

## Lissette Carey

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**From:** Cheri Smith  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 7, 2020 2:01 PM  
**To:** Lissette Carey  
**Subject:** FW: Commission Meeting 7 April 2020, Item #15

**From:** euni6801@aol.com <euni6801@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 06, 2020 4:00 PM  
**To:** Cheri Smith <csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Commission Meeting 7 April 2020, Item #15

Thank You!

Blessings

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Cheri Smith <csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>  
**To:** euni6801@aol.com <euni6801@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Mon, Apr 6, 2020 1:30 pm  
**Subject:** RE: Commission Meeting 7 April 2020, Item #15

Good Afternoon,

I have received your letter and will read it into the record at the Commission meeting.

Sincerely,  
Cheri Smith, MMC, CPM  
City Clerk  
City of Key West  
305-809-3835  
[csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)

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**From:** euni6801@aol.com <euni6801@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 03, 2020 7:18 PM  
**To:** Greg Veliz <gveliz@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>  
**Cc:** Patti McLaughlin <pmclauchlin@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>; Cheri Smith <csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Commission Meeting 7 April 2020, Item #15

Good Evening Mr. Veliz:

I would like to forward you, Ms. Patti McLaughlin - Assistant City Manager and Ms. Cheri Smith a copy of the letter that I wrote and sent to the Mayor and all of the City Commissioner requesting that the matter of the "Douglass Band Room" be taken off of the agenda scheduled for 7 April 2020 and be readdressed at a later date and time. I would also like to ask Ms. Smith to read my letter into the records at the next Commission meeting once it is announced.

As you are fully aware, this matter has been going on for YEARS and I do not see why it has to be rushed through during a time when most if not all of the residents are trying to focus on just surviving the Covid-19 virus and they are not really paying attention to what is going on.

I feel that if you allow this item to go through during this time, that you will be doing a dis-service to the community and to the position that you hold. This issue is very important to both parties involved and it should be done in complete transparency. I also feel that before either side is awarded the "Band Room", that there should be a location already in place for the group that does not get it.

Our forefathers and mothers already paid the price with their labor and love and it is only right that this matter be resolved in a truly open and civil manner. You as City Manager and Assistant City Manager have been handed this task in which your predecessor's were unable to resolve. I am requesting that you reconsider this matter and allow it to come before the City Commission once our Island home is back to some type of normality.

I would like to Thank you in advance for your consideration and attention in this matter. It is one that is very dear to my heart. I know that both parties would like to have the use of the "Band Room" and only one will get it, but I ask that you go about this with an open heart and mind and that you do what is in the best interest of all the people of "Bahama Village." or what is left of it.

Thank you for hearing my concerns and my request. I know that you will do what is right and take fully into consideration the challenges of the moment by sheltering in place orders, some people not having access to electronic devices or not knowing how to use them properly, the pressure of just trying to survive on a daily basis and the added stress of watching our Country being ripped apart at the seams with this deadly virus and wondering if we or our loved ones have been exposed to it.

Now is not the time for this matter to be pushed through. I am counting on you and I know that the entire Island community are counting on you as well.

I would like for you to let me know what your decision is as to the status of the item if you decide to move forward as planned on 7 April 2020 or if you decide that now is not the time and the matter can wait until things get back to normal. If the City has not made a decision in all these years, what is a few more months? This is not a pressing issue in my humble opinion. The lives of the citizens and getting people back to work as soon as we get the all clear, providing food on the table, trying to figure out how to pay the bills, the rent, keep the lights on, stay healthy and making sure one has a job to go back to once this is over takes precedence at this time.

Please be safe and take every precaution to protect your families and friends as well. Praying that God will bless and keep you and cover you with protection.

Sincerely,

Brenda Kee-Johnson

-----Original Message-----

From: . <[euni6801@aol.com](mailto:euni6801@aol.com)>

To: [tjohnston@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:tjohnston@cityofkeywest-fl.gov) <[tjohnston@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:tjohnston@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>

Cc: [jweekley@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:jweekley@cityofkeywest-fl.gov) <[jweekley@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:jweekley@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>; [skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)

<[skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>; [bwardlow@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:bwardlow@cityofkeywest-fl.gov) <[bwardlow@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:bwardlow@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>;

[gdavila@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:gdavila@cityofkeywest-fl.gov) <[gdavila@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:gdavila@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>; [mlhoover@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:mlhoover@cityofkeywest-fl.gov) <[mlhoover@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:mlhoover@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>;

[clopez@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:clopez@cityofkeywest-fl.gov) <[clopez@cityofkeywest-fl.gov](mailto:clopez@cityofkeywest-fl.gov)>

Sent: Fri, Apr 3, 2020 2:00 pm  
Subject: Commission Meeting 7 April 2020, Item #15

Good Afternoon Mayor Johnston and Commissioners:

My name is Brenda Kee-Johnson and I am writing this letter of concern about item #15 that is on the 7 April 2020 meeting schedule. I was not aware of the meeting until I was informed by concerned friends and once I was made aware of said item on said agenda, I felt that I needed to express my objection.

This battle for the band room has been going on for years and now that everyone is concerned about just staying alive and may not be paying attention, it seems that this item is being slipped in "hidden in plain sight."

There is no reason that this matter can not wait until things are somewhat back to normal and the citizens can have the proper time to be informed of the meeting and be able to voice their feelings be them for or against one side or the other.

Families have been divided, friends have been divided and the community has been divided over this issue. It is time that matters are handled fully and openly, but this is not the moment. You wonder why people do not trust government or the people that were elected to represent them. When things are not done in the correct manner, when people point fingers and take sides, it causes division in a time when we should all be in this together.

I understand both sides of this issue and I feel that both are important to the community. When this matter first started, there was a "Bahama Village" where many of the Bahamian descendants lived, worked, played and worshipped together. Since that time, "Bahama Village" as we know it has disappeared right before our eyes.

Once there were African-American businesses all up and down Petronia Street, there were clubs, grocery stores, ice cream parlors, shoe shine shops, schools, daycares, restaurants, etc. If you walk down in the "Village" today, one would never know that African-Americans ever existed here. Being the last Black Owned Business in the part of Key West, my heart bleeds. Do you know what it feels like when people that just move into the area say to us, "Thank you for being in our neighborhood."? Do you know what it feels like when people come from out of town and ask, "where are all the Black people"? Do you know what it feels like when you walk past houses you have seen for almost 60 years and now that people with money come into the area, the rules change as far as how the houses are fixed, pools being added in the yards, fruit trees being cut down, property lines being changed, etc. The answer to these questions are no, (except for Commission Lopez). You will never know what it feels like. You can never know the pain. You can never understand that for us it is more than about money in the City coffer and making Bahama Village look like every other place in America.

I remember as a child there were many little alleyways between people's homes that we were able to go from one street to the other. Once the Natives descendants were bought out, those "City easements" were then given to or claimed by the new owners of the property. Zonings have been changed and property that was once mixed use (homes and businesses) are no longer allowed.

I would ask all of you to do a little research into the former residents of "Bahama Village". The only things left are the churches and because there are no longer Native Conch's of Color living in the area, many of them are going to be lost in the near future as well.

Yes, health care is very important, but many of the people that Commissioner Lopez was fighting for this clinic to provide services for are no longer here to use the services. Key West is an island and people go where they want to go, but the history of a people and their struggles and successes, if there is no record of them will be lost for ever.

The descendants of Bahamian's that lived here have had everything taken from them. The military came in and took their ocean front land and then gave it to the City. (that land never belonged to the City, it belonged to Bahamian descendants). If you don't believe me, check the Census from the late 1800-early 1900's. As I recall, we were promised 6.6 acres and now it is down to two if I am not mistaken. The property taxes went up so high after properties were purchased and "remodeled" to increase property value that many could not afford to stay here and if they did and they lived in "public housing" they have been moved to other parts of the island. We were forced to stay "in the Village", now our very existence is being taken away as well.

I am asking that you, Mayor Johnston and Commissioners, do the right thing and take this matter up at a later date and a more opportune time where this matter can be resolved in complete transparency and in a more discreet manner.

My suggestion is that before the "Band Room" is awarded to one side or the other, there needs to be a location provided to the group that does not get the "Band Room". I don't know how you come up with both parties agreeing, but you all were elected to represent all of the residents of this island not just your district. Everyone has to put feelings aside and do what is right for the entire community. If you can't do it for the "grownup's, do it for the children. Do it for those that lived and died loving this island and giving so much of themselves so that their descendants will know the beauty and love of their Island home. May the work that they did, speak for them.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and attention in this very important matter. Please stay safe and may we all be blessed. We are seperated, but together. We are Key West Strong. From my heart to yours.

Sincerely

Brenda Kee-Johnson  
Johnson's Grocery  
800 Thomas Street  
Key West, Florida 33040

## Lissette Carey

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**From:** Cheri Smith  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 7, 2020 11:12 AM  
**To:** Lissette Carey  
**Subject:** FW: Public Comment #15

**From:** johnwalshlfd <johnwalshlfd@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 07, 2020 11:05 AM  
**To:** Cheri Smith <csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>  
**Subject:** Public Comment #15

I apologize that I have not paid a lot of attention to this issue. When I read Misses Johnson's letter, the issue was familiar, but I haven't taken the time to be able to make an informed decision. With everything that is going on right now, it just doesn't seem that important.

That being said Misses Johnson has an issue. She is trying to make her case to our community as well as to the Board. As one who tilts at windmills, when the cause is right, I support Misses Johnson. I am not arguing for her museum over the clinic; I am arguing for her right to fight for her cause.

I will not be at the Commission meeting to support Misses Johnson. I would. If I could just jump in my car and drive to city hall, I would be there. Just looking at the instructions to participate is daunting. Even if I were able to call in, my participation would not count. I cannot look into your eyes and see your soul, nor you mine. I cannot smile and clap to support points made by a speaker, nor can you see or hear me. There is important business to conduct during this emergency and the state has empowered you to act in this manner to deal with this extraordinary emergency, but this is not how our government is supposed to act. This is not how an open and free society does business.

Misses Johnson is ENTITLED to make her case to us, her friends and neighbors. She is ENTITLED to pack the meeting room with supporters. We are ENTITLED to be present when this is discussed. We are ENTITLED to be loud and raucous up to the point of disrupting the meeting. It is in this way that a community shows its elected representatives how we want our government to act. We can all think of times and places where large numbers of voters have come to advocate for their cause, and succeeded in overriding special interests seeking a favorable decision. This is why we have GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE.

The Governor has given you the authority during this emergency to act under cover of darkness. This issue is not one which is suited to be done here and now under these circumstances. THE PEOPLE OF THIS COMMUNITY ARE ENTITLED TO COME BEFORE YOU AND MAKE THEIR CASE. This matter should be indefinitely postponed.

John Walsh  
[3312 Northside Dr.](#)

## Lisette Carey

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**From:** Cheri Smith  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2020 5:11 PM  
**To:** Lisette Carey  
**Subject:** Fwd: CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "yolanda.m.mingo" <yolanda.m.mingo@gmail.com>  
**Date:** April 6, 2020 at 5:06:24 PM EDT  
**To:** Teri Johnston <tjohnston@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>, Jimmy Weekley <jweekley@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>, Samuel Kaufman <skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>, Billy Wardlow <bwardlow@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>, Gregory Davila <gdavila@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>, Mary Lou Hoover <mlhoover@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>, Clayton Lopez <clopez@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>  
**Cc:** Cheri Smith <csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>  
**Subject:** CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Ref: Item 16. Approving the selection of Community Health of South Florida, Inc.

Mayor Johnston and Commissioners,

Respectfully request this item be postponed for 90 days or until such time that District VI residents can be properly represented, to include clarification with respect to the BVRAC meeting on Nov 7, 2019, when Mr. John Wilson Smith affirmed that the Frederick Douglass Black Educators are indeed willing to share the old Douglass Band Room with Community Health Inc.

My initial email dated Mar 3, 2020 is attached.

Respectfully,  
Yolanda Major-Mingo  
708 Emma Street

----- Original message -----

**From:** "yolanda.m.mingo" <yolanda.m.mingo@gmail.com>  
**Date:** 3/3/20 2:34 AM (GMT-05:00)  
**To:** csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov  
**Cc:** Teri Johnston <tjohnston@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>, skaufman@cityofkeywest-fl.gov  
**Subject:** CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Ref: Approving the selection of Community Health of South Florida, Inc. for development of Bahama Village Medical Clinic

Mayor and Commissioners,

I would like to thank city staff who took the time to meet with me for several hours in an effort to understand how we got to where we are today.

With that said, City staff could not produce backup documentation to support the theory that Health Care is purportedly the #1 concern within Bahama Village. And contrary to what I was told, I discovered documentation whereby 360K was indeed set aside to fund the Monroe County Health Department's relocation expense to the old Douglass School Band Room, thereby affording the County Health Department an unfair advantage.

Residents of District VI were egregiously misinformed as well as the BVRAC board who approved the agenda item before you.

Lastly, much thanks to Commissioner Kaufman for his unwavering support of Bahama Village and the Frederick Douglass Black Educators Museum Project. I would also like to express warmest regards to the Community Health of South Florida, Inc.

In closing, how we got to where we are today should be unequivocally transparent! With that said, I do not support approval of the selection of Community Health of South Florida, Inc. for development of Bahama Village Medical Clinic.

Yolanda Major-Mingo  
708 Emma Street

## Lissette Carey

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**From:** Cheri Smith  
**Sent:** Monday, April 6, 2020 8:27 PM  
**To:** Lissette Carey  
**Subject:** Fwd:

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Roma Rispoli <romarispoli@gmail.com>  
**Date:** April 6, 2020 at 8:23:00 PM EDT  
**To:** Cheri Smith <csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>

My name is Roma Rispoli. Having worked in the private healthcare industry for over 15 years, I can personally attest to the need for more affordable healthcare in our Key West Community. As a whole, the people of this island, regardless of their financial abilities deserve multiple options. They should not be limited to one choice based on their financial restrictions. Private physicians are also suffering by seeing underinsured, as well as uninsured patients, who cannot afford to pay off their debts. In reaction to this, it drives up cost to patients who actually can pay for their care and increases debts for the private industry.

I cannot see how in the current atmosphere this is even a debate on this subject. Are the elected officials going to wait for the next healthcare debacle or pandemic, to say what could have been done? Or is this finally the time someone is going to take action and be PROactive?

Please do not postpone this vote and risk people losing one of the few healthcare options they have.



## **Lissette Carey**

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**From:** Cheri Smith  
**Sent:** Friday, April 3, 2020 5:51 PM  
**To:** Lissette Carey  
**Subject:** Fwd: Item #15 on Agenda

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** DETRA FISHER <fisherdome@aol.com>  
**Date:** April 3, 2020 at 5:03:40 PM EDT  
**To:** Cheri Smith <csmith@cityofkeywest-fl.gov>  
**Subject:** Item #15 on Agenda

***Please read into the record on April 7, 2020  
Thank You***

***The Frederick Douglass School Black Educators' Memorial Project, Inc.  
P. O. Box 5043  
Key West, Florida 33045***

***March 30, 2020***

***Dear Mayor and City Commissioners,***

*I am writing to you on behalf of The Frederick Douglass School Black Educators Memorial Project, Inc., of which I am a member. We are continuing our efforts to secure The Band Room, the last remaining historical building of Douglass School, to be used as a museum in our community, a request that started back in 2011.*

*I need to stress that it has never been or ever will be our intent to oppose healthcare for the people, but it is more than obvious that it is not and has not been an issue for the people in the community for the past four years. Our island is small, and the residents are all receiving proper healthcare through private doctors, Rural Health and The Health Department. Our community is made up of loving and caring people that ensure that if someone needs to see a doctor that will happen.*

*If the Commission feels the necessity for healthcare in the community, we are asking that you consider another location. We would suggest that it be in the Douglass School expansion or another option would be the acreage on the Truman Annex property.*

*Our community has lost so much over the past few years and we are pleading with you to allow us this opportunity to share our rich history in this last remaining historical building of Douglass School (the only school building that does not remain standing). This building represents, to us, dignity and pride where*

*we were taught by some of the greatest teachers in the history of Key West, my mother being one of them. Our life journey began with the influence of these brilliant, caring teachers. Mr. Hambright, Monroe County Historian, is quoted as saying "that some of the greatest scholars emerged from Douglass School and went on to lead highly successful lives."*

*We were also offered the opportunity to share this building with a clinic by Vice Chairman Patricia Eables at the BVRAC Meeting in November at which time John Smith accepted this offer on the record. (Please see video Nov. 7, 2019.) He also met with Mr. Veliz and was told that he would be contacting him. We have not heard from ANYONE, contrary to the article in the Key West Citizen. Why? We do not consider sharing this space as just a few pictures on the wall as true representation of the museum we have in mind. It is true that Mr. Smith has a lot of pictures that depicts some of our history, but we have so much more. It is sad to hear others on various city boards refer to our ancestors as "old black downtrodden ancestors"(Hear audio AIPP meeting 12/1219).*

*Cited above are reasons why we should be allowed to represent our history to the whole city of Key West in this Band Room. We are requesting a fair space, if we must share the building. The FDSBEMP has and continues to be a group with integrity that has done things to enhance the quality of life in our community for our Elders and our children and the community. We have never sought to bring division in our community when our main objective has always been to heal.*

*Why can't we sit down to the table and discuss this issue in a peaceful manner to arrive at a Fair Resolution? Please, someone, answer this question. This "battle," and I hate using this term, needs to end. We should not be in this place of "Us vs. Them" when we consider this simple request of sharing our history in OUR Band Room for future generations to be remembered on the island of Key West.*

*Thank you for taking the time to read this. "*

*Page 2*

*Sincerely,  
Detra Saunders Fisher, Secretary  
Frederick Douglass School Black Educators Memorial Project, Inc.*

P.S. If this is on the upcoming Agenda, we would also request a postponement for an opportunity to meet with The Commissioners and CHI on this issue before a decision is made, especially in light of the present situation in the world. It would be unfair for this item to be addressed without representation from the community and our group. There is no urgency for this to be heard at this time. Thank you for giving this matter FAIR consideration.

Sent from my iPhone

To: Mayor Terri Johnston and City Commissioners  
From: The Steering Team Members, Frederick Douglass School Black Educators Memorial Project, Inc.  
Date: April 7, 2020

## THE VILLAGE IS FIGHTING FOR ITS SOUL ....

The members of the Frederick Douglass School Black Educators Memorial Project's Steering Team urge community support and community recommendations to Mayor Johnston and the City Commission to remove #15 from the April 7, 2020 agenda.

We are asking that the city commission Not approve the RFP for Community Health of South Florida (CHI) to move into the Douglass School Band Room, currently. Officials have stated that it will be years before the CHI clinic could be outfitted and certified operational in the Band Room. So, Why the Urgency ? How does making this decision now benefit the Key West Community "Now" ?

We are all grateful to any medical facility that helps our community and affordable and comprehensive health care is always welcomed. We urge the City of Key West to provide necessary space to the CHI Clinic, so it can become operational immediately, and serve the people of our community . (Just Not in the "DOUGLASS SCHOOL BAND ROOM.")

Our group is NOT, emphatically, opposed to comprehensive and affordable health care for our community. A clinic such as CHI will provide service for the entire lower keys, therefore, it can be located anywhere on the island where it would be providing easy access for all Monroe County citizens.

Please help us. "Bahama Village is almost gone." Soon there'll be nothing left of the indigenous people or anything of their existence . "For Once, Tell the Truth" ..... DO THE RIGHT THING, and BE FAIR with the people of Bahama Village."

The FDSBEMP steering team has been journeying for almost 10 years to preserve this building for the people. Our people Need This Building. Their SOUL needs it. The Douglass School Band Room is the last educational component of the segregated Frederick Douglass High School in Bahama Village. It is a Sacred Building, and one of the last remaining structures of the old school.

This historic Band Room building belongs to the community. The people need this sacred building to store and preserve the memories of the community, the teachers and history of Douglass School. It will also provide a desperately needed space for community gatherings and other functions.

"The Ellen Sanchez Museum and Cultural Center for The Preservation of Indigenous People will contain the Hopes, Dreams and History of the indigenous people who settled here since 1850 to present. This is about maintaining a presence on the island of Key West and honoring the ancestors, as well as preserving the history for our youth and future generations.

The indigenous history of Key West will welcome visitors and educate children to the beautiful lifestyles experienced on the island for many years. The museum would be a great and positive addition for everyone. It would lend credence and demonstrate inclusivity of the Key West motto, "ONE HUMAN FAMILY", or will it prove to be ..... "Onward, Upward, Forward, Together, ..., but, WITHOUT US" ?

LET'S HELP HEAL THE WORLD, STARTING HERE ..... AT HOME.