

## MINUTES

### KEY COLONY BEACH CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING

Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 – 3:35 PM or at the end of the Public Hearing  
Marble Hall, 600 W. Ocean Drive, Key Colony Beach  
& via Zoom Conferencing

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call:** The Key Colony Beach Regular Meeting & Public Hearing was called to order at 3:50 PM followed by Rollcall. **Present:** Mayor Freddie Foster, Vice-Mayor Doug Colonell, Commissioner Tom DiFransico, Commissioner Tom Harding, Commissioner Kirk Diehl (via Zoom). **Also present:** City Attorney Jim Hicks, City Administrator John Bartus, Acting City of Marathon Fire Chief Lt. Shana Rogers, Acting Chief of Police Sgt. Jamie Buxton, Building Official Tony Lorenzo, Public Works Department Head Mike Guarino, Administrative Assistant Par Darnall, City Clerk Silvia Roussin.

**Public Attendance:** 7

2. **Approval of the Agenda** (*Additions, changes, and deletions can be made via one motion and a second to approve by a majority vote*)

City Clerk Roussin informed of the following proposed agenda changes:

- 5c. Addendum to the City Administrator's Report
- 7f. The addendum of a proposal by KCS Technical Solutions for the installation of AV Equipment at Marble Hall
- 11a. Commissioner Harding: The addendum to the Wastewater Report

There were no other changes, and Mayor Foster asked for a motion to approve.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Commissioner DiFransico to approve the agenda with changes. Commissioner Harding seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimous approval.

3. **Special Requests**

- a. Proclamation Honoring Chester "Chet" Dunn

Mayor Foster read the Proclamation honoring Chester "Chet" Dunn, and the Commission presented his family, attending via Zoom, with the signed Proclamation.

- b. Proclamation National Police Week, May 10<sup>th</sup> to May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Mayor Foster read the Proclamation recognizing May 10th to May 16th, 2026, as National Police Week. Mayor Foster emphasized his support for law enforcement, and the Commission presented the signed Proclamation to Acting Chief of Police Sgt. Jamie Buxton

- c. Presentation on Roadway Vulnerability Project

Mayor Foster introduced the special presentation. Greg Corning, Melissa Henriques, and Erin Deady appeared via Zoom and delivered a presentation on the Roadway Vulnerability Project, including background on the County's Resiliency and Climate Program, an overview of the sea level rise roads vulnerability project, policy and implementation, and next steps. \*Please contact the City Clerk's Office for a copy of the presentation.

Mayor Foster thanked the presenters for their presentation and for the Commission to review the information provided.

#### 4. Citizen Comments and Correspondence

Mayor Foster asked for citizen comments and correspondence. City Clerk Roussin informed of the following:

May 19, 2026 – Lynne Benton wrote to the City Commission with a suggestion to implement a Master Plan for the City and to create a Long-Range Planning Committee tasked with developing it.

Mayor Foster asked for citizen comments.

Lynne Benton, 621 10th Street, thanked the Commission for its work and stated her intention to speak on long-range planning goals for the city. City Clerk Roussin advised that comments must pertain only to agenda items. Lynne Benton agreed that her comments were not at the proper venue.

Cindy Catto, 601 W. Ocean Drive, asked to speak on the Tourist Development Council Grant for the Pickleball Courts but questioned whether she could do so, as the topic is not on the meeting agenda. City Clerk Roussin confirmed that the item is not on the agenda, explained the reasoning behind the rule, and advised that citizen correspondence on any matter can always be provided to the Commission and included in the public record for the meeting minutes. Cindy Catto voiced concerns that the matter would impact the current budget, which is an agenda item. City Attorney Hicks advised that the budget is on the agenda, but not as an action item. City Clerk Roussin advised Cindy Catto to provide correspondence to the Commission instead.

#### 5. Committee and Department Reports *(written reports provided; Staff and Board Chairs available for questions)*

- a. Marathon Fire/EMS – Acting Fire Chief Lt. Shana Rogers introduced herself as the Interim Fire Chief for the City of Marathon Fire Rescue. She presented the monthly fire and EMS response numbers and provided data on calls for fire incidents, hazardous materials, EMS, and false alarms. Shana Rogers could not comment on the trend in the data but believed the numbers were going down.
- b. Police/Code Enforcement - Acting Chief of Police Sgt. Jamie Buxton: Commissioner Harding reported receiving residents' concerns about safety in the beach area on West Ocean Drive and asked Code Enforcement to walk the beach and observe any items in shallow water that could pose safety risks.

Vice-Mayor Colonell commented on a school bus driver speeding on 8th Street, which Sgt. Buxton stated that the concern will be addressed.

Mayor Foster commented on the correspondence included in the Police Staff Report, including Emily Simpson's thank-you letter. Mayor Foster recalled that Emily Simpson had suffered a cardiac arrest and was resuscitated by Sgt. Buxton, saving her life. Mayor Foster read Emily Simpson's thank-you letter into the record, thanking Sgt. Buxton and other first responders for saving her life. Commissioner Harding noted that this illustrates the City's benefits for its own police department, including fast response times and well-trained employees. Mayor Foster agreed and shared his personal experience with Sgt. Buxton.

- c. City Administrator Bartus stated that he is happy to work with Sgt. Buxton and Shawna Rogers on the upcoming hurricane exercise. City Administrator Bartus stated that he would be stationed at the EOC and coordinate with the temporary EOC in the City to prepare for the upcoming season. Commissioner Harding informed that the Florida Commerce Grant Application was submitted.
- d. Public Works – Public Works Department Head Guarino: Commissioner Harding requested tree trimming near the golf course and suggested completing the work before the end of the budget year, with a proposed budget of up to \$15,000. He also suggested considering additional tree trimming throughout the city and seeking Golf Course Operator Rice's input.
- e. Building Department – Building Official Loreno: Commissioner DiFransico asked about the permit extension process. Building Official Loreno explained that contractors automatically qualify for extensions during certain storm events. He provided additional information on past storms that qualified for extensions and noted that scheduled inspections are working well.

- f. City Hall – City Clerk Roussin: The Commission had no questions.
- g. Beautification Committee – Chair Bachman
- h. Planning & Zoning Board – Chair Lancaster
- i. Recreation Committee – Chair Catto
- j. Utility Board – Chair Swanson

**6. Consent Action Items** *(Under the consent agenda, all action items will be voted on after one motion, and a second will be required to approve them without discussion. If a Commission member wants any action item discussed or voted on separately, the Commission member, at the beginning of the open session, must ask that the action be moved to the discussion action item section.)*

- a. Approval of the following City Commission Meeting Minutes
  - 1. 03-19-2026 City Commission Regular Meeting
  - 2. 04-16-2026 Citizen Advisory Task Force Meeting
  - 3. 04-16-2026 City Commission Regular Meeting
  - 4. 04-30-2026 City Commission Fair Housing Workshop Meeting
  - 5. 04-30-2026 City Commission Special Public Hearing
  - 6. 04-30-2026 City Commission Emergency Meeting
- b. Approval of Warrant No. 0426 for \$860,697.61
- c. Appointment of Elizabeth Kohout to the Utility Board as a full-time member
- d. Approval of an After-the-Fact Emergency Pump Purchase from Xylem for \$34,303.00, per the Recommendation of the Utility Board
- e. Approval of an After-the-Fact Emergency Purchase from Reynolds Construction for WRF Upgrades for \$21,587.20

Mayor Foster introduced the Consent Action Items and invited requests to pull any items for discussion. Commissioner DiFransico questioned the intrusion of saltwater into the drying bed. Commissioner Harding explained the work on the pump, its ability to be closed off, and that the intrusion is coming from the drying bed.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Commissioner Harding to approve. Vice-Mayor Colonell seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimous approval.

**7. Discussion Action Items**

- a. Discussion/Approval of a Proposal by Titl for the Electronic Digitization and Indexing of Records in City Archives for \$35,000.00

Mayor Foster introduced the agenda item and spoke about the urgent need for the digitization of the city’s records.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Commissioner Harding to approve. Commissioner Diehl seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** Commissioner DiFransico asked for research on the metadata and searchability criteria, as well as the ability to add data. City Clerk Roussin confirmed that the current proposal is limited to scanning and indexing the records in the city’s archives and that management options can be addressed. City Clerk Roussin also confirmed reaching out to the contractor to follow up on Commissioner DiFransico’s questions.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimous approval.

- b. Approval for a Permit Extension Request for 200 13th Street
  - 1. Building Official Presentation
  - 2. Permit Extension Request

Mayor Foster introduced the agenda item and asked Building Official Loreno to elaborate. Building Official Loreno explained that the request was for a one-year permit extension and confirmed that it was the first extension request for the property. Mayor Foster asked for a motion to approve. Building Official Loreno noted that the City’s ordinances allow for a charge of up to 10 percent of the permit fee in connection with an extension request.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Commissioner DiFransico to approve the permit extension request. Vice-Mayor Colonell seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** Commissioner Harding commented that, based on prior research, the average construction period for new homes is approximately 24 months, and in some cases 36 months. He suggested that the Building Official review the ordinance to determine whether the timeframe for new construction should be revised to at least 24 months. Mayor Foster recommended consulting former Building Official Roussin regarding the rationale behind the current ordinance language. Commissioner DiFransico asked whether the 10 percent fee should be assessed or waived. Building Official Lorenzo deferred that determination to the Commission and stated that the contractor's efforts and progress on the project could be considered. Commissioner DiFransico commented that the contractor appeared to be making a good-faith effort to continue the work and suggested waiving the 10 percent fee. Commissioner Harding agreed.

**AMENDED MOTION:** Amended motion made by Commissioner DiFransico to approve the extension request and waive the additional fee. Commissioner Harding seconded the amended motion.

**FURTHER DISCUSSION:** Mayor Foster requested a review of possible administrative fees. Building Official Lorenzo stated that the City of Marathon charges \$250.00 for permit extensions and provided additional information regarding potential extension fees. Vice-Mayor Colonell cautioned against making a hasty decision and stated that he would like more time to study the issue and the purpose of the City's current rules. Building Official Lorenzo confirmed that the permit extension itself was needed at this time. Commissioner Harding suggested approving the extension now and bringing the discussion of fees back at next month's meeting. Building Official Lorenzo confirmed that he would return with a recommendation for the Commission's consideration at the next meeting.

**ON THE AMENDED MOTION:** Commissioner DiFransico withdrew his amended motion.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Commissioner DiFransico to approve the requested permit extension with the caveat that the associated fees for the extension be determined at the next Commission meeting. Vice-Mayor Colonell seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimous approval.

- c. Continued Discussion/Approval to procure an Agreement with Early Alert
  - 1. Sample Task Order

Mayor Foster introduced the agenda item, noted that the proposal had previously been before the Commission, cautioned about the upcoming hurricane season, and asked for a motion to approve.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Harding asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner DiFransico seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** Commissioner DiFransico asked about contract language for full and open competition. City Administrator Bartus explained that, because the agreement is a piggyback of the City of Islamorada, the City does not need to go through the competitive bid process. Commissioner DiFransico cautioned against jeopardizing FEMA reimbursement by not including open competition in the proposal. City Attorney Hicks clarified that the Village of Islamorada should have completed the competitive bidding requirements and to verify that all needs have been met.

**ON THE MOTION:** Roll call vote. Unanimous approval.

- d. Discussion/Approval to award Haack Environmental LLC the RFP 2026-02 Sludge Hauling Service Agreement per the Utility Board's recommendation
  - 1. RFP 2026-02 (Request for Proposals)

Mayor Foster introduced the agenda item and asked for a motion to approve.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Commissioner Harding to approve. Commissioner DiFransico seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimous approval.

- e. Discussion/Approval to raise the annual Stormwater Assessment from \$80.00 to \$84.00, per the Recommendation of the Utility Board
  - 1. Stormwater Yearly Rates vs. CPI Data

Mayor Foster introduced the agenda item and asked for a motion to approve.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Commissioner Harding to approve. Commissioner DiFransico seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimous approval.

- f. Discussion/Approval of a Proposal by KCS Solutions for the installation of AV Equipment for City Hall

Mayor Foster introduced the agenda item, discussed equipment needs and labor costs, and asked for a motion to approve. City Administrator Bartus confirmed that no response had been received from another vendor regarding the requested quote.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Vice-Mayor Colonell to approve. Commissioner Diehl seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** Commissioner Harding commented on wireless and hardwire connections and asked to confirm backup for wireless.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimous approval.

- g. Discussion/Approval of a proposal by the Beautification Committee to provide a budget of \$10,000.00 for repairs at the Retention Pond.
  - 1. Memorandum by Dave McKeehan

Mayor Foster introduced the agenda item and asked for a motion.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Commissioner DiFransico to approve. Commissioner Harding seconded the motion.  
**DISCUSSION:** Commissioner DiFransico asked Public Works Department Head Guarino for an opinion on the high costs. Public Works Department Head agreed that the costs are high and suggested waiting until the upcoming paver project on 7th Street is completed. Commissioner Harding agreed to wait to determine the impact of the pavers once completed and further advised returning the costs to Stormwater. Mayor Foster stated that there was a consensus within the Commission to wait on the proposal and asked for a rollcall.

**ON THE MOTION:** Vice-Mayor Colonell – no. Commissioner Harding – yes. Commissioner Diehl – no. Commissioner DiFransico – no. Mayor Foster – no. Motion failed.

## 8. Ordinances & Resolutions:

- a. **SECOND AND FINAL READING OF ORDINANCE 2026-511:** An Ordinance Of The City Of Key Colony Beach, Florida; Amending Chapter Five Of The Code Of Ordinances, Entitled Boats, Boat Trailers, Marine Facilities And Waterways; Article I. Operation Of Vessels; Amending Section 5-9 Fishing From Sadowski Causeway Bridge Prohibited; And Providing For Codification; Repealing Any Inconsistent Provisions; Providing For Severability; And Providing An Effective Date.
  - 1. Ordinance 2026-511
  - 2. Business Impact Statement
  - 3. Proof of Publication

Mayor Foster gave the second and final reading of the Ordinance and asked for a motion to approve.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Vice-Mayor Colonell to approve. Commissioner Harding seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimous approval.

The Ordinance was adopted.

- b. **FIRST READING OF ORDINANCE 2026-512:** An Ordinance of the City of Key Colony Beach, Florida, amending Chapter Fifteen of the Code of Ordinances, entitled Stormwater Utility System, and providing for codification; repealing any inconsistent provisions, providing for severability; and providing an effective date.

Mayor Foster provided the first reading of the ordinance and asked for a motion to approve.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Commissioner Harding to approve. Vice-Mayor Colonell seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimous approval.

City Clerk Roussin informed that the second reading will be held on June 18th, 2026.

- c. **Resolution 2026-08:** A Resolution Of The City Commission Of The City Of Key Colony Beach, Florida, Authorizing A Loan In The Principal Amount Of \$3,000,000.00 To Finance The Cost Of Improving City Hall And To Pay The Costs Of Such Loan, Approving The Form Of And Authorizing The Execution Of A Promissory Note And A Loan Agreement With First Horizon TE1, LLC, Designating The Promissory Note As A “Qualified Tax-Exempt Obligation” Under Section 265(B)(3) Of The Internal Revenue Code Of 1986, Providing Certain Details With Respect Thereto, And Providing An Effective Date.

- 1. Resolution 2026-08
- 2. Loan Agreement, Promissory Note & Terms
- 3. Certificate as to Public Meetings

Mayor Foster provided the reading of the Resolution and asked for a motion to approve.

**MOTION:** Motion made by Vice-Mayor Colonell to approve. Commissioner Harding seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION:** None.

**ON THE MOTION:** Rollcall vote. Unanimously approved.

The Resolution was adopted.

## 9. Secretary-Treasurer’s Report

- a. April 2026 Financial Summary

Commissioner Harding presented the April 2026 financial summary. He reported that the City remains in good shape with respect to revenues and expenses, though a few areas are trending over budget, including legislative costs. He noted that retirement and medical expenses should be adjusted in the next budget cycle. He stated that the building funds remain in good condition and currently show a small positive balance. Commissioner Harding also provided an update on grant activity related to City Hall hardening and expressed concern about the contractor’s low spending rate. He further discussed tax-exempt bond and loan considerations, including the importance of avoiding unnecessary charges, monitoring the total cost over the life of the loan, and complying with IRS requirements. Additional discussion followed regarding the use of reserve funds for furniture, fixtures, and equipment, administrative tracking, and the fact that no specific interest rate had yet been set, with the rate to be calculated at the closing date. Commissioner Harding gave further comments on the loan proceeds, separate accounting needs, and project billing. Commissioner DiFransico asked about the possibility of property tax reform and whether the Commission should start reviewing the matter in detail. Commissioner Harding gave his understanding that the matter would be placed on the November ballot and responded that next year’s budget will be influenced by voter feedback in November. Additional comments were made regarding revenue projections and the potential fiscal impact on counties if proposed tax changes were adopted.

**10. City Attorney’s Report:** City Attorney Hicks had nothing further to report. Mayor Foster commented on the need to reduce legal costs.

## 11. Commissioner’s Reports & Comments

- a. **Commissioner Harding**

- 1. Wastewater Sampling Weekly Report for May 18, 2026: Commissioner Harding reported very low levels of COVID and no cases of RSV or flu. Commissioner Harding further commented on a newly monitored virus.

b. **Commissioner Diehl:** Nothing further.

c. **Commissioner DiFransico:** Nothing further.

d. **Vice-Mayor Colonell**

1. City Hall Update: Vice-Mayor Colonell reported good project progress and provided an update on completed and upcoming work.

The Commission briefly discussed the sludge hauling process with Operator Chris Haack, including the sampling process, determination of solids percentage, the drying process, and sludge removal.

e. **Mayor Foster:** Nothing further.

**13. Citizen Comments:** None.

**14. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 5:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Silvia Roussin*

City Clerk

**ADOPTED: June 18, 2026**

*Silvia Roussin*

*City Clerk*

CITY OF KEY COLONY BEACH  
City Commission Regular Meeting & Public Hearing  
May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026 – 3:30 PM  
Please Print Your Name  
Thank You!

- |                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1. <u>CHERYL FOSTER</u> | 19. _____ |
| 2. <u>Levi Walsh</u>    | 20. _____ |
| 3. <u>Kitty Sutton</u>  | 21. _____ |
| 4. <u>Chris Haack</u>   | 22. _____ |
| 5. <u>Carole Haack</u>  | 23. _____ |
| 6. <u>J. Fink</u>       | 24. _____ |
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| 18. _____               | 36. _____ |

Clerk

**05-21-2026 Citizen Correspondence – Regular Meeting**

The City Clerk's Office received the following correspondence:

**May 19, 2026** – Lynne Benton wrote to the City Commission with a suggestion to implement a Master Plan for the City and to create a Long-Range Planning Committee tasked with developing it.

All correspondence has been distributed to the City Commission and will be included in the official minutes for today's meeting.

Thank you,

*Silvia Roussin*

City Clerk

May 19, 2026

Dear Commissioners,

Thank-you for all your hard work. For example, your forward progress with City Hall which has been a huge endeavor requiring an extraordinary time commitment by all of you, the transformation of Sunset Park, the retention pond, and many other infrastructure improvements exhibiting your relentless dedication to improving our community.

I have been an owner in KCB for almost 15 years now and seen the shifts in community culture each time a new Mayor is elected. I am asking the Commission to establish a long-range planning committee to develop a Master Plan – a clear and enduring vision for our City — one that thoughtfully defines Key Colony Beach’s mission, values, and long-term goals. The purpose is to identify and preserve the unique qualities that make KCB so special, and to ensure those defining characteristics endure beyond changing commissions and administrations, rather than shifting with each new Mayor or Administrator.

This effort should include extensive citizen participation to ensure the plan reflects the values, priorities, and collective vision of our community.

An example of why this planning effort is so important — and how it can guide future decisions — is illustrated by something as simple as the bait and fish-cleaning table installed at Sunset Park. If our community’s priority for Sunset Park is preserving unobstructed oceanfront views and maintaining passive park spaces where residents and visitors can simply relax and enjoy the extraordinary waterfront setting, perhaps that table does not belong there. If, however, the goal is to embrace and support KCB’s fishing heritage and waterfront lifestyle, then the table is entirely appropriate.

Without clearly defined long-range goals, decisions can become piecemeal rather than part of a cohesive vision. Over time, those decisions result in a fragmented culture and character of a community, while residents are left uncertain about the broader direction and priorities of their governing body.

Attached is my initial draft illustrating what a Master Plan for Key Colony Beach could look like, to provide greater clarity regarding the type of Master Plan I am proposing.

Thanks to the Commission’s hard work in addressing much of the City’s infrastructure needs, we now have the opportunity to focus on developing an enduring plan that preserves and strengthens the qualities that make KCB special — including a sense of safety, belonging, trust, community identity, and quality of life for generations to come.

I would also like to offer my services as a volunteer to participate on a long-range planning committee tasked with developing a proposed Master Plan for review and consideration by the Commission. In addition, I would suggest appointing a designated Commissioner to serve as liaison to the committee to help ensure coordination, communication, and continuity throughout the planning process.

Respectfully,

Lynne Benton

**KCB's Master Plan**  
**Sample**

**“Honestly Now, What’s Your Hurry? You’re Here.”**

This can be the iconic<sup>1</sup> core vision philosophy for KCB. It means a community that values:

- livability over congestion,
- stewardship over overdevelopment,
- community over conflict,
- and quality of life over constant acceleration.

***The philosophy recognizes that our community’s greatest asset is not simply its location, but the feeling of belonging and safety it creates.***

“The feeling of belonging” and “safety” are foundational qualities that strongly influence whether people experience a community as welcoming, healthy, and emotionally secure. In a small coastal community like Key Colony Beach, these ideas can become part of the community’s identity and culture.

**The Most Powerful Aspect of This Philosophy**

Most modern communities are struggling with:

- congestion,
- stress,
- overdevelopment,
- polarization,
- and loss of identity.

“Honestly Now, What’s Your Hurry? You’re Here.” offers a fundamentally different civic philosophy: a community intentionally designed around quality of life rather than constant acceleration.

**That is compelling and authentic for the Florida Keys.**

**Long Range Plan Tag Line: “Preserving What Makes This Place Timeless”**

**Another example of a Tag Line is the Ocean Reef Club repeatedly describing itself as:**

***“A Unique Way of Life”***

***“More than a club, it’s family.”***

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<sup>1</sup> “Iconic” means: widely recognized, distinctive, and strongly symbolic of something important, memorable, or representative. An iconic thing becomes: instantly recognizable, emotionally associated with a place or idea, and part of a community’s identity or culture.

## **The Feeling of Belonging**

A “feeling of belonging” means people feel accepted, connected, valued, and part of the community.

It is the sense that:

- you are welcome,
- your presence matters,
- your voice is heard,
- and you have meaningful connection to neighbors and place.

In practice, belonging often comes from:

- knowing your neighbors,
- friendly interactions,
- community traditions,
- volunteerism,
- civic participation,
- and shared pride in the community.

Examples:

- neighbors greeting one another,
- people stopping to talk,
- community events,
- residents looking out for each other,
- feeling recognized rather than anonymous.

## **Why It Matters**

Communities with strong belonging often experience:

- stronger civic engagement,
- lower conflict,
- greater volunteerism,
- more resilience after disasters,
- and higher overall quality of life.

People are more likely to:

- care for the community,
- participate constructively,
- and support one another.

## **Safety**

Safety means more than simply low crime rates.

It includes:

- physical safety,
- emotional safety,
- environmental safety,
- and civic safety.

### **Physical Safety**

People feel protected from:

- crime,
- dangerous traffic,
- flooding,

- unsafe infrastructure,
- and environmental hazards.

Examples:

- safe streets,
- walkability,
- emergency preparedness,
- lighting,
- resilient infrastructure.

### **Emotional / Social Safety**

People feel:

- respected,
- comfortable speaking,
- and free from hostility or intimidation.

In civic life, this means:

- respectful meetings,
- civil dialogue,
- transparency,
- and governance people trust.

### **Civic Safety**

Residents feel:

- government is fair,
- rules are applied consistently,
- and decisions are understandable.

People may disagree with decisions yet still feel secure if:

- they believe the process was respectful and transparent.

### **Why These Concepts Matter in Long-Range Planning**

Communities often focus heavily on:

- buildings,
- roads,
- and infrastructure,

but the qualities residents most treasure are often:

- belonging,
- safety,
- trust,
- peace,
- and quality of life.

***These “soft qualities” are frequently what make a place truly special.***

## Vision Statement Example

To preserve and enhance a safe, welcoming, resilient, and uniquely relaxed seaside community where residents and visitors alike can slow down, connect with nature and neighbors, and enjoy the exceptional quality of life that defines the Florida Keys.

## Core Long-Range Planning Themes

### 1. Preserve Small-Town Timeless Coastal Character

#### Goals:

- Avoid over-urbanization
- Preserve neighborhood identity
- Protect waterfront views and open feel; waterfront gathering spaces (Sunset park)
- Protect residents' privacy
- Allow technology if only necessary and discreet.

#### Policies:

- Encourage context-sensitive redevelopment
- Preserve walkability and golf-cart culture
- Maintain architectural compatibility
- Limit visual clutter and over commercialization
- Support local business without over commercialization
- Electronic bill boards prohibited.

### 2. Livability First

The philosophy implies: life should feel manageable and enjoyable.

#### Priorities:

- Calm traffic
- Safe pedestrian movement
- Public gathering spaces
- Noise management
- Balanced tourism

#### Potential initiatives:

- shaded walking routes,
- pocket parks (we have 😊),
- canal-front seating (we have 😊),
- sunset gathering spaces (we have 😊),
- expanded bike/golf cart connectivity.

### 3. Transparency and Respectful Governance

A slower-paced, community-oriented town requires:

- civility,
- transparency,
- and trust.

#### Governance goals:

- transparency and civility,
- respectful public dialogue,
- understandable decision-making,

- strong citizen participation,
- long-range thinking over reactive politics.

**Vision principle:**

“A great community listens before it reacts.”

**4. Stewardship of Natural Resources**

The philosophy connects deeply to:

- water,
- nature,
- and environmental quality.

**Long-range goals:**

- clean canals,
- healthy nearshore waters, water quality, canal health
- mangrove protection,
- resilient shorelines,
- sustainable landscaping,
- reduced runoff.

**5. Balanced Property Rights and Community Interests**

The Keys culture strongly values private property rights, but long-range success requires balance.

**Guiding principle:**

Individual property rights and community character are not opposing goals; both are essential to preserving the qualities that make the community special.

**6. Resilience Without Losing Character**

One of the largest future challenges:

- sea level rise,
- flood adaptation, sustainability,
- insurance pressures,
- infrastructure adaptation.

The goal: adapt carefully without losing the relaxed Keys identity.

**Vision:**

- resilient roads,
- thoughtful elevation strategies,
- nature-based shoreline solutions,
- storm preparedness, while preserving charm and aesthetics.

**7. Intergenerational Community**

A successful long-range plan should ask: Will future generations still experience the same feeling of arrival and peace here?

**Focus:**

- family-friendly spaces,
- aging-in-place,
- workforce sustainability,
- preserving local traditions,
- multigenerational livability.