

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE KEY WEST PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD ("BOARD") RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COMMISSION CONTINUE TO PURSUE NEGOTIATIONS WITH MONROE COUNTY WITH REGARD TO THE USE AND OWNERSHIP OF OPEN SPACE KNOWN AS THE HAWK MISSILE SITE AND CLARENCE S. HIGGS MEMORIAL BEACH PARK, ONLY IF THE CITY IS PROVIDED UP TO 180 DAYS OF ADDITIONAL TIME TO ACCEPT PUBLIC INPUT AND PERFORM DUE DILIGENCE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the mission of the Board via City Ordinance Section 2-610 is to promote the rehabilitation, conservation, development, and best use of potential park resources within the City; and

WHEREAS, the City and County are in the early stages of negotiating an interlocal agreement that may provide significant new recreation and open space resources available for use by the residents of the City and County; and

WHEREAS, Monroe County has recently proposed a transaction to the City to satisfy the County's need for land for mitigation associated with the expansion of the taxiway on the south side of Key West International Airport ("Airport"); and

WHEREAS, at its meeting on February 8, 2023, the Board discussed the proposed transaction and finds that there may be many benefits of the Agreement to the City and its residents including:

- New open spaces available for development as recreation fields at Higgs and/or HMS
- An expansion of open space and recreation resources available for future development by the City at HMS and Higgs
- The potential for City to obtain substantial financial resource commitments from the County, available through their general taxing authority and specifically through their authority over the Tourist Development Commission ("TDC") and the Airport. The financial resource commitments made by the County to the City under the Agreement coupled with fair value leases and other potential revenue sources at Higgs may fund a substantial portion of: (1) operations and maintenance costs at Higgs and HMS, (2) development of recreation fields at both Higgs and HMS and, (3) proposed multi-use recreation paths at HMS included in the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- The potential for the City to expand its platform for providing public input on future uses of land adjacent to the Airport thereby reducing the potential negative impacts of future Airport expansion projects on City residents; and

WHEREAS. the Board finds that there are significant uncertainties associated with the benefits of the Agreement to the City, not limited to, but including:

- Whether the County has other available options for securing land for mitigation for the Airport taxiway expansion beyond HMS

- Whether the City will have time to obtain public input and support of City residents critical to such a transaction through meetings and workshops and ultimately a voter referendum to acquire Higgs

- The magnitude and repair of damages at Higgs related to Hurricane Ian and whether Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") and/or the County will fully reimburse the County/City for all such repairs

- Whether the City will be able to fund development of new recreation resources and the ongoing operations and maintenance costs of new facilities at both Higgs and HMS

- Whether environmental and regulatory rules and authorities will allow:

- (1) the Higgs restaurant, a key revenue stream to fund operations and maintenance to continue,

- (2) the removal of the Navigational Directional Beacon ("NDB") to free open space at Higgs

- (3) the development of active recreational fields at Higgs and/or HMS

(4) the development of the multi-use recreational path proposed in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

- Whether the City can successfully negotiate an Agreement with the County to realize the benefits and minimize the uncertainties described above

- Whether the City has available Management and Staff resources necessary in the short-term to pursue and realize the benefits available under the Agreement and mitigate the potential uncertainties; and

WHEREAS, many of the potential benefits and uncertainties under the Agreement have been under discussion with the County for 18 months, however, the City has only recently received information from the County related to the Agreement and is awaiting receipt of other information requested from the County; and

WHEREAS, the City has not had time to:

- Review information, make additional information requests, seek counsel from experts, and perform the due diligence necessary for such a major transaction

- Engage City residents in public workshops on the terms of the Agreement necessary for such an important and material transaction to be successful and result in voter approval via referendum; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board believes that additional time is needed to obtain public input and perform due diligence with regard to the Hawk Missile Property; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE KEY PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: That the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends that the City Commission direct City staff to continue the pursuit and consideration of public property at the Hawk Missile Site and Higgs Beach, only if the County agrees to allow an additional 180 days for public input and performance of due diligence.

Section 2: That this Resolution shall go into effect immediately upon its passage and adoption and authentication by the signature of the presiding officer and the Clerk of the Agency.

Passed and adopted by the Key West Parks and Recreation Advisory Board at a meeting held this _____ day of _____, 2023.

Filed with the Clerk _____, 2023.

TIFFANY PELICIER, CHAIR

ATTEST:

CHERYL SMITH, CITY CLERK