suitable for industry.

Business Districts:

1. Kapiolani Boulevard, between South and Sheridan streets, has been changed from controlled industrial classification to business, to encourage a higher class of construction that was possible under industrial zoning.

2. Kapiolani Boulevard, Waikiki of Sheridan. A small business district has been created on the mauka side of Kapiolani Boulevard, waikiki of Sheridan street, upon petition of owners for the establishment of an Hawaiian Village.

3. John Ena Road. A portion of the old amusement park fronting on John Ena Road.

4. King Street, from Houghtailing to Palama Street. This portion of King Street was changed from industrial to business for a depth of 100 feet on either side of the highway to provide a uniform business frontage for the entire length of King Street from Middle Street into the central business section of the city, and to encourage a more aesthetic type of development along this important highway thru restrictions applicable to construction in a business district. Incidentally, this will automatically force all junk yards back from the highway at least 100 feet into the industrial area.

5. Dillingham Boulevard, from Waikamilo to King. This change was made coincident with the change on King Street, and for the same general purpose of protecting these highways from unsightly industrial buildings and junk yards.

6. Kapahulu Avenue. Two small changes in boundary of Business District No. 24, made necessary by reason of property exchanges in connection with recent widening and improvement of this avenue.

Hotel and Apartment Districts:

Two new hotel and apartment districts have been recommended to the Board during the year,- one being initiated by property owners thru regular petition procedure, and the other originating directly with the Planning Commission.

1. Alapai and Prospect. This is the third application thru petition for a small hotel and apartment district in the Punchbowl-Makiki area, indicating a general trend toward apartment development in this section of the city.

2. Kapiolani Boulevard, between Kalakaua and Harding. This includes the entire area mauka of the Ala Wai to the boundary of the present business district on King Street and extending from Kalakaua to Harding avenues.

This recommendation, which was initiated by the Planning Commission in order to establish the general character of the district before any definite development of the area, will encourage a more aesthetic development of the land bordering the Ala Wai park, thru the elimination of the service station and small store. It will also provide impetus for a normal and logical expansion of the present Hotel and Apartment district on the other side of the Ala Wai.

This zoning change has been approved by the Commission, but its presentation to the Board has been delayed pending the preparation of legal description of properties involved.

RURAL ZONING:

Perhaps the most important and far reaching accomplishment of the year has been the passage of an amendment to the zoning ordinance in April, giving to the City Planning Commission authority to initiate and control zoning in the rural districts of the island of Oahu whenever such regulation appears to be advisable.

Although the subject of rural zoning has been under discussion intermittently for some years, the issue was brot to a head thru problems arising in connection with the rapid and uncontrolled expansion of the central business area in Wahiawa.

Under the provisions of the Rural Zoning ordinance, action has been taken on five petitions, as follows:

1. Rural Business District No. 1- Wahiawa. This establishes a business zone for Kamehameha Highway in Wahiawa from the boundary line of the Military Reservation to California Avenue. All future construction in this zone will conform to the same regulations applicable to business construction in the City of Honolulu. Petition for this zoning control was signed by practically 100 per cent of property owners involved.

2. Rural Industrial District No. 1. Was established in Waiau, Pearl City, on petition from the Hawaiian Electric Company to permit the construction of a power plant to serve the plantation areas west of Honolulu.

3. Rural Single Family Residence District No. 1- Lanikai. This was recommended for entire district of Lanikai, on the windward side of the island, on petition of approximately 100 property owners. Although all of the lots in Lanikai, with a few exceptions, have covenants registered with Land Court prohibiting their use for other than residential purposes until 1951, further protection of a more permanent nature was petitioned thru application of rural zoning provisions. No protests were filed with the commission against this restrictive type of zoning.

4. John Rogers Airport. Petition for the creation of an industrial district for John Rogers Airport was submitted to the Planning Commission by Superintendent of Public Works of the Territory of Hawaii, just prior to the passage of the rural zoning ordinance, but in anticipation of favorable action by the Board of Supervisors.

5. Rural Single Family Residential District No. 2- Kailua-Kalama. A petition to zone the Kailua-Kalama district as a rural single family residence district has finally been approved by the commission, after many months of study and public hearings. This area is the largest affected by any one petition before the commission, and has been the subject of much controversy, although the overwhelmingly majority of the property owners involved have been in favor of the plan.

Under proposed plan, the entire Kailua-Kalama district, with the exception of a small area in the Kawailoa Beach subdivision, in vicinity of the Municipal Park, which is strongly protested by a few property owners, will be zoned as a one family residence district, subject to future changes thru regular petition procedure, involving the consent of 75% of property ownership within prescribed 750 foot radius. Further study will be given to the zoning of the area in vicinity of the Municipal Park before any recommendation is made relative to its disposition.

Two other rural zoning projects are now under study by the commission for early action- the first is a petition from the people of Kaneohe, asking for the creation of a business district with the customary building restrictions for frantage on the Kamehameha Highway from Kaneohe Bridge to Haiku Road. The second is a plan recommended by the Mayor to zone all the main rural highways around the Island of Oahu as Residence Districts for a depth of 200 feet on either side of the highway. This would prevent the future construction of stores and service stations along these important highways except under definite zoning regulation. This recommendation has been approved in principal by the commission, but final action delayed pending a designation of the particular highways to be included in such restrictive zoning.

SUBDIVISIONS:

Three subdivisions have been officially approved by the Commission during the year:-

1. Makiki District, at Keeaumoku and Heulu streets.

2. Kahala and Waialae-nui. This is an extension of original plan for this district which was approved by the commission some years ago.

3. Diamond Head. This is a new subdivision development at the foot of Diamond Head, bounded by Monsarrat, Makaina and Campbell avenues.

Various subdivision plans for the development of the area between Nuuanu and Puunui have been under consideration, but none of them have been successful in securing the consent of a sufficient number of the property owners involved to warrant action by the commission.

STREET NAMES:

The following changes and additions have been made in street names:-

1. Bethelo Place- dead ended street off Funchal Street in Pauoa Valley.
2. Noela Place- dead ended street off Noela Drive in Lehi Tract.
3. Makini Street- absorbing Haunani Street.
4. Kaunaoa Street- absorbing Gazette Street.
5. Kapahulu Avenue- absorbing Makee Road.
6. Haleumi Place- dead ended street off Davenport Street, Makiki District.
7. Hoonanea Street- portion of Marques Street lying makai of Metcalf Street.
8. An interchange of two short streets in Wahiawa- Ma Way and Hulua Way.
9. Kamehameha Highway. Action was taken to define and clarify the limits of Kamehameha Highway, Kalanianaole Highway and Old Pali Road as they mingle on the Pali slope. Under proposed definition, "Pali Road" would include that portion of the road from Manalohoa Road in Nuuanu Valley, to Kaneohe over the old course of the Pali Road, turning left at the half way house. "Kalanianaole Highway" would then begin at the half way house on the Pali Road and branch off to the right toward Kailua and Waimanalo. "Kamehameha Highway" would continue on from Kaneohe toward the Pali over the new stretch of roadway until it connects with the Kalanianaole Highway at the foot of the Pali.
10. Haleles Place- replacing Peterson Lane, off University.
11. Pikake Place- short dead ended roadway off Wyllie Street.

Survey of changes and adjustments in street names in the Lanikai, Kailua and Kalama districts is now under way by the commission.

STREET PLANS:

The commission has given considerable study to miscellaneous adjustments in our street plan from time to time, involving extensions, widening, set-back lines, street closing, utility alleys, and street design, and has recommended these changes to the Board for their information in connection with further study by them.

The Commission was successful, after a long period of public hearings, and a final testing of the case in court, in establishing the right of the city to prohibit the use of the Waikiki utility alleys for any purpose other than that stipulated in original Waikiki plan, namely, for the care of underground utilities and definitely prohibiting their use for garage driveways.

There was recommended by the commission and approved by the Board of Supervisors a plan for developing a divided roadway on both Kapiolani and Ala Moana boulevards. Plan is based on a 100-foot boulevard, providing space for a center parkway of 28 feet, and a 28-foot traffic way on either side, and an eight-foot sidewalk. This would allow space for one line of parked cars and two lanes of moving traffic on either side of the parkway.

On recommendation of the Public Works committee of the Board, the commission finally agreed to an alteration in the plan limiting the use of the divided traffic way on Kapiolani Boulevard to that portion of the boulevard mauka of Kalakaua, because of the economic and engineering difficulties involved in carrying thru the plan on the town side of Kalakaua where certain improvements have already been completed.

An attempt was made by the commission to secure the closing of the mauka end of Union Street between Bishop and the junction of Beretania and Alakea streets, to eliminate the traffic problem of a five point intersection in connection with proposed installation of electromatic signal system. While the general plan was approved, both by the commission and property owners involved, it was found to be impossible at this time to work out any re-adjustment of property lines satisfactory to all parties concerned, and the matter has been temporarily dropped.

The commission approved the general plan of Mayor Wright for an arterial highway from Moanalua to Waialae by way of Dillingham, King and Beretania, reserving recommendations on details to a later time when a more careful study can be made of the problems involved.

A change in location of University Avenue extension was recommended by the commission for the purpose of eliminating the dangerous six-point intersection that would be created by the crossing of three important traffic arteries, namely, Kapiolani Boulevard, University Avenue and Date Street. This change, which has also been approved by the Board of Supervisors, proposes to shift the line of University Avenue somewhat ewa of present location, absorbing a portion of Kapakea Street mauka of the Ala Wai, and all of Kalaimoku Street makai of the Ala Wai.

The commission approved the extension of two streets in the vicinity of Tin Can Alley, as a first step in proposed slum clearance project for this district- (a) the extension of Smith Street from Kapena Lane to Kukui Street, and (b) the extension of Maunakea Street from Beretania to Vineyard Street.

Commission also recommended the condemnation of two parcels of property on Nuuanu Street, near Beretania, which now project out into Nuuanu Street in such a way as to create a dangerous traffic hazard at a point where the traffic flow is heavy.

Another bottleneck condition, created by the old Hollinger Garage on Queen Street, is being eliminated thru condemnation and another lane of traffic provided to relieve the congestion on this important street.

As a further step to improve traffic conditions, the commission has recommended to the Board that set-back lines be established as follows:- (a) in the Kewalo area, increasing present width of Kawaiahao and Waimanu streets from 40 to 50 feet, with a minimum of 60 feet for other streets in the district; and (b) on Beretania Street from Nuuanu to North King Street to conform with set-back line now in effect on Beretania from Nuuanu to Alakea.

BUILDING CODE AMENDMENTS:

Two changes have been made in the Building Code on recommendation of the commission. The first change was initiated at the request of the Home Run Bakery, who had been refused a building permit by the Building Department for a bakery on Kapiolani Boulevard, on the ground that such bakery will eventually employ more than five workers, which number is the dividing line in the building code between a business and an industry.. Under the amended law the dividing line in case of bakeries was changed from five workers to twenty five workers, in order to more nearly conform with practice in other bakeries established within the city prior to the passage of the zoning ordinance.

A second change was made at request from the Honolulu Rapid Transit Company to permit construction of an additional car barn without plaster ceiling, which they claim is not only unnecessary, but a distinct disadvantage in buildings of this type. Amendment provides that in one story buildings with metal roof framing, and equipped with approved automatic sprinkler system, to be used exclusively for the storage of materials of little or no combustibility, plaster ceiling may be omitted as a protection to the struntural steel roof frame.

MISCELLANEOUS:

The Planning Commission prepared and presented to the Territorial Legislature thru the Board of Supervisors a bill providing for the approval by endorsement of the city planning commission of all subdivision plans before they are accepted for filing or record by the Registrar of the Territorial Land Court. This action was taken in order to clarify the apparent conflict in the territorial and city and county law in connection with subdivision control, which has resulted in much confusion during the past number of years. This bill failed to pass, however, due to strong opposition from some of the territorial officials. It is hoped that this matter can be satisfactorily covered in provisions of the new city charter, now under study by the Charter Revision Commission.

The Planning Commission went on record approving recommendation of the Mayor and Board of Supervisors that the City and County go ahead immediately with first experimental unit in proposed slum clearance project for Honolulu under the provisions of the United States Housing Act lf 1937, and that the location of such unit be in the area bounded by Liliha, Vineyard and Pua Lane extended.

The City Planning Commission is now preparing report of recommendations for changes in the organizational set-up of the commission for incorporation in the new city charter, now under study by the Charter Revision Commission.

This will be in the nature of an Enabling Act, covering powers and duties of the commission, and will provide- (1) staggered four-year terms for commissioners to overlap the terms of the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor; (2) control over all subdivisions, including approval and written endorsement of the commission before such plans are accepted for record in the Land Court; (3) control of building in mapped streets; and (4) comprehensive zoning control, including the establishment of a Master Plan, which when adopted cannot be changed except it is approved by the Commission, or if disapproved by them, shall receive the favorable vote of not less than five members of the Board of Supervisors.

Respectfully submitted

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