

## KEY COLONY COMMISSION SETTLES ON FINAL CITY HALL DESIGN

By **Alex Rickert** - August 28, 2025



*A rendering based on final plans gives residents a glimpse at the renovated and expanded Key Colony Beach City Hall. With designs approved, the project is scheduled to go out to bid in September. CPH/Contributed*

A new city hall design in Key Colony Beach is ready for contractors' bids, following two meetings and approval by the city commission last week.

A special session on Aug. 18 reviewed and unanimously approved the complete design plans presented by architect Brandan DeCaro from architectural firm CPH, which has handled the new-look renovation and addition to Key Colony's existing city hall. The



construction cost estimates were later unanimously approved in the commission's regular session on Aug. 21.

The project, totaling 12,400 square feet, will see hardening of the existing building's Marble Hall and post office, along with a two-story 4,200-square-foot addition to the hall's south end. The rebuild includes a new fitness center, offices and lobby with an ADA entrance, roofing, landscaping and a new patio as well as installation of a new generator for the hall. The hall parking lot will be raised and re-stripped with additional drainage.

Renovation and addition to the building's first floor will include administrative offices, conference areas, storage, restrooms and a fitness center, as well as the new two-story lobby. The second floor will house Key Colony's building and police departments and will be useable as an emergency operations center during storms.







*Members of the Key Colony Beach City Commission and police department celebrate a successful Hot Dogs in the Park event at the city's Sunset Park. From left: commissioners Tom DiFransico and Doug Colonell, officer John Buckwalter, sergeants Jamie Buxton and Joe Burden, Police Chief Kris DiGiovanni and commissioner Kirk Diehl. CONTRIBUTED*

The project is scheduled to go out to bid in early September, with bids due Oct. 13. With a contractor selected in late October or early November, DeCaro told the commission, the project's target date of substantial completion would be the end of July 2026, with city staff able to occupy the building by that September.

CPH estimates construction costs at \$3.9 million, including a 10% contingency for unforeseen changes and costs. Cost estimates for the new addition averaged roughly \$425 per square foot, with renovations totaling \$150 per square foot, but DeCaro openly acknowledged an uncertain bid environment with tariffs affecting supply costs.

"These are estimates, so no one should run off to the bank with this," said Vice Mayor Doug Colonell.

The bill will be partially defrayed by a \$2.2 million storm hardening grant already awarded to the city by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. That grant, however, has a deadline of June 30, 2026, not July.

"The project doesn't have to be completed by June 30, but that would be the last date that you can use to bill the grant agency," DeCaro said. "But since substantial completion is very shortly after this, the contractor should be about 80% done, which is far more than the grant would reimburse you for."

**In other news:**

- The commission formally recognized Police Chief Kris DiGiovanni for 20 years of service to Key Colony Beach. The commission called him “an example of accessibility and dedication (whose) contributions to the safety, stability and spirit of Key Colony Beach are immeasurable.”
- DiGiovanni reported on the success of monthly Hot Dogs in the Park events, provided as free cookouts in Sunset Park for residents to meet and interact with members of the police department. Donations from local businesses provide food and drink for each event.
- The Key Colony Beach Community Association presented the commission with a \$5,000 donation, used to replace appliances during the upcoming City Hall remodel.

*For more coverage of the Aug. 21 meeting of the Key Colony Beach City Commission, see [keysweekly.com](https://keysweekly.com).*

#### ALEX RICKERT

Alex Rickert made the perfectly natural career progression from dolphin trainer to newspaper editor in 2021 after freelancing for Keys Weekly while working full time at Dolphin Research Center. A resident of Marathon since 2015, he fell in love with the Florida Keys community by helping multiple organizations and friends rebuild in the wake of Hurricane Irma. An avid runner, actor, and spearfisherman, he spends as much of his time outside of work on or under the sea having civil disagreements with sharks.