

MINUTES

KEY COLONY BEACH CITY COMMISSION TOWNHALL MEETING

Monday, February 12th, 2024 – 9:30 am

Key Colony Inn Banquet Room, 700 W. Ocean Drive, Key Colony Beach
& via Zoom Conferencing

- 1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer, Roll Call:** The Key Colony Beach Townhall Meeting was called to order by Mayor Joey Raspe followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Rollcall. **Present:** Mayor Joey Raspe, Vice-Mayor Freddie Foster, Commissioner Tom Harding, Commissioner Tom DiFransico. **Also present:** Building Assistant Karl Bursa, Chief of Police Kris DiGiovanni, Administrative Assistant Tammie Anderson, City Clerk Silvia Gransee.

Public Attendees: 28

- 2. Introduction of Guests:** None.

- 3. Mayor Raspe**

- a. Topic: City Hall Update
- b. Public Comment & Commissioner Input

Mayor Raspe informed of the next Townhall Meeting in March and invited residents to bring suggestions for the next Townhall meeting.

Mayor Raspe reported that a structural engineer examined Marble Hall, the Post Office, and the Building Department and found it structurally safe. Mayor Raspe further informed for the administrative part of the building, as well as the Building Department's record storage, need to be repaired or replaced. Mayor Raspe informed the engineer, having found the building to be in the same condition as six years ago and gave confidence to bring the building back to pre-existing conditions. Mayor Raspe reported for the building being electrically safe and no life safety issues having been found. Mayor Raspe further informed for all grounding to be safe and no corrosion issues found. Mayor Raspe advised of the HVAC in the Post Office and a compressor needing to be replaced and to provide estimates at Thursday's City Commission meeting. Mayor Raspe further reported for the Post Office to go back into the building and for insurance policies having been reinstated. Mayor Raspe talked about a possible ADA compliant restroom trailer and gave details on monthly leasing costs and the possibility of buying a bathroom trailer. Mayor Raspe informed for the Building Official to issue a Certificate of Occupancy for immediate use if possible and asked for help from residents to help clean to expedite the effort.

Joe Schmidt, 430 4th Street, expressed excitement of the prospect of going back to Marble Hall and stated to be ready to go back to work.

Dave McKeehan, 7th Street, also gave positive thoughts and recalled the corner pilings and cross beams to be intact and in good condition six years ago. Dave McKeehan gave a suggestion on possible repairs under City Hall and also proposed for an alternate bid.

Ron Teke, 290 10th Street, spoke on costs to lease a Post Office Box and gave further information on how to apply. Ron Teke talked on permanent resident requirements, gave cost comparisons on box rentals to the City of Marathon, and gave further information on the topic.

Vice-Mayor Foster asked Ron Teke to elaborate on his conversation with Senator Rubio's office on the topic.

Ron Teke informed on speaking to one of the staff during a video conference concerning the Post Office and suggested a visit to the office in Miami.

Vice- Mayor Foster spoke on the importance of citizen involvement and grassroots efforts. Ron Teke stated to be willing to lead the effort and to collect signatures.

Frank Tremblay, 601 W. Ocean Drive, The Cay, informed of being a Florida resident and spoke of a great summary email by the 'Concerned in KCB' group. Frank Tremblay recalled living in the Marathon Sombrero area and for the mail truck to be delivering mail on Saturdays

Sue Bartkus, KCB Resident, spoke against a Post Office in Key Colony Beach due to costs and suggested the installation of centrally located boxes for mail access.

4. Commissioner Harding

- a. Topic: 2025 Fiscal Year Budget Challenges
- b. Public Comment & Commissioner Input

Commissioner Harding spoke on next year's budget and informed on significant increases in medical, retirement, and insurance expenses as well as ambulance and rescue services. Commissioner Harding spoke on revenue being derived from ad valorem taxes and fees, and expenses to go up faster than revenue coming in. Commissioner Harding informed on an even budget for 2024 but stated to foresee challenges in 2025. Commissioner Harding spoke on possible solutions like tax or fee increases or to reduce services. Commissioner Harding suggested a review of cost schedules and to increase fees to pay a larger share.

Donald Steamer, KCB Resident, asked about the numbers of employees in the City and associated cost increase. Commissioner Harding gave details on increases and future expectations.

Mayor Raspe spoke on rising costs and for the City to be on a fixed income with assessments having to be made on how to go forward.

Joe Schmidt, 430 3rd Street, spoke on the costs of the trailer leases and for the Commission to make decisions.

Commissioner Harding informed for the current meeting room rent to be significantly lower than the rent for a bathroom trailer. Commissioner Harding further informed for medical, retirement, insurance, and ambulance and rescue service costs representing the majority of expenses. Commissioner Harding agreed a reduced rent to be helpful but not enough to cover the significant increase in expenses.

Ted Bentley, 980 Shelter Bay Drive, talked on the effects of property taxes on residents and the city not having control on costs over ambulance and protective services.

Commissioner Harding spoke on possible options for Fire and EMS services to find solutions to the increase in costs.

Ted Bentley commented on outside landscaping services and questioned not using city staff.

Commissioner Harding explained for the majority of landscaping being completed by city staff and the cost of hiring an additional employee exceeding the expense of a landscape company.

Mayor Raspe supported the explanation of cost savings. Ted Bentley gave understanding on the explanation. Commissioner Harding expressed appreciation for the input and asked to bring ideas for the upcoming year.

Donald Steamer, 311 11th Street, asked about the cost for EMS and Fire services and being treated fairly by the City of Marathon.

Commissioner Harding explained increases in costs for the City of Marathon and further explained the calculation of service fees for the City of Key Colony Beach.

Vice-Mayor Foster asked on previous suggestions for the City being able to afford borrowing monies for a new City Hall and questioned the availability of usage.

Commissioner Harding gave details on the estimated loan amount and repayment through infrastructure taxes. Commissioner Harding further explained for infrastructure funds only being able to be used for building and road funding.

Commissioner Harding informed for Monroe County not being interested in providing Fire Services for the City and for the idea not being logistically sound due to distance to the nearest fire station.

5. ~~Commissioner Ramsay-Viekrey~~

~~a. Topic: TBD~~

~~b. Public Comment & Commissioner Input~~

6. Vice-Mayor Foster

a. Topic: Code Enforcement and Citizen Education

b. Public Comment & Commissioner Input

Vice-Mayor Foster spoke on the qualities of a Code Enforcement Officer including safety, cooperative compliance to work with property owners, building relationships, and the importance of education versus punishment. Vice-Mayor Foster gave his personal belief for compliance compared to punishment and fines, and to be a facilitator to work with the citizens and not work as an enforcement agency. Vice-Mayor Foster asked for comments and suggestions on how to keep the city clean, safe, and compliant, and not an enforcement agency based on punishment.

Dave McKeehan, 7th Street, gave a personal experience on the rental property next to his property and expressed appreciation for code compliance.

Barbara Baran-Cisna, 690 11th Street, spoke on the responsibilities of the Code Officer per the Cities Codes of Ordinances and gave personal experiences of code violations by a neighbor. Barbara Baran-Cisna stated for previous Commissions being unsuccessful in achieving compliance until Mr. Goldman's involvement. Barbara Baran-Cisna informed of fines being assessed by the City or Special Magistrate and gave details on the assessment of fines in the area of construction, rental licenses, and miscellaneous. Barbara Baran-Cisna commended Code Officer Goldman for his performance of duties and ethics and stated to the city to thank him for his job.

Ron Teke, 290 10th Street, stated to be a resident since 2001 and for during his residency two individuals having been given the title of Code Officer. Ron Teke explained that prior the Building and Police Department having handled these issues. Ron Teke questioned the need to pay for this service and the ability to have code issues covered by the Building and Police Department.

Commissioner Harding explained to have been part of the Commission when the matter was considered and received feedback concluded that follow-ups were not done and things were overlooked. Commissioner Harding informed the Commission was responding to residents' complaints on non-compliance and gave further details on the process of hiring a Code Officer.

Ron Teke stated to fix the problem if current people were not doing their job.

Commissioner Harding stated that both departments informed of not having enough time which led to the decision to have a dedicated person. Commissioner Harding further reported that a separation of responsibilities is recommended for compliance compared to enforcement.

Ron Teke spoke for the City of Key Colony Beach not having a high crime rate compared to other cities and for money to be able to be saved.

Mayor Raspe explained for the town being very different to what it was a few years ago with different type of renters. Mayor Raspe spoke of problems of overloaded homes, disrespectfulness to neighbors, weekly vacation rentals, and the need to observe these issues.

Donald Steamer stated for the idea of code enforcement to be safety and recognize the difference in garbage cans versus noise complaints.

Carman Slusher, 411 12th Street, spoke about garbage cans problems for the City of Marathon and associated rodent problems and the need for a Code Officer.

Vice-Mayor Foster spoke on the need for education, communication, and community involvement. Vice-Mayor Foster talked on the problem not just being for short-term renters but also residents that violate the rules. Vice-Mayor Foster reiterated the need for more education over punishment.

Mayor Raspe spoke on the education for property managers to be ongoing.

Dan Shott, KCB resident, spoke on the cities need for a strong Police Department to keep the city safe. Chief DiGiovanni informed to receive a lot of support from the Commission and residents and explained the need to separate code violations from criminal investigations. Chief DiGiovanni reiterated good support from the city.

Mayor Raspe stated strong property values due to the fact of the Police Department giving presence and making people feel safe.

Joe Schmidt, 430 4th Street, spoke about his rental manager who employs staff to address garbage cans and the issue can be handled with education.

Joe Schmidt commended Chief DiGiovanni on the Police Department and for residents feeling safe.

Ted Bentley, 890 Shelter Bay Drive, suggested the implementation of a point system for repeat code offenders. Mayor Raspe stated for a system being in place already.

Sue Bartkus, KCB resident, agreed with Ron Teke on having had a great community with a Code Enforcement Board and recalled prior practices on Code Enforcement. Sue Bartkus stated for the problems with rentals are in the big houses and gave further information on issues with lids on garbage cans. Sue Bartkus stated for the Code Officer to go out of his way to justify his position and gave disagreement on the performance of the job.

Discussion on garbage cans with lids followed.

Code Officer Goldman confirmed for garbage to go into bags, bags into cans, and lids should go on cans.

Vice-Mayor Foster informed on problems with lids attached to cans and asked for input from residents and solutions. Vice-Mayor Foster stated that residents should be informed of violations in a timely manner to avoid the accumulation of fines.

7. Commissioner DiFransico

- a. Topic: City Charter Review
- b. Public Comment & Commissioner Input

Commissioner DiFransico informed on attending a course for newly elected officials by the Florida League of Cities and a recommendation for a citizens Charter review every several years. Commissioner DiFransico informed on the purpose of the charter and where to find it on the city's website. Commissioner DiFransico talked on the importance of the forming of a citizens group for a charter review to ensure citizens needs. Commissioner DiFransico quoted KCB resident Fred Swanson on contributing to solve problems. Commissioner DiFransico stated to look for citizens with constructive ideas who will participate in a charter review.

Dave McKeehan, 7th Street, stated to volunteer for the charter review and offered help with City Hall as well.

Mayor Raspe stated that residents have never been shy in stepping up when the City needs help and gave appreciation to all.

8. Discussion on Qualifications and Requirements for a City Administrator

- a. Mayor Raspe
- b. Vice-Mayor Foster
- c. Commissioner Harding
- d. Commissioner Ramsay-Vickrey
- e. Commissioner DiFransico

Mayor Raspe talked about the ongoing efforts to revisit the qualifications for the City Administrator and informed on responsibilities of duties in the past. Mayor Raspe asked for Commissioner input and looking to hire someone before the next budget cycle.

Joe Schmidt, 430 4th Street, stated the need for the City Administrator being a resident and to follow the same rules as anyone else.

Building Assistant Bursa informed on the upcoming Townhall meeting on February 23rd.

Chet Dunn, 101 E. Ocean Drive, thanked the Commission and Police Department for their job and keeping the residents safe.

9. Next Townhall Meeting: Monday, March 18th, 2024 at 9:30 am.

10. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:46 am.

Respectfully submitted,
Silvia Gransee
City Clerk

ADOPTED: April 18, 2024
Silvia Gransee
City Clerk

