



**Coral City Elks Lodge No. 610
1107 Whitehead Street**



**Improved Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks
of the World, Inc.**

Mayor and City Commissioners
Greene Street
Key West, Florida

Re: Disputed Fees for 2011 Goombay Festival Services

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

Coral City Elks Lodge No.610 and the Coral City Temple No.400 of the Improve Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks of the World, Inc. have been serving the Black community with honor and respect for more than 90 years right here in Bahama Village. We feel this is an accomplishment we are proud of and cannot continue do so effectively if we are perceived as dead beat debtors and untrustworthy.

We are writing you in response to a matter that we thought had been cleared up in the City Manager's Office in the meeting that the Daughter Ruler Alana Thurston and Exalted Ruler Kenneth Sullivan, of the **Coral City Elks Lodge No.610 and the Coral City Temple No.400 of the Improve Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks of the World, Inc.** had with the current city manager Jim Scholl, earlier this year in his office on Flagler Avenue. This narrative of the Coral City Elks Lodge only seems to come up when the Bahama Village Community Coalition, (in which the Elks is only one of the many Bahama Village faith based and fraternal organizations that have pledged to work together to address issues that affect our community), is being considered for the street closure for the Goombay festival. The very same Street Fair that was our only major fund raiser for more than ten years. We hosted this authentic African Caribbean cultural heritage celebration in the traditional manner. Following the traditions that were taught to us and handed down to us from the original organizers of this event. We listened to the community and developed family friendly events that covered nine months of the year. The group that now has control is only concerned with two days. The two days they can make a profit selling alcohol on our city streets and taking what took us decades to build for Bahama Village to use for the purpose of a couple of Duval Street business owners. The Coral City Elks Lodge used the proceeds from Goombay to fund its charitable operations that are used in Bahama Village. The loss of the Key West Goombay proceeds has affected our ability serve our community. For more than ten years consecutively the Coral City Elks Lodge developed many business relationships that where built on trust and respect. The Elks Lodge received many letters of recognition from many city officials for a job well done and all services being paid for in a timely

manner until 2011, when the narrative and the terms suddenly changed without warning. We the officers and members of Coral City Elks Lodge dispute these charges as the agreement we operated under was clear, discussed and agreed upon in the annual pre-Goombay meeting 30 days prior to the event. The agreement between the city of Key West and the Coral City Elks Lodge was voted on by the city commission as part of a 5 year agreement. The 5 year agreement was awarded because the Elks had demonstrated the expertise to host an event of this magnitude by the previous 5 years of hosting a family friendly event with no nudity, no violence, a good working relationship with the city departments an event where everyone felt wholesome, friendly and most of all safe. The event was good old fashion family fun and 100% of the proceeds went to a minority nonprofit organization.

Terms of the agreement;

Waste Management is contracted by the Coral City Elks to provide the following services in accordance with the normal formula used for a festival of this sized based on the previous history of event:

- Portable adequate human waste stations (port-o-potties)
- Adequate trash deposal containers (trash bins / recycle bins)
- One recycle bin for every trash bin
- Adequate dumpsters base on the previous year's needs
- Drop off and pick up service for disposal containers and port-o-letts

The Coral City Elks is to:

- Contract Waste Management for disposal equipment and disposal removal
- Contract local residence to pick up trash during the festival
- Provide garbage bags for trash cans
- Inform vendors of the policy of no cooking oil left in festival area
- Inform vendors to keep their booth space location area clean and clear of debris
- Enforce the rules and laws required by the city, county and State
- Encourage the vendors comply with all laws and regulations of the city of Key West
- Encourage the vendors to pay their sale and use taxes and provide blank forms
- The Coral City Elks is to contract local residences to clean the streets and bring the city street back to the original condition prior to the event
- The Coral City Elks is to contract off duty police for security at a rate \$35 per hour / per officer and \$45 per hour per supervisor. There must be one supervisor per / four subordinate officers.
- The Coral City Elks is to contract off duty fire and ambulance services for public health and safety concerns

The city of Key West Public Works Department:

- Is to drop off sufficient barricades for the closing of the city streets. No other equipment, supplies or services are to be provided by the city Public Works department inside the festival boundaries.

The City of Key West code enforcement officers are to check vendor locations to be sure vendors are setup properly in the clearly marked locations that have been predetermined to be safe and allow room the proper spacing for emergency vehicles

The officers and members of the Elks Lodge have a few questions;

- What happened to the \$1,000.00 deposit check provided with the application every year?
- Was \$1,000 deposit applied to the charges?
- Why haven't we received a bill or written request for payment?
- Why should we pay the community workers we contracted and the city public works department for the same work?
- Since, when does the Mayor and city manager make this type of change to an agreement between any entity and the city commission without the consent of the other commissioners?
- If it is determined that the Coral City Elks is in debt with the city of Key West is there a suggested payment schedule?
- We want to know why we were not offered an opportunity in a short term resolution to make the corrections if the city saw a problem with our performance after such a long history of successful events

We the Officers and members of the Coral City Elks Lodge do not want it to be said that we do not pay our debts. If, we owe you? We will pay you. That goes for any debtor or vendor of the Coral City Elks Lodge. If we do not receive a bill, more than likely, we will not be cutting any checks. In this case we do not believe there is any debit owed. Furthermore, we would like it to be known that the Coral City Elks Lodge does not have any more influence or voting power in the Bahama Village Community Coalition than does any other member. So, a vote against the Bahama Village Community Coalition is a vote against most of the churches, the Masons, the American Legion, the will of the community and the continuation of the traditions being celebrated.

We believe this is just a misunderstanding and someone dropped the ball on this one. We had a failure to communicate thoroughly. We have attached two of the many letters we have received over the many years that we hosted the Key West Goombay Festival. These letters will speak for the professionalism as producers of the event. Our group took pride in the improvements we made over the many years we have been associated with the Key West Goombay Festival and we are still confused as to how we can go from Quoting City Engineer Roland Flowers in a letter of recognition we received in 2003, **“Goombay event was extremely well organized and the clean-up during and after the event was exemplary.”** To what was later described as unacceptable and cause for the city to step in to take away the only major fundraiser that was produced by a Black organization that has served Bahama Village for more than 90 years, only to give control of this same event to the owners of the Bourbon Street Pub and the 801 bar. The ghost nonprofit that is nothing more than a cover for two wealthy business men that own bars on Duval Street and has given nothing back to the Black community. They have been accountable to no one. No one knows what they do with the money. I, Kenneth Sullivan serve as the fundraising committee chairman for the Mason Union Lodge No 47 (who that other group used as cover for the last three years) did not get a dime from them. The owner of Bourbon Street Pub

has used four different groups in four different years to pull one on over this commission and take control over this event for the alcohol sales. We do not believe this is the intent of this commission. So what do we do? How do we fix this? You have the opportunity to right a wrong tonight by granting the street closure for this year's Key West Goombay Festival to the Bahama Village Community Coalition effectively giving control of this event back to the Black community where it belongs. You can't punish the entire community coalition for a misunderstanding with one of the members of the coalition when the other 10 organizations have nothing to do with the problem. Particularly, when the Elks Lodge is the organization you having the problem with is willing to work with city staff to come to an amicable conclusion.

This commission should consider the Bahama Village Community Coalition has members who have the experience, knowledge, and drive to close the dived and build a bridge to the future putting aside the past but, not forgetting the mistakes we have made. Making sure it does not happen again. We have learned from our past and will not be putting too much of the decision making in too few hands and making sure the original intent of this event can live on beyond any of our lifetimes. The Coalition has a plan that will bring the family friendly feeling back to Goombay. The Bahama Village Coalition has a plan that was formulated by people that takes in the concerns of all the people in Bahama Village not just a select few businessmen who own businesses on Duval Street and have no vested interest in our neighborhood.

Last year there was some confusion as what group the commissioners intended to vote for. This year make it clear. Vote to give the festival street closure back to the Black community by voting for the Key West Goombay Festival. Only one group has the right to use the name Key West Goombay Festival and that group is the Bahama Village Community Coalition.

Respectfully yours,

Ken Sullivan

Ken Sullivan
Exalted Ruler
Coral City Elks Lodge No. 610

Alana Thurston

Alana Thurston
Daughter Ruler
Coral City Temple No. 400

Charity, Justice, Fidelity, Brotherly & Sisterly Love

Please read the attached letters into the record.