



# NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION OFFICE

Rae Gee, Executive Secretary



**Rae Gee**  
Executive Secretary

The Neighborhood Commission Office consists of three components: the nine-member Neighborhood Commission, 33 Neighborhood Boards, and the Neighborhood Commission Office headed by the Executive Secretary. These three components formulate the City and County of Honolulu's Neighborhood Board system.

## POWERS, DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

The Neighborhood Board system was officially established in 1972, after Honolulu voters approved an amendment of the Revised City Charter, Article XIV, titled, "Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Boards". The mission of the Neighborhoods and Neighborhood Boards is to increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government by facilitating the efficient and well-organized operations of the neighborhood system.

The neighborhood boards system is governed by a Neighborhood Commission comprised of nine members who are appointed volunteers who serve staggered, five-year terms. Four of the Commission members are appointed by the Mayor, and four are appointed by the City Council, and the ninth member is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. One of the Mayor's appointees and one of the City Council appointees as well as the ninth member of the Commission are required to have served one full term on a neighborhood board.

In addition to developing a Neighborhood Plan, which serves as the legal framework for the neighborhood boards, the Commission is responsible for the review and evaluation of the Neighborhood Plan every five years. The City Charter mandates that upon request, the Commission assist in the formation and operation of neighborhoods and neighborhood boards. The Commission is required to meet a minimum of six times within a year to review and evaluate the activities, performance and operations of the neighborhood boards.

## FISCAL YEAR 2010 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

The Neighborhood Commission is made up of nine members. In fiscal year 2010, Sylvia Young has been reappointed to her second term and Clara Tamamoto is the newest appointed Commissioner. The Neighborhood Commissioners for Fiscal Year 2010 are as follows:



**Brendan Bailey**  
Chairperson



**Sylvia Young**  
Vice-Chairperson



**Robert "Bob" Finley**



**Edward E. Gall**



**Wilson "Kekoa" Ho**



**Ron Mobley**



**Jeanette Nekota**



**Robert "Bob" Stubbs**



**Claire Tamamoto**



**Neighborhood Commission – Working for our Community!**

## NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION OFFICE FISCAL YEAR 2010 HIGHLIGHTS

**NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN** - The Neighborhood Plan and Rules and Procedures of the Neighborhood Commission was unanimously adopted by the Commission in June 2008. The Neighborhood Plan services as the Office's Rules and Regulations governing the

Neighborhood Board system. It was approved and signed by the Mayor and filed with the City Clerk on October 10, 2008. The Neighborhood Commission Neighborhood Plan Revision Committee has been at work reviewing and revising proposals on the plan for a revision to be adopted in the near future.

**HISTORICAL ALL-DIGITAL ELECTION** - The all-digital elections information has been evaluated and analyzed in 2010 for the upcoming 2011 elections. Neighborhood board elections are held every two years. The 2009 Neighborhood Boards elections were conducted using the Internet as the primary method of casting ballots, with an automated phone system being an alternative for those who do not have Internet access, along with 3 polling sites. Eligible voters were mailed pass codes to allow voters to access their ballot through either method. This historic event highlights the "universal access to democracy" approach by enabling voters to participate in a safe, secure, and convenient online and telephone voting system. The future goal is to educate and engage our voters in a voting system that works while reducing election costs and increasing participation.

The Neighborhood Commission Office is grateful for the support and dedication of the League of Women Voters of Honolulu for their assistance and past-President Piilani Kaopuiki for serving as Chief Monitoring Officer.

**CONFERENCE OF CHAIRS** - The Neighborhood Commission held its second, "Conference of Chairs" on April 10, 2010. This is the only forum where all Chairs of Neighborhood Boards come together to share ideas and learn about each other. Topics of discussion include neighborhood plan amendments, sunshine law and parliamentary procedure, the complaints process, board intervener status, noise, agenda template, filling vacancies and other related board business topics.

**COMPLAINTS PROCESS** – The Neighborhood Commission ambitiously held "sanctions hearings" to clear the numerous formal complaints filed with the Neighborhood Commission Office. The Commission grouped complaints together by Boards and had hearings in Honolulu Hale and Kapolei Hale. Since April 2010, thirteen cases have been heard by the Commission in which "Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law" were issued. The documents can now be found on the website under the date of the Sanctions Hearings at the NCO website <http://www.honolulu.gov/nco/commfindingsoffacts.htm>.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION OFFICE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**



**Acting Mayor Kirk Caldwell & NCO staff.**

The Neighborhood Commission Office (NCO) provides administrative and technical support services to the Neighborhood Commission as well as the 33 neighborhood boards. The NCO serves as the administrative office that facilitates the City charter-mandated functions of the neighborhood board system, which are to increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government.

**NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANTS** – The neighborhood assistants attended 355 meetings in FY 2010 and prepared 495 minutes and agendas. They serve as the primary liaison between the boards, the Neighborhood Commission, the City, and state and federal governments. They provide documentation of board activities by producing and filing meeting agendas; attending, recording

and distributing meeting minutes; and completing the written and oral requests generated by official board action. Neighborhood assistants also provide technical information on proper meeting procedures, City policies and programs, and assist in producing and distributing materials to enhance two-way communication with neighborhood residents.

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND OFFICE SERVICES** –The administrative staff completed and mailed 33,934 sets of minutes in FY 2010 and emailed another 41,872 sets of agendas. They also distributed 40,221 newsletters to residents of four boards that regularly mail annual newsletters. They coordinate and service all regular meetings of the Neighborhood Boards and the regular and special meetings of the Neighborhood Commission. Substantial staff support and technical assistance were provided to the Commission during regular commission meetings, complaint "sanctions" hearings, public hearings, committee meetings, permitted interaction group meetings, as well as activities dealing with issues affecting neighborhood boards and the neighborhood board system.

Staff coordinated and monitored the fiscal expenditures of each neighborhood board through its purchasing and accounting functions. Individual monthly statements were prepared for all 33 neighborhood boards to apprise each board of the status of its operational, publicity and refreshment appropriations. In addition to assisting with the preparation of the commission's annual operating budget, the administrative staff serviced the nine-member commission and handled all fiscal, personnel and property inventory matters.

**MAYOR'S REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM** - The Mayor's Representative Program in cooperation with the Managing Director's Office is supported by the NCO administrative staff. Members of Acting Mayor Caldwell's cabinet regularly attend board meetings to provide information as well as respond to community concerns expressed by board members and residents at monthly neighborhood board meeting. Questions and concerns that require research are then forwarded to the appropriate departments by the NCO staff. This process is monitored to assure that responses are received from departments in time for the Mayor's representatives to report and discuss at the following board meeting.

**PUBLIC AWARENESS** – In order to broaden public awareness of the neighborhood board system, as well as a part of its function as a City agency, administrative staff worked closely with Olelo community television in publicizing neighborhood board meeting dates on public cable television. Olelo is one of the more popular venues to view a neighborhood board in action. Eighteen of our thirty-three boards have chosen to videotape their regular monthly meetings. While these boards air their meetings during regular weekly time slots on Olelo, other boards reach out to their communities by mailing annual newsletters.

**WEBSITE** - The web site includes individual Neighborhood Board websites with agendas and minutes going back through 2001, as well as boundary maps for each board and board photos. Agendas and minutes for the Neighborhood Commission are included along with Commissioner and Board Member directories, calendars of monthly board meetings, office staff and Mayor's Representatives contact information and their board assignments. About 25,200 emails are generated each month in an effort to cut postage costs, in the distribution of boards and commission agenda and minutes.

**COMMUNICATION** - Services include the production and distribution of newsletters, surveys, flyers, posters, brochures, members' guidebook, and certificates recognizing citizens throughout Oahu. The NCO staff also published press releases and legal notices, and produced related correspondence as needed.

Besides the 25,200 monthly email distribution, NCO currently circulates more than 12,300 sets of agenda and minutes and a calendar of events via mail each month. This outreach is to assist the boards to publicize activities of Oahu's neighborhood boards and the commission in a timely manner. Eighteen of the thirty-three neighborhood boards also choose to videotape their meetings which are then aired on Olelo in a weekly time slot. These services provided and coordinated by staff allow neighborhood boards and the neighborhood commission to reach 150,000 residents and households and organizations each year.

**COMPLAINTS** - In cooperation with the Department of the Corporation Counsel (COR), the NCO continued its review and resolution of complaints. During Fiscal Year 2010, twenty-four informal or formal complaints were closed or dismissed out of the forty-eight complaints received this past fiscal year.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD BOARDS**

Our 33 neighborhood boards are supported by 446 volunteer board members serving as advisory groups to the Honolulu City Council, Acting Mayor Caldwell's Executive Administration, departments, agencies and other public officials of the State and Federal governments. Oahu's neighborhood boards function as an island-wide communication conduit, expanding and facilitating opportunities for community and government interaction. The Neighborhood Plan, developed by the Neighborhood Commission, serves as the legal framework for the neighborhood boards.

**BOARD ACTIVITIES** – Olelo Community Television broadcasts the following board meetings on a regular basis: Aliamanu/Salt Lake/Foster Village, Ewa Beach, Hawaii Kai, Kalihi Valley, Kailua, Makakilo, Manoa, Mililani/Waipio/Melemanui, Mililani Mauka, Nanakuli-Maili, North Shore, Palolo, Pearl City, Waianae Coast, Waimanalo, Waikiki and Waipahu. Videotaping board meetings through arrangements with Olelo continues to be a popular venue to stimulate public interest. Residents island-wide who are unable to attend the meetings are still able to view these neighborhood board meetings. The NCO is exploring the financial feasibility of creating a videograph archival system on the City's docushare website to maintain the video taped meetings of the neighborhood boards and provide public access to all the videotaped meetings, the way City Council provides taped meetings "on demand" from the city clerk's website.

Neighborhood boards provide their community with opportunities to express its needs and desires in the delivery of government services. Presentations from various organizations and associations on issues, concerns, and/or projects that will affect all of Oahu are often brought before the boards, including political forums. This past fiscal year, approximately ten neighborhood boards held political forums within their communities, to foster and promote community discussions between the candidates and the residents.

**HONOLULU HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT CORRIDOR PROJECT** - provided monthly updates to fifteen boards Aiea, Ala Moana, Downtown, Ewa, Kaimuki, Kalihi, Kapolei, Mililani, Mililani Mauka, Nanakuli, Pearl City, Salt Lake, Waipahu, Waianae, Waikiki. In addition two sides of the rail issue was presented with lively discussion at the Aliamanu/Salt Lake/Foster Village, Kuli'ou'ou/Kalani Iki and Mililani/Waipio/Melemanu neighborhood boards.