



February 7, 2017

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Mr. Jody Lowe, Real Estate Specialist
USPS Facilities Office
PO Box 27497
Greensboro, NC 27498-1103

RE: Opposition to USPS plan to remove Lihue Post Office from Rice Street

Dear Mr. Lowe,

The Lihue Business Association is deeply concerned about the United States Postal Service's proposed relocation of the Lihue Post Office.

Since the facility opened in 1939, this main post office in the county has held pride of place in the center of Lihue, the county seat, the heart of Kauai.

The post office property at 4441 Rice Street was placed on both the Hawai'i State Register of Historic Places and the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. The Spanish Mediterranean-style building is historically significant and complements its National Register neighbors, the Kauai Museum and the Lihue Civic Center Historic District, which encompasses the County Building (the oldest continuously used county building in Hawai'i); the former Hawai'i Territorial Building (now serving as county Election Services); the grand entry park in front of the two buildings; and the former courthouse, currently being rehabilitated for state offices.

The Lihue Post Office was originally opened in the center of town as Kauai's first stand alone facility and it continues to serve as a single-purpose post office to this day. The dozens of county and state departments housed across the street from it as well as the hundreds of employees who work there rely on the easy, convenient access that this post office provides. Thousands of others who spend their workdays in the banks on either side of the facility and the credit union behind it, as well as in commercial and professional establishments in the vicinity also routinely patronize that post office, not to mention the many P.O. box holders and other nearby residents, including those in the Kaniko'o (Rice Camp) Senior Apartments a few blocks away.

*Making Lihue
Our Business*

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*A registered
501(c)(6)
non-profit
organization*

The US Department of Transportation recently awarded the County of Kaua'i a \$13.8 million dollar TIGER grant (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) for the specific purpose of improving and revitalizing the Rice Street neighborhood, with an emphasis on Complete Streets and "livability." The USPS's January 27, 2017 letter to Mayor Carvalho sites as its first rationale for the relocation the desire "to increase access to its retail services," yet the walkability factor in the current location is far greater than the exclusively vehicle-oriented facility on Kapule Highway would be; the TIGER improvements promise even to increase driver access to the current location by adding 80 parking spaces in the Rice Street area. For one federal agency, the USPS, to be working to undo another's investment/initiative seems shortsighted at best.

In addition to our concerns about the removal of USPS retail operations in the center of town, the LBA is alarmed by the possibility of losing a historic structure that has been integral to the fabric of our downtown district. The County of Kaua'i is a Certified Local Government, yet the USPS has never communicated with the Kaua'i County Historic Preservation Review Commission about its "disposal action" plans for the Līhu'e Post Office. Nor has Section 106 consultation been instituted, despite the fact that removing USPS operations from the building and abandoning, selling or leasing the property could result in substantial adverse effects without rigorous conditions established, legally enforceable and applied to run with the land, to insure buyers'/lessees'/owners' assiduous long-term preservation.

Finally, the Līhu'e Business Association is concerned about the lack of USPS transparency in its decision-making process for the Līhu'e Post Office as well as of the absence of any public input before a "disposal action" was concluded. On January 23, 2017, a notice was posted between post office service windows that declared the USPS is "taking public comments related to the disposal action" of the Lihue Post Office, which it dismissed as "excess" and "no longer necessary for Postal operations." It directed all written comments to be received in Greensboro NC by February 8, 2017. Four days later a second notice seemingly "walked back" both Mr. Sakagawa's 2011 news and the January 23rd pronouncement; that notice states that the USPS is "considering" abandoning the historic Līhu'e site and moving its retail operations to a nondescript building next to the airport at the edge of town on Kapule Hwy. It also publicizes a public meeting to be held on February 23rd, with comments accepted for



30 days afterward (this time to a different entity in San Francisco). Given the contradictory notices, the LBA is confused about the true role that the community can play in the process.

We request that you or another USPS official assure us that the "disposal action" has not in fact been concluded, that public input will carry true weight in the decision-making process, and that we will be apprised of the USPS's criteria for reaching that decision.

America's postal service has played a heroic role in our country's development since 1775. It has played a proud role in creating lovely, liveable communities and connecting one to another. The current USPS program of closing and selling historic post offices from the Bronx, New York and Palm Beach, Florida to Berkeley, California and Eugene, Oregon has been described as "the largest private auction of public history our nation has ever seen." The Lihue Business Association opposes the program nationally and locally: SAVE OUR LĪHU'E POST OFFICE.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "P" and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

Pat Griffin, President
Lihue Business Association