

KEYS WEEKLY

BREAKING: KEY COLONY BEACH COMMISSIONER RAMSAY-VICKREY RESIGNS

By **Alex Rickert** - February 7, 2024



Citing an impending move to Marathon that would make her ineligible to serve on the city commission, Key Colony Beach City Commissioner Beth Ramsay-Vickrey announced her resignation in an email to eight city staff members early Wednesday morning.

"I bought my home in KCB to be closer to my family and to walk the beach each day, but it has become apparent that condo living is not the best fit for me or my dog," Ramsay-

Sombrero Beach became available for sale and I couldn't pass it up, so I am under purchase contract and will close on it soon."

"I want to thank each and every one of you – it has been a pleasure to know and work with you," she added. "And although KCB is currently navigating rough waters and facing some hard issues ahead, you are the heart and backbone of the city and I know that your high standards, morals, and integrity will continue to serve the citizens well."

Ramsay-Vickrey's resignation comes amid significant political turmoil in Key Colony Beach, the majority of which centers around the years-long debate over the fate of City Hall. Ramsay-Vickrey was one of three commissioners who voted last July to award an \$8.375 million contract to Hands On Builders LLC for construction of a new hall building in a split decision, and has since remained a staunch supporter of a full rebuild.

However, the commission has seen a significant shift in power following the resignation of then-Mayor Patti Trefry in October, the unanimous appointment of commissioner Tom DiFransico in November and the subsequent termination of then-City Administrator Dave Turner in December. The commission also pivoted

on its July decision in recent months, electing in December to settle a lawsuit from resident Laurie Swanson by rescinding the HOB award.

Since then, discussions of the feasibility, practicality and legality of reopening, rebuilding or repairing the existing building have continued to dominate KCB's commission meetings and newly-enacted monthly workshops.

"I hope I've added a new level of transparency in government to KCB through my initiatives in making agenda back-up materials available online prior to commission meetings, by having written activity reports prepared by each department head, and by making available all the structural engineering reports and the legal opinion on the old city hall building," Ramsay-Vickrey wrote in a text message to the Weekly.

Asked in a follow-up call if the current shift in KCB's political climate prompted her decision, she stated, "As much as I love living on the beach, it's just not the right fit. It has nothing to do with Key Colony Beach politics and everything to do with how hard it has been without a fenced-in yard."

She reiterated via phone that her stance on the hall had not changed, adding that "the current administration is going to have to come around and say that they looked at everything and there's nothing that can be done." She voiced continued concerns with KCB's post office, saying that the office's recent contract extension was predicated on a new building in the works.

Originally appointed to the commission in 2022, Ramsay-Vickrey was re-elected by KCB voters in the November general election that same year. Her resignation, which closely follows Trefry's October move to North Carolina, will leave the seated commission to fill a vacant seat by appointment or special election for the fourth time in less than two years. Trefry's October vacancy, eventually filled by DiFrancisco, drew seven applicants to fill the seat.

Per the city's code of ordinances, the remaining commissioners may fill Ramsay-Vickrey's seat by appointing a new commissioner within 45 days. If they are unable to agree on a replacement with a majority vote, a special election will be called to fill the vacancy. However, KCB's code holds that "no special election shall be held within six months prior to a regularly scheduled municipal election," meaning that the city's timeline for such a move would presumably expire in early May.

KCB's code allows for City Clerk Silvia Gransee to act as KCB's supervisor of elections, though Monroe County Supervisor of Elections Joyce Griffin has previously handled KCB's recent votes that aligned with larger municipal elections as a courtesy to the city.

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