

**From:** Joe Walsh <[tropicalsoup1@gmail.com](mailto:tropicalsoup1@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2026 5:25 PM  
**To:** Lucas Torres-Bull <[lucas.torresbull@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:lucas.torresbull@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] RFP 26-001 and RFP 26-003

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Dear Mr. Torres-Bull,

Thank you for running the bid review meeting today for the redevelopment at Mallory Square.

I respectfully request that both of the competing redevelopment proposals for 26-001 The hospitality House and 26-003 the cable tanks be sent to the City Commission along with an opportunity for both applicants to make a presentation. HRG has no objection to including the results of the staff scoring of the proposals.

There are several important areas of review that Hayes Robertson Group Inc thinks should be reviewed by the Commission in public:

1. Two of the reviewers preferred one company- One preferred the other. This split is relevant since the judging criteria are subjective.
2. Across all reviewers, the HRG proposals scored higher in "vision for Mallory Square" than the Tropical Shell and Gift proposals
3. This was not a simple bid with plans and specs and then a number to do the specified work.
4. The proposals cover a critical piece of city property, and the scoring matrix is subjective.
5. It is not clear to me that one of the reviewers is familiar with the Mallory Square Master Plan and yet "Vision" for Mallory Square was a key scoring element. Even so, HRG still scored higher in this category.

6. One of the reviewers issued a score of 20 out of 25 for financial capacity to HRG, when the proposer included a brokerage statement and letter of commitment showing that the project was already fully funded.

7. "Experience" was the highest weighted scoring area, however, many people believe that Mallory Square has been poorly operated- so perhaps Mallory Square would be better served with something newer.

8. The plan for redevelopment of Mallory Square should be discussed in public. The Citizens and Commission should have an opportunity to review it. The plan and design should be reviewed.

In addition to reviewing the plan where HRG's was preferred, we should also discuss the financing, and feasibility, and experience in which Tropical Shell and Gift was preferred.

9. There were only two proposals. The redevelopment of Mallory Square is worth the time and effort

Regarding 26-002: while the City will be losing a substantial amount of money annually by not leasing 402 Wall Street to Hayes Robertson Group Inc, HRG is not requesting to make a presentation or contest this recommended RFP award to Tropical Shell and Gift to roll into its Wall Street oriented operation.

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regards,

Joe Walsh

305-731-9972

## Keri O'Brien

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**From:** jack.flats <jackflats509@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 29, 2026 10:04 PM  
**To:** Keri O'Brien  
**Cc:** Acastillo@cityofkeywest-fl.gov; Samuel Kaufman; LCarey@cityofkeywest-fl.gov; MHaskell@cityofkeywest-fl.gov; DLee@cityofkeywest-fl.gov; Greg Veliz; Danise Henriquez  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] City commission meeting April 1, agenda items 41, and 43

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Keri,

In compliance with Sec 2-773, (c) (2)(B) (the cone of silence) please ensure that it is part of the public record. This email, and agenda items refer to City of Key West Purchasing Office's RFPs 26-001 and 26-003.

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

For many, Mallory Square is the most iconic waterfront space in Key West. Unfortunately it has been profoundly neglected. Neither the City nor its tenants have focused on the guest experience or on shade, or seating, or the waterfront, or extending the use of the square beyond sunset. The quality of the tourism product offered in Key West, and the quality of life experience for those who live here needs to be improved. Unlike Duval Street, or North Roosevelt Blvd, or the triangle entrance, Mallory Square does not have other property owners to prevent revitalizing it or making it more attractive. The City can fix Mallory Square.

The City has spent years of planning, dozens of meetings, and hundreds of thousands of dollars in planner and consultant expenditures in developing Mallory Square master plans. If the City chooses to not examine the merits of the two Mallory square redevelopment proposals in public and discuss why one or the other is more desirable is indicative of gross negligence. [Mallory Square Visioning Hub](#)

There were a number of differences and several similarities between the two proposals that the City received for RFPs 26-001 and 26-003.

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- HRG Hayes Robertson Group (HRG) offers to build a world class splash fountain proposed in the master plan for approximately \$1million dollars, and allocates over 200,000 per year for ongoing operational and maintenance costs. Tropical Shell and Gift (TS&G) TS&G does not
- HRG offers to build additional public restroom facilities. TS&G does not.
- HRG offers support storage for Mallory Square sunset performers (CPS). TS&G does not

- HRG offers to construct master plan style shade structures for added public enjoyment of Mallory Square. TS&G does not
  - HRG's plan revitalizes Mallory Square executing multiple components of the master plan, and offers to spend \$3 million dollars on development costs. TS&G proposes spending 1.4 million to expand the aquarium.
  - HRG proposes multiple landscaping and seating areas to facilitate public enjoyment and performances at Mallory Square TS&G does not.
  - HRG proposes removing the prison style gates and increasing public access to the cable tanks. TS&G does not. Its proposal leaves the gates and requires paid access.
  - HRG offers \$50,000 per year. TS&G proposes rolling this property into its decades-long master lease for much of Mallory Square that does not have a minimum payment.
  - HRG is not seeking rent credits. TS&G is demanding that its master lease rent payments be reduced by 1.5m over the next 10 years. So- despite the city staff comments that this proposal will be at no cost to the City- the plain language of the proposal states that the largest Mallory Square tenant will be reducing city rent payments to pay for its aquarium expansion, by approximately \$150,000 per year.
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- Neither proposal included any new buildings and neither obstructs the views of the water or sunset, or historic structures- Although TS&G does propose retaining the black fencing preventing Mallory Square guests from accessing this area.
  - Both proposals offer educational signage and historical markers, but TS&G's requires aquarium admission to view.
  - Both proposals include additional land around the Hospitality House and Cable tanks-
  - Both proposals include new doors in the cable tanks
  - Both proposals include using the Gulf Atlantic cut for additional controlled marine life display
  - Both proposals grouped RFP-26-001 and RFP 26-003 together.
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- Both proposals offered CVs of marine biologists and experts to manage the coral development. (HRG has such a partnership currently on Summerland Key.)
  - Both companies are among the largest private employers in the Keys.
  - Both proposals offered to repair and maintain the hospitality House
  - Both companies submitted evidence that the initial development costs would be made by company funds on hand. Despite this, TS&G was scored higher than HRG in "Financial Capacity"
  - The HRG proposal in total was scored higher by one of the reviewers. TS&G was scored higher by two.
  - The HRG proposal's overall score was higher in the most important category "Project Vision and Key Objectives"
  - The TS&G proposal scored higher in "experience". While it is true that TS&G has used the areas subject to this RFP for parking, maintenance, storage, cart construction, and aquarium pumps, for twenty years, HRG respectfully disagrees that this experience should be a positive factor in awarding these RFPs.
  - The ranking criteria are subjective leading to differing opinions and scores.
  - The ranking criteria poorly identify the needs of Mallory Square, and the criteria fail to recognize that this is probably the last private sector opportunity to revitalize Mallory Square.

HRG is proposing:

A world class splash fountain, landscaping, architectural shade sails, support for CPS, park seating, coral restoration, historical markers, a Mallory square museum, additional restrooms, a concession stand, built in performer spaces, public access to the historic structures, orienting Mallory Square amenities towards the water- not towards Wall street, no cost of construction to the city now or in the future, and \$50,000 per year. HRG submitted multiple examples of Delta Fountains designs and work but likes the work at Centennial Square in West Palm Beach as a good starting point design



From the City's master plan



Waiting to get the right plan will not hurt. The City has made several changes to Mallory Square in the past thirteen years. Most have not been positive. Mallory Square is worth the effort to get it right.

from 2019



From 2013



You should postpone items 41 and 43, RFP 26-001 and RFP 26-003, and allow the two proposers to make public presentations explaining why their respective visions or financial capacity, or experience are better suited for the redevelopment of Mallory Square. The City Commission is specifically required to make this award determination or rejection. The Commission should not outsource a subjective opinion to staff who had a weekend to analyze the future of one of the City's most important assets.

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Regards,

Joe Walsh  
305-731-9972