Keri O'Brien

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Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 7:11 AM
To: Keri O'Brien
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition Letter Agenda #28

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Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

We write to formally oppose the proposed resolution amending the City Commission's Rules of Procedure.

While presented as an administrative update, this resolution must be evaluated in the context of the recently issued Monroe County Grand Jury Report and accompanying recommendations, which document systemic failures of oversight, accountability, transparency, and internal controls within the City of Key West .

When viewed through that lens, the proposed procedural changes move the City in the opposite direction of what the Grand Jury explicitly called for.

1. The Grand Jury Identified Oversight Failures — This Resolution Narrows Oversight

The Grand Jury found that multiple failures across departments and leadership levels were allowed to persist due to insufficient checks, inadequate review, and concentration of authority.
Among its key themes were the need for:

Stronger accountability mechanisms
Independent review
Meaningful transparency in decision-making
Fully informed elected officials

Instead of responding to these findings by strengthening deliberation and public engagement, this resolution:

Imposes strict time limits on Commissioner discussion
Concentrates procedural authority in the presiding officer
Restricts default public comment on discussion items and presentations
Encourages policy formation outside formal public hearings

These changes materially reduce the very safeguards the Grand Jury concluded were missing.

2. Public Participation Is Treated as Discretionary Rather Than Structural

The Grand Jury emphasized restoring public trust after significant misconduct and institutional breakdowns. Public trust is not restored by limiting access.

Yet this resolution:

Eliminates guaranteed public comment on discussion items and presentations
Restricts public comment primarily to the beginning of meetings
Places decisions on whether the public may speak entirely at the discretion of the presiding officer

At a time when the Grand Jury specifically highlighted the consequences of insular decision-making, reducing public input at formative stages is both ill-advised and deeply concerning.

3. Concentration of Procedural Control Conflicts with Grand Jury Warnings

The Grand Jury warned against excessive influence, unchecked authority, and environments where dissent or scrutiny was suppressed or discouraged.

This resolution:

Expands unilateral discretion of the presiding officer over decorum, debate limits, and public participation
Reduces the collective role of Commissioners in managing their own proceedings
Encourages substantive decisions to occur informally or procedurally shielded

Good governance relies on distributed authority and visible deliberation, not procedural efficiency achieved at the expense of accountability.

4. Timing Undermines Public Confidence
The City remains in the process of responding to Grand Jury recommendations that include:

Calls for structural reform
Independent auditing and review
Enhanced whistleblower protections
Greater transparency in governance

Advancing a resolution that narrows debate and public engagement during this corrective period sends the wrong signal to residents, employees, and external oversight bodies alike.

5. Procedural Accuracy and Care Are Lacking

Finally, the resolution contains multiple drafting and formatting errors, raising additional concerns about haste and insufficient review. This stands in contrast to the Grand Jury's repeated emphasis on diligence, documentation, and careful oversight by both staff and elected officials.

Conclusion

The Grand Jury's work made clear that the City's path forward must be grounded in openness, scrutiny, and shared responsibility. This resolution, however well-intentioned it may be portrayed, moves the City toward greater procedural control and reduced transparency at precisely the moment when the opposite approach is required.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Commission to reject this resolution and instead prioritize reforms that align with the Grand Jury's recommendations and restore public confidence in City governance.

Respectfully,

Gregory and Jennifer Lloyd
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