



DOWNTOWN–CHINATOWN NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD № 13

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DRAFT WRITTEN SUMMARY OF VIDEO RECORD
THURSDAY 7 MARCH 2023

PRINCESS RUTH KE'ELIKŌLANI MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA & WebEx
6:00 PM

The video record of this meeting may be found on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpUFdxM15X0> and https://olelo.granicus.com/player/clip/88814?view_id=78&redirect=true.

Referenced reports and other meeting materials may be found in the [month-specific](#) folder of the [NB 13 public-facing Google Drive](#) on https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1F4DdI9R8Er12TNf6Bl-yb4p4EW0-68vu?usp=drive_link.

I. **CALL TO ORDER – [0:00:01]**: 6:00 pm

Chair Ernest Carvalho called the Downtown–Chinatown Neighborhood Board № 13 meeting to order at 6:00 pm. **Quorum was established with seven members present**; this nine-member board requires five members to establish quorum and take official action.

Members Present: Robert Armstrong, Ernest Carvalho, Sean Fitzsimmons (6:04 pm), Ross Isokane, Kevin Lye, Lori McCarney, Kevin McDonald (6:05 pm), Chu Lan Shubert-Kwock, and Travis Thompson.

Members Absent: None.

Guests: Firefighter Paul Tojo (Honolulu Fire Department); Major Paul Okamoto, Lieutenant Arnold Sagucio (Honolulu Police Department); Mayor Rick Blangiardi, Managing Director Mike Formby (City & County of Honolulu); Director Roger Morton, Hong Li (Department of Transportation Services); Ben Lowenthal (Honolulu Civil Beat); Shawn Hamamoto (Office of the Governor); Ian Santee (Office of the Mayor); Richmond Luzar (Office of Councilmember Dos Santos-Tam); Paul Mendez (Office of Senator Rhoads); Iris Oda (Honolulu Board of Water Supply); Blaine Kawamura (Hawaii Department of Transportation); Harry Cho (Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation); Tom McCabe, Myong Choi, Ron Lee, Brandon Akou, Ronald Higa, Caroline Oda, Chang Isooctane, Rick Keene, Willis Moore, Charles Jonsson, Seok Hooi Ng (Residents); Executive Secretary Lloyd Yonenaka, Deputy Dylan Whitsell, Dylan Buck (Neighborhood Commission Office). **Names were not included if not recognized or not legible on the sign-in sheet; there were as many as 50 unique attendees.**

[0:01:00] – Shubert-Kwock MOVED to insert item *Public Concerns* to follow item IV. *Presentations* on the meeting agenda. The motion WAS ADOPTED 7–0–0 (Aye: Armstrong, Carvalho, Isokane, Lye, McCarney, Shubert-Kwock, Thompson; Nay: None; Abstain: None). – [0:01:08]

II. **BOARD MEMBER THREE-ABSENCE LETTER – [0:01:39]**

Pursuant to [Neighborhood Plan](#) §2-14-106(c), Thompson presented reasons for being unable to attend recent meetings; no action was taken by the Board.

III. **PUBLIC SAFETY REPORTS – [0:03:04]**

Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) – [0:03:04]: Firefighter Paul Tojo spoke to a [report](#) with statistics for February 2024 and relayed a safety tip about smoke alarm safety. For more tips and information, visit <https://fire.honolulu.gov/>.

Fitzsimmons joined at 6:04 pm; eight members present; McDonald joined at 6:05 pm; nine members present.

Honolulu Police Department (HPD) – [0: 04:57]: Lieutenant Sagucio spoke to a [report](#) posted after the meeting with statistics for February 2024 and provided safety tips regarding prevention of vehicle break-ins; Major Okamoto introduced himself to the community.

Questions, comments, and concerns followed – [0:07:08]. McDonald inquired of any legislative bills for which NB 13 should consider providing support to assist HPD; Okamoto expressed concern about [HB 1601](#),^a which would require law enforcement officers to issue citations in lieu of arrest for certain offenses such as DUI and domestic violence. Fitzsimmons inquired if community volunteers would be asked by HPD to monitor video feeds of the new camera system in the Downtown–Chinatown neighborhood; Okamoto noted the

^a“The legislature also finds that arrests are highly disruptive to a person's life. Despite the fundamental principle of the presumption of innocence on which the justice system is built, arrests cause embarrassment...”

timeline for training of potential volunteers and the need for security within the HPD Chinatown substation. Lye requested [differentiation of the clause *Weed and Seed*](#) as applied to [1] the US Department of Justice initiative administered locally by the US Attorney's Office, [2] the 501(c)(3) corporation "Weed & Seed Hawaii, Inc." of Fort Weaver Road in Ewa Beach, and [3] the plan to ban repeat offenders from certain parts of the city (often referred to as "the [Department of the Prosecuting Attorney's island-wide Weed and Seed program](#)"). McCarney asked how HPD sees the new camera system playing a role in making the community safer; Okamoto noted *post hoc* footage review to obtain evidence such as license plate numbers. Crime mapping statistics may be found on <https://www.honolulupd.org/information/crime-mapping/>.

IV. PRESENTATIONS – [0:19:48]

Updates about Downtown–Chinatown and other topics – [0:19:48]: Mayor Rick Blangiardi and Managing Director Mike Formby spoke to a [report](#) citing updates from eleven City & County of Honolulu Departments about projects impacting the Downtown–Chinatown community, emphasizing the collaborative efforts of HPD, the Department of Information Technology (DIT), the Department of Facility Maintenance (DFM), and the Department of Transportation Services (DTS) to install the new high-resolution security cameras at every major intersection in the Chinatown district. Questions, comments, and concerns followed. – [0:24:20]

Chair Carvalho called a brief recess at 6:53 pm; Carvalho called the meeting back to order at 6:57 pm.

Kekaulike Mall Improvement Project – [0:52:25]: [Hong Li](#) (DTS) provided updates, noting that the project is currently under budget, its tree planting phase is complete and the irrigation system is operational, installation of light poles will soon commence, and the final yards of concrete will soon be poured in the center of the mall. Questions, comments, and concerns followed. – [0:55:40]

Insights Regarding the Planned Bethel Block Conversion– [1:13:14]: [Ben Lowenthal](#) (Honolulu Civil Beat) spoke to [his column](#) regarding the State's interest in purchasing the Bethel Block in Downtown–Chinatown to repurpose as affordable housing and noted that while area residents agree that affordable housing is needed, they do not support the redevelopment of this particular block in light of its historic nature. Questions, comments, and concerns followed. – [1:18:38]

V. PUBLIC CONCERNS – [1:33:10]: No discussion.

VI. ELECTED OFFICIALS – [1:33:40]

Congressman Ed Case's Representative – [1:33:44]: No representative present, no report submitted.

Governor Josh Green's Representative – [0:58:05]: [Shawn Hamamoto](#) spoke to a [report](#) and provided responses to certain questions raised at previous meetings. Questions, comments, and concerns followed. – [1:39:17]

Mayor Blangiardi's Representative – [1:10:22]: Deputy Director [Ian Santee](#) (Honolulu Emergency Services Department) announced an HPD internship program, noted TheBus route updates for routes 151 and 433, and referenced the HPD dashboard on <https://www.honolulupd.org/dashboard>. A [report](#) and list of [upcoming town hall meetings](#) are posted online.

Questions, comments, and concerns followed – [1:45:10]. Shubert-Kwock commended the [Crisis Outreach Response and Engagement \(C.O.R.E.\) program](#). Lye requested a commitment to provide statistics about how the [Iwilei Resource Center](#) is impacting the neighborhood, relayed [concerns from constituents](#) about malfunctioning crosswalk countdown timers, requested powerwashing of North and South Kukui Street sidewalks within one block of Nu'uau Avenue to address odiferous bird excrement, and again asked (later echoed by Fitzsimmons) if improved signage could decrease the number of civilian vehicles on restricted portions of Hotel Street. McDonald inquired about support from the office of the Mayor regarding festivals and events in the Downtown–Chinatown area.

City Council (District 6) – Tyler Dos Santos-Tam – [1:52:55]: [Richmond Luzar](#) spoke to a [report](#) and noted requests for public restrooms throughout Chinatown and additional lighting along Hotel Street, hope that the Avalon Group acquisition of the downtown Honolulu Walmart space will be positive for the community, and the availability of general funds for affordable housing in Chinatown. Questions, comments, and concerns followed. – [1:57:10]

State Senate (District 13) – Karl Rhoads – [2:00:56]: [Paul Mendez](#) addressed certain questions raised at previous meetings. A [report](#) is available online.

Questions, comments, and concerns followed – [2:03:51]. Chair Carvalho cautioned McDonald against asking certain questions about ethics, to direct such to "the ethics commission at the state legislator's level," and to file a complaint against the chair if so moved. Fitzsimmons requested a position statement regarding relaxation of requirements for prescribing certain controlled substances as part of gender-affirming health care services as per [HB 2079](#). Lye posed [questions from constituents](#) seeking clarification

regarding privileges afforded to a sole individual accompanied by an emotional support animal (ESA) who is *not* the human to which an accommodation has been granted (and if an ESA when not in the presence of an accommodated individual is to be regarded as a pet), requested clarification of the balance being sought between feral chickens and humans as per [SB 2401](#),^b and asked what can be done to promote expansion of the number of high-rise condominium insurers in the state to address the shrinking array of insurers, which has left some larger condo associations to suffer within a *de facto* rate monopoly.

State House (District 26) – Scott Saiki – [2:11:50]: No representative present; a [report](#) was provided.

State House (District 28) – Daniel Holt – [2:12:04]: No representative present; no report submitted.

VII. MONTHLY REPORTS – [2:13:38]

Honolulu Board of Water Supply (BWS) – [2:13:44]: [Iris Oda](#) noted two water main breaks within the area during February 2024, reported [World Water Day](#) in March 2024, and provided responses to certain questions raised at previous meetings.

Questions, comments, and concerns followed – [2:18:00]. Lye provided clarification regarding [chronic water leaks generating feral bird baths](#) along the makai side of North Kukui Street between Nu‘uanu Avenue and Maunakea Street; Oda recommended calling the [Water Waste Hotline](#) on (808) 748-5041 to report such issues. Fitzsimmons asked if short-term vacation rental properties should have water billed at commercial rates; Oda noted prior consideration of such as well as difficulty identifying such properties and adjusting billing rates.

Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) Highways Division – [2:20:17]: [Blaine Kawamura](#) introduced himself and announced an intent to attend NB 13 meetings on a quarterly basis to provide updates and respond to questions.

Questions, comments, and concerns followed – [2:21:10]. Lye recounted [prior constituent concerns](#) about unlocked gates to state DOT properties as well as concrete bunkers along H-1.

Safe Haven – Mental Health Kokuā – [2:22:20]: Greg Payton spoke to a [report](#) and noted that Safe Haven is now called [Maunakea Village](#) on Maunakea Street and, since December 2023, has placed 33 formerly homeless individuals with severe mental illnesses into permanent housing; the [Pūnāwai Rest Stop](#) has housed an additional 14 people with mental illness so far in 2024. At least 90% of these 47 individuals remain housed. Questions, comments, and concerns followed. – [2:23:33]

Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) – [2:25:40]: [Harry Cho](#) (HART) provided responses to certain questions raised at previous meetings, including follow-up regarding a [vandalized message board](#) near ‘A‘ala Park, and noted that a charter amendment question would be needed before [HART could merge with DTS](#) as has been preliminarily proposed. [Construction updates](#) are available; contact ccur3@honuaconsulting.com with questions or for assistance. Questions, comments, and concerns followed. – [2:27:15]

Chinatown Improvement District – [2:29:57]: No representative present; no report submitted.

Chinatown Business Community Association (CBCA) – [2:30:09]: Shubert-Kwock spoke to a [report](#), noting that the prior meeting on 13 February 2024 focused on HPD patrols, new programs to improve public safety, sidewalk safety, and ADA-compliant curb issues; Shubert-Kwock also commented on the new Iwilei Resource Center, and relayed that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 12 March 2024.

Neighborhood Citizen Patrol – [2:32:57]: Lye presented [images and reported observations by the patrol from February 2024](#), including graffiti defacing trail signs and markers as well as street signs, extensive loitering and sleeping on sidewalks all across the district as well as at the state Capitol, increasing numbers of sidewalk-sitters covering their heads with sheets while using drugs, shattered business doors, juveniles loitering on docked Biki bikes, mid-block jaywalkers, extensive semipermanent structures within Kamali‘i Mini Park adjacent to Fire Station 1 and an EMS response to an overdose therein, multiple unrepentant alms-beggars within the median of Vineyard Boulevard at Pali Highway, extensive piles of trash obstructing sidewalks on Kekaulike Street, multiple semipermanent sidewalk-obstructing structures created from wooden pallets painted blue just as those observed at a certain big-box store in Iwilei, fed feral birds, referral to C.O.R.E. of a patient with mental illness disrupting a supermarket parking lot, and observations suggesting the need to diligently clean every supermarket cart to remove unwanted domestic animal residue prior to use. Lye invited the public to join the patrol on the second Tuesday of every month, departing at 7:00 pm from outside the Diamond Head Tower lobby of Kukui Plaza [GPS: 1261 Fort Street]. Please bring a friend and a camera, join the patrol, and help identify areas of concern within the community.

^b *Nota bene*: “SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.”

VIII. APPROVAL OF WRITTEN SUMMARY OF VIDEO RECORD – [2:37:26]

Thursday 1 February 2024 Regular Meeting Written Summary of Video Record – [2:37:25]: Lye announced prior circulation for review of the amended draft written record to the Board after the unamended initial draft had been distributed by the Office of the City Clerk, and noted one subsequent technical amendment thereto. Armstrong moved to adopt the [amended written summary](#) of the video record [2:28:35]; the **Written Summary of the Video Record WAS ADOPTED as amended 9–0–0 (Aye: Armstrong, Carvalho, Fitzsimmons, Isokane, Lye, McCarney, McDonald, Shubert-Kwock, Thompson; Nay: None; Abstain: None).** – [2:38:54]

IX. NEW BUSINESS – [2:39:06]

Letter in Support of Bills 57 & 58 (2023) Regarding Efforts to Shut down Illegal Game Rooms and City and County of Honolulu Resolution 23-228 – [2:39:06]: Chair Carvalho noted that a joint special meeting in November 2023 of Neighborhood Boards 01 (Hawaii Kai), 10 (Makiki), and 13 (Downtown–Chinatown) addressed illegal game rooms. A [letter](#) expressing support for named measured was noted; a [preliminary floor draft with amendments](#) for consideration was identified. Chair Carvalho requested additional input. **Action on this item was deferred to the next meeting.**

Downtown–Chinatown Neighborhood Board № 13 Resolution 2024-001 – High-impact blue-light presence by Honolulu Police Department in Downtown-Chinatown to address ongoing concerns about diminished safety and livability – [2:43:32]: [2:43:41] Lye moved to **defer action on this item until the April 2024 meeting**; the motion **WAS ADOPTED 9–0–0 (Aye: Armstrong, Carvalho, Fitzsimmons, Isokane, Lye, McCarney, McDonald, Shubert-Kwock, Thompson; Nay: None; Abstain: None).** – [2:43:52]

Chair’s Report– Proposed Border Changes with Kalihi–Palama on ‘A’ala Park and Iwilei; Community Walk Update and Clean Up Project for NB 13 – [2:43:55]: Chair Carvalho reported that discussion of [proposed changes to NB 13 district boundaries](#) will be postponed to a later meeting, and relayed concerns about the expressed availability of funding allocated by NCO for community project activities.

Questions, comments, and concerns followed – [2:46:14]. Lye sought confirmation that items already purchased by NCO could be used for the non-cleanup community activity also planned by NB 13. Carvalho encouraged members of the Board to begin considering dates for upcoming cleanup projects. McDonald inquired regarding the propriety of board members departing the dais when making remarks, or if members are requested to remain seated while speaking. Carvalho recommended the filing of a complaint against the Chair if concerns about such persist, and adjourned the meeting without objection.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS – [not voiced]

Next Regular Meeting: The next regular meeting of the Downtown–Chinatown Neighborhood Board № 13 is scheduled for Thursday 4 April 2024 at 6:00 pm at the [Princess Ruth Ke’elikōlani Middle School](#) and virtually by [Webex](#).

Rebroadcasts and online archives: Downtown–Chinatown Neighborhood Board № 13 meetings are replayed on ‘Ōlelo channel 49 every third Thursday at 9:00 pm, as well as 9:00 am on the third Saturday of each month. An archive of past meetings may be found on <https://olelo.org/olelonet/> by searching on [Downtown Board]. A subset of video records of NB 13 meetings may be found on <https://www.youtube.com/@cityandcountyneighborhoodc2559/search?query=downtown%20chinatown>.

XI. ADJOURNMENT – [2:51:15]

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.

Submitted by Dylan Buck, Neighborhood Assistant, NCO
Reviewed by Dylan Whitsell, Deputy Director, NCO
Finalized by Kevin Lye, Secretary, Downtown–Chinatown Neighborhood Board № 13