

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Margaret Romero

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Resume

Margaret A. Romero

1615 Washington St. Key West, Florida
305-296-3284 / 561-523-4433

Professional Profile

Seasoned professional with successful consulting, project management, organizational change, and marketing experience. Significant achievements in innovative new business development, strategic planning, alliance partnerships, relationship management and event management. Proven expertise with data gathering, analysis, and interpretation, corporate facilitation, process improvement, program management, and proposal and contract development. Reputation as an innovative and energetic self-starter with excellent leadership, organizational, communications, and teaming skills.

Professional Experience

Executive Consultant

- Led or influenced consulting engagements focused on improving Client and Supplier relationships and process improvements. Activities included Client/Supplier data gathering, compilation and analysis, creation of unique workshop content based on framework for “as-is” and “to-be” models by identifying and prioritizing improvement areas, facilitation of sessions to identify root causes, develop problem statements, discover alternative solutions, articulate action plans, monitor progress of action plan implementation to drive recommended changes, development and delivery of executive presentations
- Provided appropriate training and tools for clients’ personnel to better conduct effective team meetings and become self-sufficient in areas of continued improvement
- Developed subject matter expertise in the areas of governance, organizational relationship management, organizational trust, and leadership competence
- Performed as Trusted Advisor to Executive Level Management, operations personnel, and staff
- Served on numerous task forces focused on increased customer sat experience in multiple industry environments
- Created best practices guidance on effective governance and organizational relationship management – both inter and intra company.

Global Business Partner Manager

- Managed overall coordination and execution of Division participation for Worldwide Business Partner Executive Conferences. Duties included coordination of internal clients (exec and staff), external vendors and partners regarding logistics, marketing collateral, development of executive speeches, coordination of elective sessions and trade show area, Sponsor and Partner attendee processing and

tracking, executive participation, and expense reconciliation. All projects on time and under budget with high sat ratings.

- Served as spokesperson for Division on Partner Initiatives with specific focus on incentives, communications, productivity and satisfaction levels
- Developed Partner Strategies for multiple Division projects designed to improve participation rates and satisfaction (30 % and 50% respectively).

Latin America Channels Manager

- Assisted Worldwide executive team in development of first Worldwide Channels White Paper; co-wrote Worldwide Harmony Strategy for Brands, Industries and Channels. This included the design of required management systems, tools, processes and measurements.
- Built channels organization in Latin America from the ground up to 30% + overall contribution
- Created and delivered unique channel education classes for Latin American executives, management and staff focused on growing Channel business in LA countries.
- Participated in crafting strategies and resolving client concerns involving utilization of International Business Partners in Latin America

Program Manager for Small & Medium Business and Business Partners

- Created and implemented company's 1st electronics channels for PCs, 1st Aftermarket Alliance, and 1st Services Business Partner, as well as innovative programs for Partners
 - Responsible for all aspects of program implementation from design to national roll-out. Included executive sponsorship of concept, initial business cases, staffing, documentation of required processes, guidelines for multi divisional approvals, advertising, budget, training development for management and staff, tracking and evaluation processes.
- Researched and created training materials for "Marketing to Entrepreneurs" and "Fast Growing SMB Businesses", coordinated T3s (Teach the Teachers) and roll-out of national programs
- Interfaced to and advised Area Executive Management to grow both SMB and Partner business. Results over the 2 year period was growth in those areas by 40%

Other Key Assignments

Baldrige Quality Award Examiner
Developed and led Transformational Leadership Programs
Multiple Marketing Programs and Sales positions
Math Teacher at the Junior and Senior High School levels

Education

Barry University, Bachelor of Science, Mathematics
IBM Certified Consultant - Business Strategy, Organizational Change
Management

Other

Participant in Family Owned Major Appliance Franchise Dealership

Employment History

1973 – 1974 Immaculate Conception School; Hialeah FL; Math Teacher
1974 – 1977 Miami – Dade County Public Schools; Miami, FL; Jr. and Sr. HS
Math Teacher
1977 – 2006 IBM (International Business Machines); Armonk, NY; positions as
listed
2006 – 2012 Family Business and Civic Involvement (includes 3 years city
budget meetings)

Relevant Skills

Business Acumen
Channels / Alliance Experience
Communications, Presentations

- verbal / written
- cross level / cross-function

Contract Development
Event Management
Global Perspective

Leadership / Relationship Management
Microsoft Excel, Power Point, and Word
New Business Background
Organizational Trust / Governance
Program Development
Project Management
Sales / Marketing Experience
Strategy Formulation

Relevant Characteristics

Assertive
Creative
Deadline Sensitive
Detail oriented
Flexible
Innovative
Logical

Organized
Persevering
Professional demeanor
Responsive
Self-starter
Team-Player
Thorough

CB&A Interview

Margaret Romero

Education

BS, Mathematics, Barry University, Miami Shores, FL

Professional Experience

Family owned major appliance franchise – civic involvement	2006 – present
Certified Consultant, International Business Machines, Armonk, NY	1977 – 2006
Math Teacher, Miami-Dade Public Schools, Miami, FL	1974 – 1977
Math Teacher, Immaculate Conception School, Hialeah, FL	1973 – 1974

Background

Ms. Romero has a strong background in sales and marketing. As an Executive at IBM, she was the woman who took innovative ideas and brought them to fruition. On a daily basis she was responsible for researching areas of interest, building a strategy to accomplish outlined goals, and coordinating teams of diverse people, including engineers, industry experts, legal representatives, and others. She accomplished these tasks successfully and always remained conscientious about timelines and budgets. One highlight of her career was a 40 million dollar project she was entrusted with. She was challenged with the task of making IBM products more accessible to consumers by offering them at various, non-IBM owned, retailers. Not only was Ms. Romero successful in helping the company reach its goals within the allotted time frame, but her planning and efficiency also enabled her to complete the project under budget.

These experiences have enabled Ms. Romero to identify important issues facing Key West. She outlines a three-step process she intends to use to accomplish city-related goals.

- Planning: Research and develop a strategy tailored to the City’s specific situation and desired outcomes;
- Set deadlines: Establish appropriate timelines and time sensitive goals throughout the project to ensure progress and status awareness. This approach allows for modifications to the original plans which can be made as new circumstances arise; and
- De-briefing: Upon completion of every project, a detailed review meeting with all those involved will be conducted to discuss strengths and weaknesses as well as brainstorm new tactics to use when implementing future projects.

Interview Comments:

Ms. Romero is a fifth generation Conch. She is a single woman with strong ties to family. She enjoys cooking and has published a cookbook based on traditional Key West recipes. She is a social person and seeks involvement with her church and community. Ms. Romero left her

Margaret Romero

hometown to pursue multiple career paths from High School Math teacher to International Business Machines executive in New York. Returning to Key West in the 1990's, Ms. Romero became interested in community affairs. Because of her community involvement some local residents suggested she would be a good candidate for the City Manager position. After researching the criteria for the position, Ms. Romero deemed herself qualified. She stated that she has the time, energy, and experience to be a valuable asset to the City.

Ms. Romero has a pragmatic management style. She deals with matters sensibly and realistically. She makes practical decisions based on the information she gathers both from people and data. She holds her staff to the same high standards she sets for herself.

Her staff would say she is objective, fair, truthful, and decisive. Ms. Romero would not ask her staff to engage in any activities or work she was not prepared to do herself. Ms. Romero's supervisors would describe her as a dependable, trustworthy employee. Whenever she was given an unpleasant task, she handled herself as she would any other task and met the same standard of quality and performance.

Ms. Romero measures her performance by the satisfaction level of the people she works with, be they colleagues, clients, or community members. She customizes this concept by setting obtainable goals and expectations, based on the specific situation.

Ms. Romero's organizational skills are among her greatest strengths. She views a situation from many perspectives and remains unbiased. She considers herself a problem solver who can devise innovative and efficient plans of action. She is a hands-on leader who personally oversees plans being implemented by teams from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Ms. Romero recognizes two weaknesses in her professional character, the first being a tendency to become consumed by the need to complete her tasks. As a result, her personal life occasionally gets neglected as she fulfills her career obligations. The second weakness may appear when she conducts a meeting or presentation; she is sometimes perceived as too unemotional.

Ms. Romero's greatest achievement has been her establishment of a solid reputation. She attributes its development to years of honesty and strong work ethics. She takes pride in the fact her previous employers would re-hire her because she left with 'no broken glass'.

Ms. Romero does not believe that any situation is a failure as long as a lesson has been learned. On one occasion she was responsible for coordinating a worldwide meeting among IBM executives, and one of her jobs was to greet them at the airport. While performing this task, she unknowingly conversed with her new boss without realizing who he was. As embarrassing as this was; she learned a valuable lesson. Now she obtains a photograph and brief biography for any persons of interest.

When asked about firing employees, Ms. Romero recalled that, while not a requirement of her past employment with IBM, she experienced one instance where she had to let an employee go. The employee's productivity and focus level were consistently sub par. During counseling with

Margaret Romero

the employee, she learned that he was facing various personal problems. Although empathic with his struggles, she determined that it would be best for the company to terminate his employment.

Ms. Romano foresees her greatest challenge in moving from private to the public sector will be adjusting to her life in the public eye. She recognizes that a city official has a higher level of visibility and accountability to both government and the community. She takes this responsible very seriously and intends to establish an open door policy under which she will always be available.

Ms. Romero attends approximately 90 to 95% of City Commission meetings. She humorously refers to being a fixture in the back of the room. Prior to attending meetings, she researches topics on the agenda and often addresses the Council and community concerning items she feels strongly about.

Asked what the most important issues facing Key West's government today are, Ms. Romero indicated the budget. As City Manager, her biggest challenge would be properly allocating the City's resources through the budgetary process.

If chosen as the next City Manager for Key West, in her first six months Ms. Romero would:

- Review the budget and implement changes as necessary;
- Meet with department officials to devise a plan that would diversify city assets and grow revenue. She also wants to attract younger residents, all the while maintaining the "Key West Experience";
- Review department procedures to make sure they are organized efficiently;
- Become a liaison between City and State in matters concerning the North Roosevelt Bridge Project; and
- Revive the Waterfront Development Project.

Ms. Romero has an excellent relationship with the media. They consider her to be a valuable resource and they frequently contacted for comments and opinions. She also takes a proactive approach by reaching out to the media, in an attempt to bring community awareness to the topics she is passionate about.

In her leisure time, Ms. Romero volunteers in the community. She enjoys socializing with all types of people, often providing compassionate services such as cooking and delivering meals to those in need.

There are no personal or professional events in her background that would embarrass The City of Key West if they were to become public knowledge. She has led an open and transparent life. Ms. Romero does not anticipate that any opposition to her candidacy from anyone in the community concerning her application to become the City Manager. Should any negative allegations be made, Ms. Romero is confident the content of such allegations would be manufactured and have basis in fact.

Margaret Romero

Reason for Leaving Recent Position

Ms. Romero was a high-ranking executive consultant with IBM. At the height of her career, she was advised of an immediate family member's urgent medical situation. She made the personal and professional decision to put her family first and therefore resigned.

Words or phrases Ms. Romero uses to describe herself:

- Pragmatic,
- Energetic,
- Involved,
- Economical,
- Confident in her ability, and
- Compassionate.

Current Salary

Her base salary while at International Business Machines was \$135,000. Combined with a benefit package, Ms. Romero estimates that she was earning approximately \$170,000 annually. She currently receives an IBM retirement pension.

Interviewer's Impression

Personable, articulate, organized, assertive, and confident. Relishes any challenge. Has a firm grasp of the issues facing Key West.

Interviewed by: Kate Estey
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Candidate Response to Requested Questions

1. Describe your experience in finance, budgeting, cost control, infrastructure and maintaining an efficient organization. As part of your answer, describe the approach you would take to evaluating our organization to insure it is operating as efficiently and effectively as possible.

- a. Finance
- b. Budgeting
- c. Cost control
- d. Infrastructure
- e. Efficient Organization

~ The resulting awards and promotions over 29 years at IBM are evidence of being successful with the above mentioned areas. The recognition spanned hardware products, new channels of marketing products, better use of facilities to serve customers and partners, unique relationships with other firms to better serve customers, new avenues to provide clients with services, introduction of US initiatives to other countries, involvement with partner incentives and contracts, business process revisions to better serve and support partners, and event management. The above listed areas were a portion of the overall program and project management that were a portion of my responsibilities over multiple efforts over multiple years and positions held. To be noted in several of these efforts were problem identification, innovation, teaming efforts, and solid communications.

~ Citing specific products, programs, partners, and/or customers would violate IBM confidentiality agreements.

f. Evaluating the current Key West Organization for efficiency and effectiveness

~ The first thing is to collect the data – by communicating with people and reviewing hard data. Then do a review and analysis of the information to formulate assessments of efficiency and effectiveness – as well as opportunity and problem statements. Following that, develop action plans with named responsibilities and subsequent suitable monitoring for implementation.

~ Having been present through the last three Budget Review Sessions (held each June over 6 – 8 days, going thru each department’s budget line item by line item) I believe that I have the beginning of an understanding of some of the challenges faced by our various city departments. That being said, that does not imply that I would come to the City Manager position with all the answers – just some Key West specific knowledge that would give me a fast start in tackling the responsibilities of the job.

2. Describe your experience with sustainable communities and a tourism based economy.

a. Sustainable Community Experience

- ~ My experience with this area is limited at best. I am familiar with Key West's development of the Climate Action Plan and subsequent appointment of the Sustainability Advisory Board. That board has 4 key areas of responsibility to assist the City in "Meeting the vital human needs of the present, without compromising the ability to meet future needs".
- ~ I am aware that they are currently working to assist the City in prioritizing and implementing the Climate Action Plan, as well as reviewing the solid waste study currently underway by Kessler Consulting in order to effectively advise the City
- ~ As part of the City's Strategic Planning Committee, we suggested certain goals and objectives which included:
 - Each city department keep a record of efforts to go green
 - Educate City department heads on 'Green Purchasing'
 - Establish annual goals and develop an Action Plan for the reduction of fossil fuels by the City's fleet
 - Construct all city facilities adhering to LEED or similar standards
 - Establish a greenhouse gas emission target and monitor and report on it annually
 - Inventory and maintenance of hard assets

b. Tourism Based Economy Experience

- ~ I was appointed to and have served as an active member of the DAC (District Advisory Committee) – District 1 (Key West) to the Monroe County TDC (Tourist Development Council).
This experience has given me additional insight to the various and changing challenges faced by the local lodging industry, attraction businesses, chamber of commerce, cultural organizations, eco-tourism companies, and sponsored sports related events. I have also come to recognize the many aspects of our coordinated marketing, advertising, and public relations activities associated with the "marketing" of our tourism industry.
- ~ During my tenure with IBM, among my clients were several hotels / motels (both independent and corporate flagged) and 2 major cruise lines. Interacting with these clients caused me to become very knowledgeable of their respective business and economic challenges – such as recruiting new and maintaining recurrent guests, providing guests with the best possible experience, uncertain and catastrophic weather conditions, and fickle market circumstances.

3. Significant weather events occur from time to time in Key West. Describe your experience preparing for and dealing with the aftermath of storm events and /or natural disasters.
- a. Preparing for storm events / natural disasters
 - ~ As part of my involvement and dedication to our community, I am a member of Key West Community Emergency Response Team that is managed by the Key West Department of Emergency Preparedness. To achieve that membership I had to attend classes, pass tests (completed August 9, 2009), and sign up for my willingness to accept such duties as assigned.
 - ~ As part of that training, I reaffirmed that dedication to disaster awareness and community preparedness by completing the Department of Homeland Security / FEMA Community Emergency Response Team Program on August 7th, 2009
 - ~ Prior to submitting my application for City Manager, I met with the Department Head of Key West's Emergency Management Preparedness to understand the NIMS qualifications required and know exactly what courses are required and how I can meet that certification process in a given time-period.
 - ~ My being a resident of Key West and South Florida all my life has given me much personal experience preparing for a hurricane --- this includes not only "buttoning-up" properties, but prior preparation of large trees , and personal needs preparation of those who are frail, medically dependent, or have other special needs
 - b. Dealing with the aftermath of storm events / natural disasters
 - ~ My CERT training and willingness to participate in NIMS training /certification speaks to this on a community-wide basis
 - ~ On a personal level, I have experienced living thru the winds of Hurricane Andrew in Miami, Georges in the Key West and several others. I know firsthand about the absence of working utilities, the need for correct information and good communications amongst the community, and the damages flood waters and in one case the need for roof replacement.

4. Describe your experience building effective teams, facilitating consensus, and bargaining with unions.

a. Building effective teams

~ Please see answer listed under 1 e

b. Facilitating consensus

~ I was IBM trained in both facilitation and consensus building by IBM and through additional programs which IBM sponsored at non-IBM companies and professional organizations.

~ My belief is that facilitation can be done to obtain information, gauge perceptions, and other purposes --- not merely for consensus building

~ Likewise, one need not be “the facilitator” to spur consensus building. Consensus building can be brought about by one or more people who are participating in the discussion or “sitting at the table”. Various methods and tools can be utilized depending on the goals to be achieved (such as mutual benefit or shared resources) and realizing that consensus does not always mean absolute agreement.

~ My experience with consensus building includes staff, executive, and mixed teams in IBM, for IBM clients, and both inter and intra-company sessions. Again – IBM confidentiality agreements preclude specifics.

c. Bargaining with unions

~ While I have not actually bargained with unions, I have been both the IBM leader and part of IBM teams regarding various contract negotiations. Some of these situations included understanding the impact that certain decisions would have on specifically associated union personnel.

~ I have also been trained and am experienced in negotiations and conflict resolution in my organizational governance background.

5. Key West prides itself on its diversity and its accepting attitude toward all groups. Describe your experience in encouraging diversity within your organization and working with diverse community groups. What role do you intend to play in the Key West community?
- a. Key West prides itself on its diversity and its accepting attitude towards all groups
 - ~ I was born and raised in Key West and can honestly say that I did not know what prejudice was until I left the island to further my education.
 - b. Encouraging diversity experience within organization
 - ~ One of the words often seen at IBM was THINK - and we all knew the many situations to which that word applied. Also seen at IBM was the phrase – “Respect for the Individual”. Likewise, that was a part of our culture. We knew we were respected for our individuality and contributions – likewise we were expected to respect our fellow IBMers and our clients – no matter what their affiliations, beliefs, backgrounds, or any other type of “classification”.
 - ~ I both attended and provided “diversity” training as the various laws of our land changed and discrimination brought to the public’s attention – that was part of the company fulfilling it’s good corporate citizen role
 - ~ A personal comment – Guess I was lucky to be raised by the people who raised me in the times that I was raised in Key West ... and lucky to have worked in a company who demonstrated many of those same guiding principles. I’ve lived the “One Human Family” motto and will continue to do so in both my personal and professional life.
 - c. Working with diverse community groups
 - ~ There are many diverse community groups in Key West – our Military men, women, and their dependents, fresh and salt water Conchs, newcomers, full time residents, winter residents, wanders and drifters, long and short term vacationers, families of all types, sports minded, arts focused, environmentally sensitive and the list goes on and on. Yes, I have worked with and associated with people from just about every “group” that can be defined.
 - ~ I have attended many commission district meetings to learn about other neighborhoods, to understand their issues and concerns that are unique to them and similar to ours. I have participated in many Affordable Housing, Economic Development, Land Authority, Housing Authority, Truman Waterfront and other community interest groups and boards to see if and how things of concern are shared across groups and how we, as a community, might make some advances. I don’t have all the answers.
 - ~ I also spend many hours as a volunteer.

- d. Intended role in the Key West community
 - ~ My intention is to keep involved in community affairs – but will need to do so as regards my position as City Manager. I see me extending the breadth of my attendance at a few more organizations – or at least asking them if I can attend some of their meetings on an on-going basis -- to understand their dynamics and concerns.

- 6. From your research and knowledge of Key West, what do you believe are the four biggest challenges facing the community in the next four years? Have you faced similar challenges your prior employment experience, and how might they assist you in developing strategies to successfully respond to those challenges?
 - a. Four biggest challenges facing community in next four years
 - ~ Economic growth and diversification that sustains a healthy economy
 - a) Realizing the importance of our tourism and military economy, while looking forward to draw another generation of “entrepreneurs” to our community while striking a fair and equitable balance between those policies that address community values and those that relate to the economy, health, housing, education and involvement of our citizens
 - ~ Commercial and residential (re)development that is appropriate to a small city and enhances the sociability of neighborhoods with a view towards our city’s Comprehensive Plan
 - a) Understanding the impact and prominence of such developments as the Truman Waterfront, Peary Court, and Commercial Development of shopping centers and lodging facilities
 - ~ Transportation venues that are functional , efficient, safe and environmentally sensitive
 - a) Focus on the North Roosevelt Blvd. Project and its impact on vehicular traffic and adjoining business, challenges presented by an increasing biking community, and citizen attention to and enforcement of all laws pertaining to our roadways
 - ~ The conservation and responsible consumption and disposal of all natural and manmade resources
 - a) With a focus on the city’s sustainability

While many may not see this as a challenge, I will consider it an important goal for there to be an ethical, open and accountable relationship between City government and the citizens of Key West with a focus on good and timely communications to elected officials, citizens, and city staff.

I also see citizens concerned with various anxieties associated with the wanderers and drifters who seem to “end-up” in Key West for either short or extended periods of times.

- b. Similar challenges in prior employment experience?
 - ~ YES
 - c. How might they assist in developing strategies to respond to the challenges
 - ~ My training and experience as an IBM certified executive consultant in Business Strategy and Organizational Change Management (in many industries), as well as other professional project and program management experience, will be among the tools I bring to the execution of my responsibilities as Key West City Manager.
7. Assume for the moment that you are the City Manager of Key West and you are doing next year’s budget. Your preliminary numbers project a significant budget deficit. What departments would you look at in terms of cutting expenses? Would you consider layoffs and benefit reductions?
- a. What departments to look at in terms of cutting expenses?
 - ~ I would look at all departments and services
 - ~ It must be noted here that there are multiple ways to address a significant budget deficit. Among the alternatives that I have used in the past are as follows:
 - Cutting expenses
 - Supplies and equipment
 - Controllable expenses
 - Travel, utilities, delay expenditures / purchases of capital equipment, memberships
 - Not just people
 - Services
 - Limit the number of “free” services
 - I.e. false alarms
 - Eliminate those that are no longer appropriate but still on the books
 - Evaluate current contracts
 - Might include Memorandums of Understanding, actual contracts, leases, etc.

- Share the pain
 - Similarly interested organizations / departments
- **Increasing revenue**
 - Payment for services rendered
 - Lease agreements comparable to market lease
 - Additional services not currently provided
 - Enforcement of laws and ordinances that currently carry fines for non- adherence or compliance
 - Other innovative things that haven't even been thought of yet

b. Would you consider layoffs and benefit reductions?

~ Yes – all things should always be considered. However, we must try to be as true to our given word and agreements as possible.

Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
MARGARET A. ROMERO**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Westchester County, NY	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
New York	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Westchester County, NY	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
New York	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Very Good

Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Education

Results Pending

Employment

Confirmed

Personal Information Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: MARGARET A. ROMERO

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you even been involved in a domestic abuse incident that resulted in you being arrested or that was covered by the media?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No ACCOUNT IS USED VERY INFREQUENTLY
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account?
Yes No
10. Is there anything else in your background that might cause a reasonable person concern if he/she became aware of it through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No

Attested to: Margaret A. Romero
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via WORD or PDF DOCUMENT to kknutson@cb-asso.com or via fax to (888) 539-6531 no later than 9:00 AM 04/23/2012.
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

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Reference Notes

Margaret Romero Reference Notes

Harold Wheeler - Director of Monroe County Tourist Development Council 305-296-1552

Mr. Wheeler is the current Director of Monroe County's tourist Development Council and has known Margaret Romero since 2007. Together they worked on an advisory committee and created a media plan.

While Mr. Wheeler does not know Ms. Romero on a personal level, he states she is very personable and professional. She is a people person and conscientious of others on the team. She always takes the time to thoroughly research potential strategies in preparation for collaborative council planning. She possesses great communication skills which enable her to convey innovative thoughts and ideas effectively. Ms. Romero remains positive and motivated in any unforeseen circumstance and makes appropriate adjustments.

As an avid problem solver, with excellent logical decision making abilities, she will be a great City Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Romero:

- Independent,
- Planner,
- Strong willed,
- Strong communicator,
- Prepared, and
- Community activist,

Strengths: The ability to plan; she has a natural aptitude for investigative research and creating solutions; excellent organizational and communication skills.

Weakness: Ms. Romero is passionate about her involvement and can sometimes be strong minded and opinionated. She is aware of these character traits and makes a sincere effort to remain respectful of others.

Bill Becker - US1 Radio 305-587-3886

Mr. Becker has been a news director for US radio for the past 32 years. He met Ms. Romero in 2009 through their mutual interest in community affairs and their attendance at a wide array of meetings ranging from the School Board to City Council.

She frequently addresses these meetings, always in a knowledgeable and organized manner, delivering her comments or concerns effectively within the three minutes allotted. She has a wide range in interests, but they all reflect her devotion to the city of Key West. Specifically, when with the Horace O'bryant Middle school was under construction, many complications arose. Ms. Romero created a web site to keep citizens informed and helped stimulate community involvement in the project's completion.

Margaret Romero Reference Notes

Ms. Romero is a good leader who makes wise decisions. She can operate on her own but also successfully coordinates teams. She remains focused on her tasks and is persistent in her efforts to accomplish her goals.

Mr. Becker receives insight on community issues directly from Ms. Romero and considers her to be a reliable, valuable resource to the media. Her meticulous research and attention to detail would easily earn her a position with his news radio, should she ever wish to pursue a career as a field reporter.

Mr. Becker could not think of any potentially negative or embarrassing incidents in Ms. Romero's past. He highly recommends her for a position as City Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Romero:

- Knowledgeable,
- Meticulous,
- Decisive,
- People person, and
- Persistent.

Strengths: Excels in her communication and organizational skills. Genuinely cares for the City's well being.

Weaknesses: When working on a project, Ms. Romero does not tolerate poor performance. She can also be very persistent.

Kevin Boucher - Business Owner 305-304-3108

Mr. Boucher has co-owned Margaretville since 1987. He takes an active interest in Key West affairs and met Ms. Romero while serving on a city council committee in 2010. During the one and a half years they have been affiliated they attended meetings together twice each month. He found Ms. Romero to be very well informed, thorough in her research, and opinionated. She is innovative in her planning and problem solving.

She is also known to be efficient with task and team management. She is a good leader and commands respect from the room. She takes a personal interest in all people and is generally well liked.

Mr. Boucher does not believe there is anything controversial in her past that would prevent her from obtaining a role as a city official. If Ms. Romero's qualifications meet the established criteria for the position, he supports her desire to become the City Manager.

Margaret Romero Reference Notes

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Romero:

- Personable,
- Attractive,
- Prepared,
- Informed,
- Attentive, and
- Thorough.

Strengths: Her greatest strength is her problem solving abilities. She fairly assesses any situation and creates a solution.

Weaknesses: Can be overly prepared and thorough. She may benefit from slowing down a little and delegating more responsibilities to others.

John Dick - School Board Chairman, Monroe County 305-395-0657

Mr. Dick is the School Board Chairman for Monroe County. He met Ms. Romero at a School Board meeting in 2010. Her continued involvement with the Board has given him a positive opinion of her involvement and skills. Ms. Romero interacts well with people and is cordial and polite to all. She is involved in multiple boards and speaks informatively on pertinent topics of discussion.

Ms. Romero is always very well informed and does her own investigative research. She uses this information to make good, concrete decisions. She will likely adapt to government service seamlessly, given her current role as a public figure within the City.

Ms. Romero ran for Mayor of Key West last year. She lost the election and is rumored to have a benign relationship with the Mayor. She is an honest, trustworthy person. Mr. Dick is not aware of anything in her past that might reflect negatively on her application to become City Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Romero:

- Investigative,
- Tenacious,
- Thorough,
- Organized,
- Professionally attired, and
- Perceptive of others.

Strengths: Very investigative in her research; prepared to speak up and develops constructive solutions to current issues.

Weakness: When she makes up her mind, it can be difficult for her to change. She needs to be more flexible after initial decisions.

Margaret Romero Reference Notes

Christine Russell - General Activist 305-296-0878

Mrs. Russell has known Ms. Romero since 1997 when they met through their mutual interest in community affairs. She is seen by many people as independent thinker with no political ties or agendas.

Ms. Romero has a strong and devoted work ethic and is involved with city politics for the appropriate reasons. She is honest and displays integrity in all of her involvements.

Ms. Romero has great leadership skills and a knack for public speaking. She is articulate, well educated, and speaks informatively at meetings. Well respected in the community, she would likely excel as a City Manager and deliver the same energy and drive for success that she applies when she pursues her other endeavors.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Romero:

- Intelligent,
- Organized,
- Passionate,
- Respected,
- Motivated, and
- Efficient.

Strengths: Highly intelligent, well researched, and articulate; unbiased and fair, and does not have her own political agenda. She truly cares for the well being of the City and wants to do what is best for its residents and resources.

Weakness: Lacks experience in the realm of politics. She has a different management style and process for achieving goals than the current city officials and may meet resistance when implementing new procedures. However, she is more than capable of working with all different types of people and accomplishing goals.

John Carter –Vice President for International Business Machines 214-679-5000

Mr. Carter is a former Vice President at International Business Machines. He and Ms. Romero worked in the same division. She was part of his staff, and he has known her since 1988

Mr. Carter frequently relied on Ms. Romero for completion of tasks. They dealt with large volumes of work in the marketing division. She was charismatic and aggressive. She was very good at handling tough situations. She had a great ‘can do’ attitude, even when assignments were difficult.

A critical part of Ms. Romero’s job was to keep everyone involved in the project well informed. Her performance was excellent in this area.

Margaret Romero Reference Notes

Ms. Romero makes very good decisions. She is quick on her feet when it comes to evaluating situations and coming up with solutions. She is passionate about whatever project she is working on. She does her homework thoroughly on the topic. She stands her ground, even when her opinions or decisions are unpopular. At one point, IBM made the choice to exit the typewriter market within two years. This decision was very sensitive and critical. IBM needed to sell off its patents and not upset the industry or the community given its exit from this area, and manage the potential layoffs of 3,000 employees. Ms. Romero diligently drew up a strategic plan and executed it. Employees were relocated and balance was maintained between the industry and the community. She played an integral part in making sure his team was successful.

Mr. Romero will do well working with her elected officials. Even though personalities differ, she is a native of Key West. The welfare of the City and the community is her only concern. She is quite capable of setting policy and implementing it.

IBM had many employees, and difficult issues arose from time to time. However, Mr. Carter is not aware of any controversial situations involving Ms. Romero. She worked many long hours and did not have much time for socialization.

Since Mr. Carter's retirement from IBM he has been a Senior Vice President with three software companies. He would hire Ms. Romero in a minute. At one time he offered her a job; however, that job would have required her to relocate to California. Ms. Romero declined because she did not want to leave her hometown of Key West.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Romero:

- Honest,
- Hardworking,
- Energetic,
- Charismatic,
- Aggressive, and
- Intelligent.

Strengths: Able to handle stressful situations and produce desired results. She is charismatic and works well with others. Ms. Romero is a good leader who has a firm grasp of effective management strategies.

Weaknesses: Ms. Romero's greatest weakness is her impatience. She likes to eliminate down time and run projects efficiently, conscientious about time constraints. Sometimes she can become frustrated with delays in progress. She always expressed any such feelings appropriately.

Margaret Romero Reference Notes

Bill Verge- Former City Commissioner 305-219-6600

Mr. Verge met Ms. Romero in 2004. He was a city commissioner and she often attended the Commission meetings. When the meetings were finished, he often stayed behind and continued to discuss current topics with her. He does not know her on a personal level.

Mr. Romero's greatest strength is her ability to be well prepared. She puts a tremendous amount of time into researching the issues which she finds important, exploring all aspects of a subject.

Ms. Romero's weakness would be in her presentation of materials. These presentations are often filled with facts and emotion. She sometimes has strong, preformed opinions.

Based on the data Ms. Romero gathers on each subject, one can conclude that she makes well informed decisions.

Ms. Romero is always in the public eye. She attends many and varied meetings. She speaks her mind honestly and respectfully. She is very community oriented and sincerely wants what is best for the City of Key West and its citizens.

Ms. Romero will have to make a small adjustment when working with the City officials. She has strong opinions of how certain matters should be handled. If the City officials' final decisions differ from her own, she needs to willing and prepared to accept their choices.

Ms. Romero will make a good City Manager. She has the unfailing ability to implement exact guidelines which have been set in place. She is organized and has the time to devote to the position.

Mr. Verge would be surprised if there were anything in Ms. Romero's background which might prove embarrassing to a prospective employer. She is open and honest.

Words or phrases used to describe Ms. Romero:

- Diligent,
- Hardworking,
- Well prepared,
- Well spoken,
- Has a can do attitude, and
- Dedicated.

Strengths: Mr. Romero's greatest strength is her ability to be well prepared. She puts a tremendous amount of time into topic research. She explores all aspects of a subject.

Weaknesses: Ms. Romero's weakness would be her method of presenting material; her presentations are often filled with facts but lacking in emotion. She sometimes has strong, preformed opinions.

Margaret Romero Reference Notes

Dave Erwin - Care Ambulance, Key West, FL 305-396-7191

Mr. Erwin is currently the Rescue Paramedic Supervisor for Care Ambulance in Key West. He met Ms. Romero in 2004. She is highly intelligent and very motivated. She is very dedicated to the well being of Key West and its citizens.

Ms. Romero makes good decisions. She is always more than adequately prepared on the topic. She is decisive and her decisions are well thought out. She has the ability to view a situation and promptly determine a solution.

Ms. Romero is very active in the community, attending school board and City Commission meetings. When she speaks, people listen. They can rely on her information being accurate.

Mr. Erwin had the opportunity to work directly with Ms. Romero on a Boat Racing Event. She was on the Tourism Board, and he represented the emergency medical response services. Together they decided on a functional traffic route to be used by the public, particularly which roads they would close for pedestrian and spectator use during the event. She interacted very well with him, listening to his ideas and deciphering the most logical plan.

It will take Ms. Romero a little while to get used to the slow pace of government operations in Key West. She puts considerable effort into her research, makes a decision, then likes to see her ideas carried out in a timely manner.

Nothing in Ms. Romero's background would prove embarrassing or controversial if the press went digging. She is a very visual and respected member of the community.

Ms. Romero would make a good City Manager because she has the time and energy to put into the job. She is always well prepared on any subject matter she chooses to tackle.

Words and phrases used to describe Ms. Romero:

- Dedicated,
- Sincere,
- Pleasant,
- Well informed,
- Educated, and
- A voice with an honest opinion.

Strengths: Dedication to the City; very active in all aspects of the community; sincerely cares about Key West's past, present, and future.

Weaknesses: Sometimes Ms. Romero can be politically stubborn. Once she makes a decision, it is hard for her to change her mind.

Completed by: Kate Estey, Colin Baenziger & Associates

Internet Research

Key West Citizen, The (FL)

January 31, 2012

School money among Keys referenda

Author: *GWEN FILOSA; Citizen Staff*

Monroe County voters will head to the polls today, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., to help Florida select a Republican candidate for this fall's presidential election and decide whether the Monroe County School District may once again tap the capital fund for general expenses.

The half-mill school referendum is the sole county-wide issue on the ballot today, available to voters regardless of party identification at the 33 precincts from Key Largo to Key West.

A "yes" vote would allow the district to transfer about \$9.5 million from the capital fund, reserved only for big-scale construction projects, into the general fund that pays for daily operations.

Tax bills would stay the same whether the half-mill fails or passes.

Two specific measures also await voters in Marathon and Islamorada today.

In Marathon, voters will weigh in on a nonbinding resolution over whether the Monroe County Commission should actively pursue commercial air service at the Florida Keys Marathon Airport.

Voters in Islamorada will decide whether the village should eliminate runoffs by requiring only a plurality of the vote, rather than a majority, for the election of a Village Council member.

The School District has spent the past few months courting Keys-wide voters to deliver the 51 percent total needed to approve the half-mill.

Although voters have handily approved the half-mill twice since 2004, the School District this year stepped up its campaigning for a "yes" decision, already anticipating a budget shortfall of several million dollars and fearing a \$14 million deficit if the referendum tanks.

"The concern is backlash, for some of the problems the School District had in the past," said Stuart Kessler, chairman of the volunteer Audit and Finance Committee that reviews School District spending.

The committee was created two years ago in response to the Randy and Monique Acevedo embezzlement scandal that by 2010 had sent her to prison for stealing \$413, 000 of the district's money and cost him his elected superintendent office for lying to cover up her crime.

The scandal, and any loose controls on the district's checkbook, is history, said Robin Smith-Martin, the School Board member who helped organize a Monday evening rally promoting a "yes" vote on the half-mill hosted by Salute.

Internet Newspaper Archives Searches
Romero Margaret
[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

"Systems are in place now to account for our dollars," said Smith-Martin, as his musician friends performed on the restaurant's beachfront patio and guests mingled on the eve of the vote.

Key West Mayor Craig Cates, Schools Superintendent Jesus Jara, teachers union president Holly Hummell-Gorman, Florida Board of Education member John Padget and School Board Vice Chairman Andy Griffiths showed up, along with a couple of School Board candidates for incumbent Duncan Mathewson's seat.

"Without the referendum passing, the possibility of having over a \$9 million shortfall is kind of daunting," said Kym Momaly, a first-grade teacher at Glynn Archer Elementary School, who brought her husband and three children to the seaside rally.

The one-mill capital funding tax is in place as part of the School District's property tax assessment.

Every four years since 2004, the voters have been asked to redirect half of that tax to operating expenses, and in exchange for that permission, the board halves the capital tax.

"If we lose it, the people who get hurt are the students and the staff," School Board Chairman John Dick said of today's half-mill vote. "The students will lose certain programs and the staff would take strong hits in salaries." No organized anti-referendum effort has emerged, but political watchdogs have taken a few swings at the district.

Margaret Romero, a former Key West mayoral candidate and constant critic of government spending, wouldn't disclose how she will vote today, but maintained her skepticism of the School District's performance when it comes to fiscal responsibility.

"I'm hearing a lot of people saying they need to live within their means," **Romero** said of the argument for voting "no" on the half-mill. "They think there has been a lot of mismanagement." If anything, the "means" have dropped dramatically, said Kessler. "The revenue has gone down, primarily because of changes in state rules. Monroe County was forced to reduce its taxes. The taxpayer's bill has gone down." **Romero** said the issue unfairly paints naysayers as anti-education.

"People don't want to come across as being against schools," she said. "We are all for kids and teachers, but they keep crying wolf." gfilosa@keysnews.com.

Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)

July 7, 2011

Fourth candidate jumps into Key West mayor race

Author: *SEAN KINNEY*

Key West voters now have four mayoral candidates from which to choose with the addition of **Margaret Romero**, a native Conch and active civic watchdog.

Romero, a constant presence at Key West City Commission and Monroe County School Board meetings, told KeysNet she's ready to assume a leadership role in local government.

"I felt I could be more contributory to the government and the community by not just having three minutes at the podium but by actually sitting at the dais and being a part of the discussion and part of the vote," she said in declaring her candidacy.

Romero, 60, will face incumbent Mayor Craig Cates and Carrie Noda, both of whom filed with the City Clerk's Office official paperwork to run; and Sloan Bashinsky, who has announced his intent to run but has yet to file papers.

Romero gave a laundry list of issues she'd like to address, including the height of Horace O'Bryant Middle School, development at the Truman Waterfront, reconstruction of North Roosevelt Boulevard and the possible widening of the shipping channel into Key West Harbor.

"I look at an issue and I say, 'Why, how, what are the ramifications, what are the benefits, is there another way to do it?' Then I come up with the best objective decision that's based on common sense and logic."

Romero said she honed those skills during her career with IBM working as an executive consultant specializing in organizational change management and business strategy.

The citywide election is scheduled for Oct. 4 with a runoff, if needed, set for Nov. 8. The candidate qualifying period runs from noon Aug. 15 to noon Aug. 19.

Key West Citizen, The (FL)

May 4, 2011

Architect skewered over school

City, School District to enter resolution process over HOB

Author: *MANDY MILES; Citizen Staff*

City and School District officials will enter a formal conflict resolution process to determine the future of the Horace O'Bryant school, which violates the city's height cap by more than 30 feet.

City commissioners on Tuesday had harsh words for architect Rick Z. Smith, who designed the new campus, which will include the relocated Glynn Archer Elementary School students.

Commissioner Jimmy Week ley told Smith, "You were negligent; the School District was negligent in not bringing the plans for these buildings to our planning department for review." "There are a number of us who are not happy with your utter disregard for one of the most important rules of our community," Commissioner Teri Johnston said, questioning Smith about the plans that changed several times throughout the process and calling for the tallest building to be lowered.

"There are companies that modify tilt-wall buildings," she said. "This is going to be one of our legacies, whether we stood up for our rules or not." Smith told the commission that he could bring the remaining buildings slated for construction into compliance with the city's height restriction, but that might not be enough for the commissioners, who pointed out that parents were never supportive of the plan to move Glynn Archer students to HOB.

Commissioners Barry Gibson and Johnston questioned Smith about the site's plan for landscaping, which could act as a noise buffer.

Johnston said she had heard that the landscaping budget had been eliminated.

Smith said there would be 25 feet of "green space" between the school property and the neighboring properties, but he did not know specifics about landscaping features.

Residents spoke in support of lowering the existing buildings. Washington Street resident **Margaret Romero** said she has been in touch with a national association of tilt-wall companies that are willing to bid on a project that would include altering the new, 56-foot middle school building. "The School District did nothing, so I have," she said. "Children and staff should have been out of HOB years ago, but the district did nothing. They thumbed their nose at the entire city. Even the arrogant and influential must follow our laws." The conflict resolution process is outlined by state statute, and includes an initial meeting that will assess the basis of the conflict.

Both parties then must negotiate in good faith and possibly select a third party mediator. Litigation is the final step if no resolution is reached. The initial meeting is expected to take place in the next 10 to 14 days.

Key West Citizen, The (FL)

April 27, 2011

**New buildings may be shorter
Offer made to lower rest of school by up to 6 feet**

Author: *MANDY MILES; Citizen Staff*

Designers of the remaining four buildings slated for construction on the Horace O'Bryant campus can shave approximately 2 to 6 feet off the top of each building, bringing them closer to compliance with the city of Key West 's height restrictions.

The Monroe County School Board on Tuesday heard from architect Rick Z. Smith about plans for the second phase of the HOB construction project, but did not vote on any changes to the plans.

Smith told the board that he and his design team identified ways to condense air-conditioning equipment and change the pitch of some roofs in order to lower the buildings.

"In some cases, we've shaved as much as nearly 6 feet off the height," the architect said, adding that his team will not charge the School District anything for the changes.

Smith and Fred Sims, the district's facilities manager, will meet today with Key West 's planning department "to see if the city will be satisfied if we go through with these changes," Sims said, adding that he does not think the changes will impact the construction costs.

"I'm glad to see there have been some changes made," board Chairman John Dick said. "I think we needed to make some concessions, and this shows a good-faith effort to the city." Prior to the report from Smith, board members heard from a community divided on the height issue.

Former School Board member Pat Labrada asked that construction continue as planned, saying the public had ample opportunity to review and comment on the construction plans.

Resident **Margaret Romero** encouraged the board to design a new middle school and tear down the new building, which, at 56 feet high, exceeds the city's height limit by more than 30 feet. She suggested then using the material from the demolished building for other projects, and said the architects and contractors have errors and omissions insurance to cover the costs of demolition and redesign.

Key West resident Louis LaTorre has been an outspoken critic of HOB, and on Tuesday said the School District has "the worst maintenance department or program around, because you've never taken care of those buildings." LaTorre also denounced the agreement between the School District and city for joint use of Glynn Archer Elementary School.

The board unanimously approved a memorandum of understanding that outlines the potential for shared ownership of the historic school, which could become a new City Hall, and the district's new administrative headquarters.

Internet Newspaper Archives Searches
Romero Margaret
[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

Board members approved the agreement and agreed to continue discussions with the city despite recent talks about moving the district's headquarters to a more central location in Marathon.

"At our last meeting at Coral Shores, it sounded like we were ready to move our administration to Marathon," Dick said.

District administrators also pointed out that a new appraisal, commissioned by the School District, values the Glynn Archer property at \$9 million. The appraisal commissioned by the city estimated the property value to be \$6.8 million, leaving many significant details to be ironed out.

In other board activity, officials approved a new mission statement of "constant improvement," penned by board member Robin Smith-Martin.

The board's morning workshop session included a discussion of budget reduction options given the district's need to eliminate about \$8 million from the budget, although no votes were taken.

Superintendent Joe Burke told the board that the district's high school principals have devised a way to save high school students' elective classes, which were on the chopping block.

Burke said teachers willing to teach electives, including band, will receive a salary supplement, and students who want to take their electives can stay in school for an additional seventh period. The regular school day could be shortened to six periods.

Officials also made the unpopular suggestion that the district eliminate art and music teachers from the elementary schools, despite opposition from parents and some board members.

Smith-Martin called the move "completely unacceptable," while Dick pointed out that the students would still be taught art and music, but by classroom teachers rather than specialty teachers. Burke also pointed out that the elimination would "make it virtually impossible for elementary school principals to schedule planning periods for their teachers without art and music teachers." Board member Duncan Mathewson said that he had heard from teachers at Plantation Key School who said they would opt for an additional furlough day, without work or pay, rather than eliminate art and music.

The board and district will continue evaluating difficult budget reductions in the coming weeks, but no decisions were made Tuesday.

Key West Citizen, The (FL)

April 15, 2011

Resident launches HOB website

Online petition asks city to enforce height limit

Author: *MANDY MILES; Citizen Staff*

A Key West resident launched a website Thursday that blames the Monroe County School District for the new middle school building that violates the city's height limit, and features an online petition that asks the city to enforce its zoning regulations.

Key West resident **Margaret Romero** paid for the design and hosting of www.tamehob.com with her own money, using no donations or funding from any other sources, she said when she alerted *The Citizen* to the site on Thursday. The name refers to Horace O'Bryant Middle School, locally known as HOB.

Romero "A number of people had said to me, 'What are you doing about HOB, and what can be done?'" **Romero** told *The Citizen* on Thursday. "I wanted to get information out there so people can be informed, so they will have as many facts as I can provide and then contact their officials." On the website, **Romero** encourages the School District to take legal action against its vendors and contractors, and urges city officials to enforce its zoning laws with regard to HOB.

"I just thought that if I started this, maybe others would join and become active in our local decisions," she said.

Petition signatures automatically will be sent to Key West Mayor Craig Cates and the city commissioners, and Monroe County Schools Superintendent Joseph Burke and the School Board, **Romero** said.

"That's the default setting, but people can customize their list of recipients if they want," **Romero** said.

The website's home page shows a photo of the new middle school building, which stands 56 feet tall in a neighborhood with a maximum height restriction of 25 feet.

The building casts a shadow, **Romero** said, that extends over the waters of Garrison Bight.

The website also includes photos of the school construction from several angles. It explains that plans for the new campus, which will be a combination of HOB and Glynn Archer Elementary School, include seven new buildings, six of which would exceed the neighborhood's height limit.

Romero criticizes the School District for overlooking the city's land development regulations, for failing to obtain early neighborhood and citizen input and for "enhancing the level of public distrust by having no business case or financial justification" for the new school. The website says the new school has been dubbed "Fiscal Folly," "Palace of Poor Planning" and "The Ugly Monstrosity." "But it should in no way be called "The City's Fault," the site states.

It is, however, the city's responsibility to enforce its regulations and "safeguard its citizens from future flagrant disregard for city laws and processes," the website states.

Romero said the new school should not become the taxpayers'burden "because of the School District's seemingly gross negligence, disregard for citizen input and cavalier attitude for usage of public monies." School Board member Robin Smith-Martin, whose district includes HOB and who viewed the website Thursday afternoon in response to The Citizen's questions about it, said it contains "quasi-accurate information." "Ms. **Romero** is quick to point fingers and place blame, but offers no realistic solutions and seems to have complete disregard for the needs of our children and the sanctity of our tax dollars," Smith-Martin said.

He said the biggest revelation, to him, was what he called a "conflict of interest" stemming from the web design company's relationship with The Citizen. The website is being hosted by GoDaddy.

com and was developed by Floridakeys.com, an independent company that is owned by The Citizen's parent company, Cooke Communications.

Key West Citizen, The (FL)

March 16, 2011

City Hall talks go on

KEY WEST Mayor, schools to continue negotiations

Author: *MANDY MILES; Citizen Staff*

The Key West mayor has two more months to hash out an agreement with the School District for use of Glynn Archer Elementary School as a City Hall, and a local businessman got the go-ahead

to revitalize Simonton Beach.

The City Commission on Tuesday unanimously approved Mayor Craig Cates' request for a 60-day extension of the deadline for negotiating a shared-use - and possibly shared-ownership - agreement with the School District for the historic school.

Negotiations have included discussion about the city controlling two-thirds of the property, and the district utilizing one-third for its relocated administrative headquarters.

The approval came only after a lengthy discussion of commissioners' continuing concerns about renovation costs of the historic building, closed-door negotiations and the School District's dubious track record.

"I have no idea what you all have been talking about in those negotiations," Commissioner Mark Rossi said, echoing many of his colleagues' sentiments.

"We need to be informed. With all due respect, Mr. Mayor, we've never made an official decision about joint use of the property, and the track record between the city and the School District is not that good." He outlined past problems with the district's concession stand at Horace O'Bryant Middle School and the delayed soccer fields at Poinciana Elementary School.

Resident **Margaret Romero** also listed several concerns she had about the Glynn Archer deal and why it is important to the School District.

In August 2007, [former Superintendent] Randy Acevedo recommended approval of Ed Swift's proposed Trumbo Village housing development on the district's current headquarters, she said.

School Board member Robin Smith-Martin acknowledged that the school district's Trumbo Road headquarters likely would be sold to pay off debts once the district moved into Glynn Archer, but he dismissed **Romero's** information about Trumbo Village as "conspiracy theory." **Romero** also said that architect Bert Bender's estimated construction costs are less per square foot than the cost of restoring the Gato Building 10 years ago.

"Tom Pope was asked for his numbers, and when some people didn't like them, Bender was asked for his numbers," **Romero** said. "Commissioners, I beg you to hold the School District accountable to the taxpayers." Commissioner Teri Johnston echoed **Romero's** concern about the

architect, and reminded Cates that the commission has never approved Bender as the architect for the project, yet he is the only one involved in the ongoing negotiations.

"During our last meeting, I realized that the only architect involved was Bert Bender, and not one of us had ever selected him," she said. "Nowhere did we give you the authority to move on that." She added that she wants to hear from other architects during this process.

All commissioners asked Cates and City Manager Jim Scholl to keep them better informed about the progress and specifics of the negotiations and proposed agreements.

Concession contract In other activity, the commission unanimously approved a proposal from businessman Rick Spencer to operate a concession stand and watersports business at Simonton Beach.

The commissioners were encouraged by the proposed redevelopment of an otherwise blighted area that has been overrun by homeless residents in recent years and disused by other residents and visitors.

Key West Citizen, The (FL)

October 17, 2010

Key West voters to decide on 3 referenda

ELECTION PREVIEW 3 KEY WEST CITY REFERENDA Ballot asks about buying school, selling parcel, setting runoff date

Author: *MANDY MILES; Citizen Staff*

Key West voters will decide on more than elected officials in the general election, including determining whether the city acquires one property and gets rid of another.

The question of whether City Hall should be rebuilt at its current Angela Street location or relocated to a renovated Glynn Archer Elementary School building could be decided on Nov. 2.

In one of three referenda, voters will decide whether to authorize the city "to acquire the historic Glynn Archer school site at 1302 White St. from the Monroe County School Board for use as a City Hall upon terms and conditions acceptable to the City Commission after a full hearing with public input." If the referendum passes, the City Commission will retain its oversight authority.

If commissioners decide the renovation option is too expensive, the project will not move forward.

If voters tell the city not to acquire the historic building, plans for a new City Hall and parking garage will continue as planned on Angela Street.

The issue has proven to be a divisive one within the community, with Mayor Craig Cates leading the charge to convince people that Glynn Archer is the best option for City Hall. He is joined by business owner Kate Miano, who owns The Gardens Hotel, across the street from the current City Hall.

Miano has told commissioners that construction across the street would cripple her business, and the Glynn Archer proposal is better for the community because of the cost and opportunity to restore a historic building.

Cates organized an open house at the school Saturday afternoon to give public tours and lobby for the referendum.

He has teamed with historic preservation specialist and architect Bert Bender to present plans for a restored building that would cost less than the proposed \$18 million Angela Street complex. Bender's plan would cost \$15.9 million and would allow for a single-level parking lot and public restrooms on Angela Street, where a new fire station will be built regardless, Cates said.

Cates estimates the parking lot could generate \$400, 000 per year in city revenue. Additional benefits would include an onsite auditorium to be used for commission meetings, more parking for residents conducting business at City Hall and an alleviation of traffic in Old Town, near the current City Hall.

Residents and officials in favor of a new government complex on Angela Street point primarily to the unknown costs that come with restoration of a historic building. There also are other unanswered questions about the city's relationship with the School Board for the deal.

Cates has proposed a land swap in which the school district would receive a parcel of land the city owns on Trumbo Road, next to the school district headquarters, in return for Glynn Archer.

The school district has not agreed to the swap, said Key West resident **Margaret Romero**, who opposes the Glynn Archer option. She also pointed out that School Board member Debra Walker has said she wants the district to lease the school building to the city rather than sell or trade it outright.

"The mayor is just pushing too hard for this," **Romero** said. "Why didn't he ever speak as a citizen about the Glynn Archer possibility before he became mayor? Why didn't he care about it then, when the plans for Angela Street were being developed?" She predicted the city will give the school district its waterfront land on Trumbo Road.

"And the School Board doesn't need voter approval to get rid of its land," she said, adding it could sell or lease the waterfront land to developer Ed Swift, who built the adjacent luxury Steam Plant Condominiums.

Plans from years ago show Swift wanted to create a marina and park for his condo residents, **Romero** said.

The school district could relocate to space it wanted to lease back from the city at Glynn Archer, she said.

Romero said Miano is not the only business owner who has endured construction next to their business.

"I'm just tired of special interests picking the public pockets," **Romero** said.

Pier House land Voters also must decide whether the city should sell the land underneath the Pier House Resort's Caribbean Spa building.

The resort owners currently lease the land from the city, and pay \$3, 870 per year in rent and sales tax. The resort owns the building.

Those owners want to buy the land "to ensure the facility is a permanent fixture of the resort," according to campaign literature advocating the sale of the land.

Voters will not know the purchase price of the land unless the referendum passes, in which case two appraisals are required.

If the voters approve the sale, then the property would be appraised and a public bidding process would start. The successful bidder would pay for the appraisals.

Internet Newspaper Archives Searches
Romero Margaret
[Articles Appear In Reverse Chronological Order]

A "yes" vote from the public does not guarantee the sale of the property. City officials retain the authority to negotiate a fair deal, and are not required to sell the property. The referendum just provides the authority to do so.

Proponents of the sale say the city would "receive several millions of dollars that could be used immediately to provide benefits to its citizens," according to the campaign literature.

Those who question the land sale point out that in 10 years, ownership of the land and the building on it reverts back to the city. At that point, the property and its accompanying building will be worth significantly more.

"At the end of 10 years, we get everything," **Romero** said, opposing the sale of the land in this depressed real estate market, and adding that it is the best time for the resort owners to try and buy the land.

"I just want what's best for the majority of the people in Key West, and not the special interests," she reiterated. "Plus, the city is not doing the appraisals unless the referendum passes, so the voters don't know how much the city would receive." She wants the city to wait the 10 years, and realize the full benefits of that land and its building when the market recovers.

Runoff elections Finally, voters will be asked whether the city should hold its runoff elections the same day as Monroe County, the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

The referendum has not drawn any public criticism or discussion, and aligns the city elections with the county's, but because it would entail a change to the city charter, voter approval is required.

Reporter, The (Tavernier, FL)

July 24, 2010

New park possible for Old Town Key West

Author: *SEAN KINNEY*

Key West City Commissioner Barry Gibson wants voters to decide on Nov. 2 whether to spend \$500,000 of special tax revenue to buy property and build a park at 2800 Flagler Ave. "Some people might see this as a burden to the city," Gibson said Tuesday at a City Commission meeting, "or as a burden to the taxpayer. In my part of town [District 4], there's not a park. Not one."

"God help me if it's such a bad thing to want to build a park on this island. All I hear about is green space, anti-development on Wisteria Island. Here I propose a park and people are against it."

Gibson has drawn fire from some who see the proposed project as a publicly funded bailout for the landowner, Jacob Zucker, rabbi of the Chabad Jewish Center of the Florida Keys; he purchased the land in 2004 for \$675,000 according to Monroe County Property Appraiser's Office records.

"It seems we're starting a trend that if a landowner can't sell their property or get the price they want, they come to a governmental entity and say, 'Hey, here's what you can do with my property,'" resident **Margaret Romero** told commissioners. "That's what it sure looks like on this position with this Flagler Avenue property."

"This was my idea," Gibson came back. "It had nothing to do with the landowner. It had nothing to do with the landowner's financial situation. There's no bailout being offered to anybody here, Ms. **Romero**."

The money used to purchase the New Town property, up to \$500,000, Gibson said, would come from the city's Fort Zachary Taylor Fund, which is generated from a 50-cent local tax on each admission to Fort Zachary Taylor State Park at the end of Southard Street. There's \$962,000 in the fund, according to city records.

The city's purchase of the proposed park land has to be approved through a referendum by the city's registered voters. Tuesday, commissioners passed the first of two required ordinance readings that would place the measure on the ballot.

Commissioner Billy Wardlow was absent while commissioners Teri Johnston and Mark Rossi dissented, citing unknown costs of recurring maintenance.

Gibson has organized donations for clearing the land, removing the waste, designing the park and installing 150 palm trees.

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The 4.25-acre site is zoned for four houses. The property has 1.2 acres of upland, .56 acres of salt marsh and 2.49 acres of high-quality mangrove wetlands adjacent to the 11th Street public boat launch.

Commissioners will consider final approval of the proposed referendum on Aug. 3 beginning at 6 p.m. in Old City Hall on Greene Street.

McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)

July 10, 2010

Key West dimming the lights on some performers

Author: *Sean Kinney, Florida Keys Keynoter, Marathon*

July 10 Key West city commissioners on Tuesday approved the first reading of an ordinance that would put stricter controls on where some 220 license-holding street performers set up their act or wares on Duval Street.

A major tenet of the proposed law would confine street performers, musicians and artists to the blocks on Duval between Front and Petronia streets. There would be a specific prohibition from setting up shop on Upper Duval, defined as Olivia Street to the Atlantic Ocean.

Commissioner Clayton Lopez, who represents that area, introduced that amendment at the behest of constituents. Attorney Susan Cardenas, who said she represents 12 Upper Duval property and business owners, described the art-gallery-rich blocks as having a "distinct, cultural difference."

"We appreciate, from the Upper Duval perspective, that you're protecting that area," she said.

Other requirements would make street performers carry \$300,000 in liability insurance, set and up 30 feet from the corner, 20 feet from one another, 12 inches from the curb and five feet from the adjacent property line.

However, based on discussion among commissioners, those distances could change between now and the next scheduled ordinance reading, set for July 20 at Old City Hall on Greene Street.

Performers also would not be allowed at Mallory Square (buskers and other vendors that do perform at the sunset celebration at Mallory Square do so through the Cultural Preservation Society, which runs an organized lottery that assigns nightly winners a designated performance or sales areas).

Other restricted areas: Wall Street; in front federal, state or local government buildings; in front of churches and theaters; the Key West Bight harbor walk; the Truman Waterfront; and the Southernmost Point.

"What it does is it makes everywhere that I've played on Duval Street for the last 30 years illegal to play," street musician Steve Clark said. He plays acoustic guitar and said he needs to sit facing a wall to amplify his sound.

"Why do we have to pretend it's about public safety?" he asked. "To put us five feet out in the middle of the sidewalk is going to be safer. Safer, so we need \$300,000 in liability?"

Commissioner Mark Rossi pushed for a mechanism to be added to the proposed law that would give business owners recourse, either through the police or code compliance, if they're having problems with street performers near their business.

"You have people down there," Rossi said, "who are causing a ruckus in front of people's businesses and the business owner can't do anything about it. If a business owner complains about a performer out in front of his business, there should be some type of a mechanism, a cease-and-desist or something."

"I wish you had a stricter ordinance," resident **Margaret Romero** told commissioners. Then she turned toward the artists and performers: "If your performance is that good or your craft that you're creating is that good, I suggest either finding a cooperative, get some floor space, or get in a sublease with someone on Duval Street."

Under current law, performers merely have to have a hold-harmless agreement with the city and are restricted from only a handful of areas.

Key West Citizen, The (FL)

December 5, 2009

Meters stay, but other options possible

KEY WEST

Author: *MANDY BOLEN; Citizen Staff*

Parking meters along Key West's Smathers Beach will remain, but city officials may come up with a new decal that would allow residents to park for free. City Commissioner Billy Wardlow had proposed removal of the meters, which were installed in 1997 and yield about \$37, 000 in annual revenue, according to documents prepared by Rod Delostrinos, deputy director of Community Services.

"I think residents deserve their beach without having to worry about parking enforcement," Wardlow said during a Thursday night City Commission meeting, which lasted until 1:30 a.m. Friday.

But City Manager Jim Scholl told the commissioners he could not recommend the removal of any revenue stream during these economic conditions.

Mayor Craig Cates agreed, and said he would hate to lose another city employee to layoffs if the city lost \$37, 000 in revenue.

Commissioner Barry Gibson suggested a new decal or permit that would identify locals and prevent parking enforcement officers from writing tickets at their expired meters.

Washington Street resident **Margaret Romero** suggested using the city-issued Hurricane Re-entry decals to identify locals. Such decals are issued only to people with a local ID, she said.

Other residents, including Christine Russell and Tom Lavender, thanked Wardlow for thinking of the residents, but both said the city could not afford to give away any money right now.

Lavender suggested the addition of more meters at the east end of Smathers Beach, which he hopes soon will be a nude beach. He also pointed out that many people park for free across the street on the bridle path, but the area is near environmentally sensitive salt ponds, and forces beachgoers to cross busy South Roosevelt Boulevard to get to the beach and its related activities.

"Ninety percent of the people on the beach are not Key West residents," Lavender said, adding that more residents use the seawall and sidewalk for exercise than use the beach.

Scholl said he would look into the matter, and added that it may be a job for the city's new parking director, who will be hired this year to oversee all aspects of the city's parking situation, including collection of parking fines, employee parking permits and the residential parking program, which is not currently enforced.

In other late-night commission business: □ The commission approved a five-year, \$10.4 million extension to its contract with Waste Management for residential curbside pickup of garbage and recyclables. That extension came with an agreement that Waste Management officials will work with city staff to craft a long-term recycling plan to improve the city's abysmal 7 percent recycling rate.

Commissioner Teri Johnston urged the commission to move ahead with the hiring of a consultant to help with the plan's drafting and implementation.

She criticized the town's recycling rate under Waste Management's contract, but then acknowledged that the contract does not include emphasis on or incentives for increased recycling.

"We're the ones who have to recycle," Gibson said. "It's not Waste Management's job to make us recycle.

"We really do need a longterm plan." That plan may include an evaluation of the composting process by which organic waste is broken down and used for fertilizer.

The commission will meet again on Dec. 14 for a special meeting to discuss the results of the audit of the Bahama Conch Community Land Trust.

That meeting will take place at 6 p.m. in Old City Hall.

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
February 19, 2009

City Hall's future spot in limbo

Author: *MANDY BOLEN; Citizen Staff*

A tied vote on the location of a new City Hall prompted the Key West City Commission on Wednesday to delay the decision until Commissioner Mark Rossi, who was absent, can cast a vote.

Also, Mayor Morgan McPherson said he doubted the Bahama Conch Community Land Trust could successfully develop a six-acre parcel on the Truman Waterfront.

Commissioners Dan Kolhage and Teri Johnston opposed the delay in naming a spot for a new City Hall. Both of them ranked Angela Street, its current location, as the best.

McPherson spoke passionately about locating the new City Hall at Wickers Field.

Commissioner Bill Verge also ranked the New Town location higher than Angela Street, but only after encouraging the commission to seek other alternatives.

He said Monroe County is looking to vacate the Gato Building on Simonton Street, and wants to explore leasing that building.

"It certainly would be a lot cheaper than spending \$24 million," Verge said.

Commissioner Clayton Lopez has always ardently supported the Angela Street location, but said that he would be happy with any Old Town location.

In other commission activity, McPherson's proposal for a Truman Waterfront advisory board met with serious resistance Wednesday night, as residents and commissioners questioned its worth and the motives behind it.

The City Commission ultimately approved the creation of the seven-member board, which McPherson said would guide the development of the waterfront.

And in answer to a question from Johnston, McPherson admitted that he anticipates the failure of the Bahama Conch Community Land Trust (BCCLT) to successfully develop about six waterfront acres that it can lease from the city.

Voters last year gave the city authorization to enter into a long-term lease with the BCCLT for control of one section of the waterfront. Another voter referendum authorized to city to enter into a lease with another group to operate an assisted-living facility for senior citizens at the waterfront.

"I don't see the BCCLT being able to pull this off," he said following several comments from residents who questioned the board's necessity.

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Tom Milone spoke on behalf the environmental group Last Stand, saying that the group opposed the creation of the board, because "consultants have been retained and a master plan was approved." Washington Street resident **Margaret Romero** questioned the motives behind creating the board.

"Who or what group of connected individuals is pushing this one?" she asked, wondering aloud why the proposed board includes the Navy as a non-voting member. "Why can't the Navy vote? Because it would be harder for special interests to influence them." Kolhage, after consulting with City Attorney Shawn Smith, pointed out that the new board will have no authority to alter any of the lease terms finalized between the city and the BCCLT or assisted-living coalition. Verge emphasized the importance of protecting the parkland area of the waterfront.

Key West Citizen, The (FL)

October 22, 2008

City creates Village tax committee

KEY WEST

Author: *MANDY BOLEN; Citizen Staff*

Despite some concerns from Key West residents, city officials on Tuesday created a new committee to oversee tax dollars designated for improvements in Bahama Village.

The new Key West Redevelopment Trust Fund Advisory Committee will comprise seven members who live in, work in or have ties to the Bahama Village neighborhood.

Each city commissioner and the mayor will appoint a committee member.

Residents **Margaret Romero** and Tom Milone questioned the name of the committee, and wondered aloud why the committee was not named for the neighborhood it benefits.

Romero urged the commissioners to deny the passage of the ordinance creating the committee, calling it "vague, misleading and open to manipulation." She and Milone also urged the commissioners to make the committee's name specific to Bahama Village.

City Attorney Shawn Smith pointed out that the name of the committee came directly from the name of the fund that pays for neighborhood improvement projects.

Bahama Village has been designated as a blighted area in need of redevelopment, meaning the property taxes that come into the area remain in that trust fund, rather than going into the city's general coffers.

"There's no chance of these funds going outside of the taxing district," Smith said in response to **Romero's** concerns about a possible manipulation or redirection of the funds to other Key West redevelopment areas.

Commissioners unanimously passed the ordinance that creates the committee.

A second reading is required before the committee is implemented and the members appointed. In other commission activity, officials, at the request of Commissioner Mark Rossi, voted to name the newly repaved bike path along North Roosevelt Boulevard after Jim Malcolm. Malcolm was the city's pedestrian and bicycle coordinator until his death earlier this month.

"He'll be impossible to replace with just one person," City Manager Jim Scholl said after a reading of Malcolm's accomplishments with regard to bicycle safety and handicap accessibility within the city of Key West.

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Also, Police Chief Donie Lee publicly recognized resident David Lybrand for his courage in stopping a violent attack on William Street on Oct. 1. Lybrand, who was biking on Southard Street, saw Christopher Farrell attacking a woman and her 3-year-old daughter with a tree saw.

Lybrand pulled the man off the girl and then chased him until police arrived and arrested Farrell on charges of attempted murder.

Commissioners postponed discussion of a new law dealing with fees that organizers of special events pay for city services such as garbage collection, security and installment of barricades. Those services cost the city money in overtime, supplies and other items.

Last year, the city lost about \$120, 000 because it underestimated the costs of such services when charging event organizers.

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