

DECISION 2026: MEET THE KEY COLONY BEACH CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES

By **Alex Rickert** - August 11, 2026



Screenshot

Leading up to the November general election, the Keys Weekly is committed to helping our community learn more about the candidates running to represent them. In the Gem of the Florida Keys this fall, two seated Key Colony Beach commissioners – Mayor Freddie Foster and commissioner Kirk Diehl – will square off with Lynne Benton for two open seats on the dais.

The following answers are printed exactly as submitted by candidates, with responses limited to 400 words.

QUESTIONS:



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1. How long have you lived in Key Colony Beach and what drew you to the Florida Keys?
2. What volunteer/civic organizations, clubs or other groups are you involved with in Monroe County?
3. What skills or experience from your career or past service do you believe are most beneficial in a public office?
4. What personal or professional accomplishment are you most proud of?

LYNNE BENTON

1. My husband and I have been part of the Key Colony Beach community for 15 years. We came to the Florida Keys on vacation, but stayed because of the beautiful waters, abundant marine life, living coral reef, and, most importantly, the people. I'm running for City Commission to help our community define and preserve what makes Key Colony Beach so special and ensure those community values endure as leadership changes.
2. I serve on the Key Colony Beach Planning & Zoning Board, which has given me firsthand knowledge of the challenges facing Key Colony Beach, and the importance of fair, consistent, and transparent decision-making based on the rules. I'm also a member of the Marathon Rotary Club, Key Colony Beach Fishing & Boating Club, Pickleball Club, and Community Association.
3. My experience as an engineer, mediator, business owner, and attorney has taught me how to analyze complex issues, ask the right questions, build consensus, and make decisions based on facts, the law, and the community's long-term interests. Examples include managing multimillion-dollar engineering projects, mediating complex community disputes, interpreting and applying laws as an attorney, managing the finances and operations of my own business, and serving on the Key Colony Beach Planning & Zoning Board where decisions should be based on the law and competent, substantial evidence — not personal opinion.
4. The accomplishment I'm most proud of is building a career centered on solving complex problems and helping people resolve difficult disputes. I've always found the greatest satisfaction in learning from others and bringing people together to reach fair, practical solutions.

KIRK DIEHL



1. In 2018, we fell in love with the pristine cleanliness of the neighborhood, the family oriented community, the incredible waterfront restaurants, the beautiful local beaches, and its easy access to both the Gulf and the Atlantic Ocean.
2. Currently active in the Key Colony Beach Fishing and Boating Club supporting our local marine heritage, boating safety, and community camaraderie; the Moose Lodge, the American Legion; and KCB 70th Birthday Committee – leading a specialized committee in close partnership with our KCB Community Association – to plan, organize, and execute additional community functions and special events to celebrate our landmark 70th Birthday in March 2027.
3. My 32-year career with the U.S. Postal Service, and then as a general contractor in the private sector, provided me with the ability to balance large-scale public service management as well as local hands-on business experience. Both careers provided me with a combination of fiscal discipline, organizational turnaround, and firsthand knowledge of coastal development.
4. Professionally, I am proud of my long-term management career with the U.S. Postal Service, where I earned numerous service awards, as well as my work as a general contractor managing several standout waterfront construction projects. Over the past year, I have been honored to collaborate with my fellow city commissioners to achieve some of the most significant improvements in our city's history. These include the City Hall renovation, retention pond construction, upgraded city parks, new tennis and pickleball courts, and sunshades across most recreational areas. We are pursuing future grants that will provide us the funds to initiate and complete the following projects/improvements: stormwater management, sewer plant renovations, canal restoration, shoreline protection, street repaving and the burial of existing overhead utility lines. Future plans also include working with the US Postal Service to eliminate/reduce current P.O. Box fees.

FREDDIE FOSTER



1. I purchased my home in Key Colony Beach in 2010 and spent the next 10 years as a weekend resident before becoming a full-time resident about six years ago. I was drawn to the Keys by the boating, fishing, and strong sense of community.
2. I am active in the Masons, Shriners, Rotary, Moose Club, Key Colony Beach Fishing & Boating Club, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary, American Legion, La Niña Christmas Gifts and Food Drive, Presents in Paradise, and the Key Colony Beach Kids Fishing Derby.
3. With more than 45 years as a nuclear professional, I have developed strong project management, budgeting, and financial accountability skills. Combined with my four years serving on the Key Colony Beach Commission, these experiences have prepared me to make informed, responsible decisions for our community.
4. I am proud to have helped initiate the new City Hall project, improve Sunset Park, develop and install the Shelter Bay detention pond, return the Post Office to City Hall, complete ADA improvements throughout the city, and secure millions of dollars in grant funding for Key Colony Beach.





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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.

