

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA, DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO COMPETITIVELY PROCURE AN INDEPENDENT PLANNING AND ENGINEERING FIRM TO REVIEW ALL PERMITS ISSUED FOR THE YEARS 2021-THROUGH 2025 INCLUDING THE SEVEN (7) PERMITS IDENTIFIED IN THE RECENT INDICTMENT AGAINST THE CHIEF BUILDING OFFICIAL OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA TO PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ANY REMEDIAL ACTION NEEDED AND THE BEST METHODOLOGY TO IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL PERMITS THAT SHOULD BE REVIEWED THAT MAY FIT THE SAME CATEGORY OF FALSIFIED PERMITS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, on April 28, 2025 Monroe County State Attorney Dennis Ward announced that a Monroe County Grand Jury had indicted Rajindhar Michael Ramsingh, 56, of Key West, Florida, on seven felony counts of Official Misconduct under Florida Statute 838.022(1)(a) & (b); and

WHEREAS, according to the indictment, Rajindhar Michael Ramsingh knowingly and intentionally falsified, concealed, covered up, or altered multiple official building permit records across a range of properties in the City of Key West between 2021 and 2024 which are alleged to have benefited Ramsingh personally, Strykker-Avery Homes LLC, and several property owners; and

WHEREAS, the alleged charges are related to falsified permit records for the following properties:

- Count 1: 98 Golf Club Drive (Permit #BLD2021-1543)

- Count 2: 1309 United Street (Permit #BLD2021-3116)
- Count 3: 1020 White Street (Permit #BLD2023-0619)
- Count 4: 3528 Eagle Avenue (Permit #BLD2022-1173)
- Count 5: 534 Duval Street (Permit #BLD2023-3375)
- Count 6: 1101 Simonton Street (Permit #BLD2022-2247)
- Count 7: Ramsingh's own residence at 2827 Harris Avenue (Permit #BLD2021-1399); and

WHEREAS, the allegations set forth in the indictment handed down by the Monroe County Grand Jury include conduct that caused unlawful harm to the City of Key West and/or resulted in personal or financial gain;

WHEREAS, the allegations and issues set forth in the indictments and corresponding discovery raise concerns of possible systemic issues in permitting workflows, training, or oversight;

WHEREAS, the issuing of falsified permits raises further concerns about the potential impacts on the City;

WHEREAS, an independent planning and engineering firm would be able to provide the City with the proper remedial actions to implement, including technology integration, and internal controls; and

WHEREAS, allegations have been made that the Chief Building Official "was caught early on performing inspections that were impossible to complete on one day"; and

WHEREAS, allegations have been made that the Chief Building Official was the only one in the building department with access to approve, sign off, or alter permits; and

WHEREAS, previous employees within the building department identified disturbing patterns of permit manipulation during the review process and provided short-term recommendations as far back as 2021 to complete a *"forensic audit of the building permitting/inspection process - including private provider inspection services (specifically lacking required documentation) - since July 2021 be conducted by an independent party, to include interviews with current and recent staff to identify the depth and extent of problematic actions and equally as important in-actions."*; and

WHEREAS, the City in 2023 commissioned a study of the development review process by the planning and engineering firm *"The Corradino Group"* to identify concerns associated with the review process along with potential solutions; and

WHEREAS, the Corradino Group found aspects of the City of Key West permitting system are *"unusual...more specifically the assignment of the interpretation of the Land Development Regulations is disputed, and in many cases said to be under the control of the building department. Typically, planning directors are assigned this responsibility."*; and

WHEREAS, the Corradino Group also found *"that when the*

building department receives an application it does not automatically send those application to be reviewed by or for zoning, historic preservation or landscaping. While it is not wrong that a planning department employ the staff that is reviewing the zoning, historic preservation and landscaping, it is wrong that many permits are not being reviewed or inspected for these issues, as things can be built that do not conform to the code or were not approved through the proper channels."; and

WHEREAS, the Corradino Group also found that *"the number of zoning, historic preservation and landscaping (planning) reviews has dropped by 70% between 2021 - 2022 and 82% between 2021 - 2023. This year (2023 -2024), the planning department is on pace to receive 141 permit reviews out of about 4000 permit applications - an 86% drop from 2021. Permit reviews should be decided based on a formalized application type and scope of work.";* and

WHEREAS, the Corradino Group also found that several permits had been issued without proper planning review including:

- 1701 Ashby Street.
- 3528 Eagle Avenue
- 419 Southard Street, and
- 534 Duval Street; and

WHEREAS, the Corradino Group recommended that *"a more detailed examination of this be undertaken.";* and

WHEREAS, approximately 4,000 permits are issued annually through the building department; and

WHEREAS, improperly issued permits result in fundamental threats to public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, the ongoing criminal investigations involving the former City Attorney, Chief Building Official, and former Director of Code Enforcement undermine the integrity of the regulatory processes within the City; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to restore public confidence in the permitting process and at the same time ensure that previously issued permits were issued, inspected, and closed out in accordance with all applicable Building and Fire codes as well as any and all applicable Land Development Regulations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: That the City Commission hereby directs the City Manager to procure an independent planning and engineering firm with experience in all aspects of the planning and building regulatory process to review all permits issued for the years 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 including the seven (7) permits identified in the recent indictment against Rajindhar Michael Ramsingh, Chief Building Official, City of Key West, Florida, to provide details and recommendations for any remedial action needed.

Section 2: The independent planning and engineering firm shall also provide the City of Key West with the identification of any and all permits that were potentially falsely issued or were not properly inspected.

Section 3: That this Resolution shall go into effect immediately upon its passage, adoption and authentication by the signature of the presiding officer and the Clerk of the Commission.

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Passed and adopted by the City Commission at a meeting held
this _____ day of _____, 2025.

Authenticated by the Presiding Officer and Clerk of the
Commission on _____ day of _____, 2025.

Filed with the Clerk on _____, 2025.

Mayor Danise Henriquez	_____
Vice Mayor Lissette Carey	_____
Commissioner Aaron Castillo	_____
Commissioner Monica Haskell	_____
Commissioner Mary Lou Hoover	_____
Commissioner Sam Kaufman	_____
Commissioner Donald "Donie" Lee	_____

DANISE HENRIQUEZ, CHAIR

ATTEST:

KERI O'BRIEN, CITY CLERK