

ORDINANCE NO. 13-11

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA,
AMENDING CHAPTER 2 OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES
ENTITLED "ADMINISTRATION" BY ADDING SECTIONS 2-
773, "CONE OF SILENCE" TO PROVIDE FOR LIMITATIONS
AND PROCEDURES REGARDING COMMUNICATIONS
CONCERNING CITY ISSUED COMPETITIVE SOLICITATIONS;
PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS; PROVIDING FOR
SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR REPEAL OF
INCONSISTENT PROVISIONS; PROVIDING FOR AN
EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, the City of Key West finds that that transparency,
fairness and integrity in the competitive solicitation process is best
served by limiting potential bidders, proposers or service providers
from communicating with City officials, employees or selection
committee members; and

WHEREAS, an amendment to add 'cone of silence' provisions to the
Code of Ordinances will promote the welfare of the citizens and
visitors of the City of Key West.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF KEY WEST, FLORIDA:

Section 1: That Section 2-773 of the Code of Ordinances is hereby added as follows*:

Sec. 2-773. Cone of silence.

(a) Definitions. For purposes of this section, reference to one gender shall include the other, use of the plural shall include the singular, and use of the singular shall include the plural. The following definitions apply unless the context in which the word or phrase is used requires a different definition:

(1) Competitive Solicitation means a formal process by the City of Key West relating to the acquisition of goods or services, which process is intended to provide an equal and open opportunity to qualified persons and entities to be selected to provide the goods or services. Competitive Solicitation shall include request for proposals ("RFP"), request for qualifications ("RFQ"), request for letters of interest ("RFLI"), invitation to bid ("ITB") or any other advertised solicitation.

(2) Cone of Silence means a period of time during which there is a prohibition on communication regarding a particular Competitive Solicitation.

(3) Evaluation or Selection Committee means a group of persons appointed or designated by the City to evaluate, rank, select,

*(Coding: Added language is underlined; deleted language is ~~struck through~~.)

or make a recommendation regarding a Vendor or the Vendor's response to the Competitive Solicitation. A member of such a committee shall be deemed a city official for the purposes of subsection (c) below.

(4) Vendor means a person or entity that has entered into or that desires to enter into a contract with the City of Key West or that seeks an award from the City to provide goods, perform a service, render an opinion or advice, or make a recommendation related to a Competitive Solicitation for compensation or other consideration.

(5) Vendor's Representative means an owner, individual, employee, partner, officer, or member of the board of directors of a Vendor, or a consultant, lobbyist, or actual or potential subcontractor or sub consultant who acts at the behest of a Vendor in communicating regarding a Competitive Solicitation.

(b) Prohibited Communications.

A Code of Silence shall be in effect during the course of a Competitive Solicitation and prohibit:

(1) Any communication regarding a particular Competitive Solicitation between a potential Vendor or Vendor's Representative and the City's administrative staff including, but not limited to, the city manager and his or her staff;

(2) Any communication regarding a particular Competitive Solicitation between a potential Vendor or Vendor's Representative and the Mayor, City Commissioners, or their respective staff;

(3) Any communication regarding a particular Competitive Solicitation between a potential Vendor or Vendor's Representative and any member of a City evaluation and/or selection committee therefore; and

(4) Any communication regarding a particular Competitive Solicitation between the Mayor, City Commissioners, or their respective staff, and a member of a City evaluation and/or selection committee therefore.

(c) Permitted Communications

Notwithstanding the foregoing, nothing contained herein shall prohibit:

(1) Communication between members of the public who are not Vendors or a Vendor's representative and any city employee, official or member of the City Commission;

(2) Communications in writing at any time with any city employee, official or member of the City Commission, unless specifically prohibited by the applicable Competitive Solicitation.

(A) However, any written communication must be filed with the City Clerk. Any City employee, official or member of the City Commission receiving or making any written communication must immediately file it with the City Clerk.

(B) The City Clerk shall include all written communication as part of the agenda item when publishing information related to a particular Competitive Solicitation;

(3) Oral communications at duly noticed pre-bid conferences;

(4) Oral presentations before publically noticed evaluation and/or selection committees;

(5) Contract discussions during any duly noticed public meeting;

(6) Public presentations made to the City Commission or advisory body thereof during any duly noticed public meeting;

(7) Contract negotiations with city staff following the award of a Competitive Solicitation by the City Commission; or

(8) Purchases exempt from the competitive process pursuant to section 2-797 of these Code of Ordinances;

(d) Procedure

(1) The Cone of Silence shall be imposed upon each Competitive Solicitation at the time of Public Notice of such solicitation as provided by section 2-826 of this Code. Public notice of the Cone of Silence shall be included in the notice of the Competitive Solicitation. The city manager shall issue a written notice of the release of each Competitive Solicitation to the affected departments, with a copy thereof to each Commission member, and shall include in any public solicitation for goods and services a statement disclosing the requirements of this ordinance.

(2) The Cone of Silence shall terminate at the time the City Commission or other authorized body makes final award or gives final approval of a contract, rejects all bids or responses to the

Competitive Solicitation, or takes other action which ends the Competitive Solicitation.

(3) Any City employee, official or member of the City Commission that is approached concerning a Competitive Solicitation while the Cone of Silence is in effect shall notify such individual of the prohibitions contained in this section. While the Cone of Silence is in effect, any City employee, official or member of the City Commission who is the recipient of any oral communication by a potential Vendor or Vendor's Representative in violation of this section shall create a written record of the event. The record shall indicate the date of such communication, the persons with whom such communication occurred, and a general summation of the communication.

(e) Violations/penalties and procedures.

(1) A sworn complaint alleging a violation of this ordinance may be filed with the City Attorney's office. In each such instance, an initial investigation shall be performed to determine the existence of a violation. If a violation is found to exist, the penalties and process shall be as provided in section 1-15 of this Code.

(2) In addition to the penalties described herein and otherwise provided by law, a violation of this ordinance shall render the Competitive Solicitation void at the discretion of the City Commission.

(3) Any person who violates a provision of this section shall be prohibited from serving on a City of Key West advisory board, evaluation and/or selection committee.

(4) In addition to any other penalty provided by law, violation of any provision of this ordinance by a City of Key West employee shall subject said employee to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

(5) If a Vendor is determined to have violated the provisions of this section on two more occasions it shall constitute evidence under City Code section 2-834 that the Vendor is not properly qualified to carry out the obligations or to complete the work contemplated by any new Competitive Solicitation. The City's Purchasing Agent shall also commence any available debarment from city work proceeding that may be available upon a finding of two or more violations by a Vendor of this section.

Section 2: If any section, provision, clause, phrase, or application of this Ordinance is held invalid or unconstitutional for any reason by any court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions of this Ordinance shall be deemed severable therefrom and shall be construed as reasonable and necessary to achieve the lawful purposes of this Ordinance.

Section 3: All Ordinances or parts of Ordinances of said City in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby superseded to the extent of such conflict.

Section 4: This Ordinance shall go into effect immediately upon its passage and adoption and authentication by the signature of the presiding officer and the Clerk of the Commission.

Read and passed on first reading at a regular meeting held this day of June 4, 2013.

Read and passed on final reading at a regular meeting held this day of June 18, 2013.

Authenticated by the presiding officer and Clerk of the Commission on 19 day of June, 2013.

Filed with the Clerk June 19, 2013.

ATTEST

Cheryl Smith
CHERYL SMITH, CITY CLERK

Craig Cates
CRAIG CATES, MAYOR