



## THE CITY OF KEY WEST

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MEMORANDUM

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**TO:** Jim Scholl, City Manager  
Greg Veliz, Assistant City Manager  
Mark Finigan, Finance Director

**FROM:** Karen DeMaria, Urban Forestry Manager

**DATE:** May 2, 2019

**RE:** **Approval of the purchase and planting of trees from Ecoscapes for Mallory Square, not to exceed \$25,274.60.**

**ACTION STATEMENT:**

This resolution authorizes the purchase and planting of seven large canopy trees from Ecoscapes in the amount of \$25,274.60 for select planters at Mallory Square. This purchase is made pursuant to Ordinance 2-797 (4)(b). The selection of large trees provides an urgent need by the City to provide shade to the Mallory Square Sunset promenade area which is in the best interests of the City, its residents, and visitors. The planting of trees in the next month is also in the best interest of the City due to the lull in pedestrian and vehicle traffic in the Mallory Square area.

After a review of competitive submittals, an estimate from Ecoscapes was selected by the Tree Commission based on submitted tree species and cost of work. Ecoscapes recently completed the planting of the nearby Truman Waterfront Park and has vast knowledge of the area and work conditions which is in the best interest of the City in ensuring minimal disruptions to the contracted sunset celebration at Mallory Square.

**BACKGROUND:**

In the past, numerous trees once existed in the main Mallory Square area. These trees were removed and the planters were covered in concrete. The public has asked that larger trees be planted for shade in the area. An internal review by departments indicated that due to construction along the western area of Mallory Square (aquarium seawall and mooring dolphin repair) only seven planters can be used at this time (see attached map).

*Key to the Caribbean – Average yearly temperature 77° F.*

**PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION:**

It was requested that the Urban Forestry Manager purchase large canopy trees using tree fund money for immediate shade opportunities for the Mallory Square sunset area. It was also decided that in the best interest of the City, any request for an estimate must include the purchase and planting of the trees.

Seven companies known for doing landscape work and purchasing trees in the Key West area were contacted requesting information regarding the availability of large trees at the nurseries due to the limited market and high demand, and to gather information from the companies as to their interest in the acquisition and planting of these trees at Mallory Square. Five companies responded to the initial request and were sent a formal e-mail requesting the submittal of an estimate for the purchase and planting of seven large trees at Mallory Square.

Four vendors responded with estimates. On April 9, 2019, the Tree Commission determined that there were questions regarding the actual cost and size of the trees submitted in the estimate from the lowest estimate (Blue Native). The Tree Commission determined that Ecoscapes would provide the most appropriate selection of larger trees at the lowest, realistic cost.

In accordance with Sec 2-797 (4)(b), it is asked that the City process this estimate for trees due to exceptional circumstances and it is in the best interest of the City. The selected vendor, Ecoscapes, provided the best selection of trees at the lowest, reasonable price.

Exceptional circumstances exist with this request. Due to the limited availability of large trees at the tree farms, the price of the large trees has and continues to increase. Using known, local landscape vendors is in the best interest of the City to ensure success of the planting with the selection of healthy, structurally sound tree species. Local vendors know that planting area, the delivery issues through narrow old town streets, the potential issues with staging and planting at a highly visible, very publicly used area, the Mallory Square Sunset promenade, and will be available to help city staff monitor the health and stability of the planted trees. Ecoscapes, a local vendor, recently landscaped the nearby Truman Waterfont Park area and successfully handled all the issues involved with planting in the old town area.

**OPTIONS / ADVANTAGES / DISADVANTAGES:**

1. The City Commission can approve the purchase and planting of seven large canopy trees from Ecoscapes in the amount of \$25,274.60 for select planters at Mallory Square, pursuant to Ordinance 2-797 (4)(b). This option will immediately provide shade and minimize disruptions to the area.
2. The City Commission can require an RFP. With this option, the City would delay the planting of the trees and possibly miss the opportunity to plant the selected larger tree species due to the limited market (supply and demand).
3. The City Commission can deny the request.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The funding for the purchase and planting of the trees will come from the City of Key West Tree Fund (0013701-5375200).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Commission select Option 1, authorizing the approval of the City to purchase and planting of trees from Ecoscapes to be planted at Mallory Square, not to exceed \$25,274.60.