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## Annual Meeting

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Plans are underway for our Annual Meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – we hope you'll join us! This year will be a little different – we'll be meeting virtually via Zoom. We're excited about this year's guest speaker – Kelly Cox, Esq. of Miami Waterkeeper, who will talk about keeping excess nutrients out of our nearshore waters and explain a model fertilizer ordinance for South Florida. As usual, you will also hear a short summary of the issues on which Last Stand has been focusing its energies during the past year.



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## Membership Renewal

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Keep an eye out – we'll be mailing Membership Renewal letters in December. Through your past support of Last Stand, *you have demonstrated that you care about educating the public on balancing environmental protection while respecting the unique community character that values its identity and follows principles of sustainable development and quality tourism. We hope you will continue your support by renewing your membership for 2021.*

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## Cruise Ship Referenda Pass in Key West

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Key Westers voted and made their position clear on the three Charter Amendments.

Limiting Persons Disembarking

✓ Yes – 63%

Cruise Ship Capacity

✓ Yes – 61%

Best Environmental and Health Records

✓ Yes – 81%

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## We Took a Stand

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### Lobster Mini-Season

*Last Stand has proposed that the people and organizations of the Florida Keys join together to speak out about some of the recurring negative environmental, social and quality-of-life issues surrounding the annual Lobster Mini-Season.*

Earlier this summer, Last Stand asked the BOCC to cancel this year's Lobster Mini-Season, in light of the spiking cases of COVID-19; this request was an attempt to control the number of tourists coming into the county for this annual two-day event. In doing so, we learned that neither Monroe County, nor any of the Keys' municipalities, has the authority to change any aspect of Lobster Mini-Season, as the event is managed by the state Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC).

In cooperation with eleven other environmental and community groups, Last Stand appealed to the FWC and suggested a new approach to Mini-Season, including appropriate management measures to:

- Minimize environmental impacts to corals and other benthic habitat;
- Improve safety and maintain quality of life for Keys residents, on the water and on area roadways;
- Provide an effective management tool for law enforcement; and
- Eliminate illegal multiple trips and poaching.

Over the years, the FWC has implemented several changes to the rules governing the recreational Mini-Season in the Florida Keys, and although the present rules are more restrictive than for mainland Florida, problems still exist. *Our members tell us: there are too many people on the water these days for Mini-Season to remain an "open access fishery".*

“Open access” has resulted in human and wildlife deaths, damage to natural resources (coral heads, sea grass beds, and lobster habitat), harvest of endangered and threatened species, conflicts between divers and property owners, overcrowded & illegal vacation rentals, and increased traffic accidents on a congested US 1.

Last Stand is hopeful that the FWC will, over the course of the next six months, enact reasonable management practices to: better protect our natural resources, reduce crowding and improve safety, enhance the overall outdoor experience for recreational lobster divers, and assist law enforcement in carrying out its duties.

### Affordable Housing

Sunset Marina Apts-2mths rent free!  
5555 College Rd, Key West, FL 33040  
Key West

1/19

Rent Specials  
\$2790 with 2 months free rent! Call for details!  
\*restrictions may apply

Monthly Rent	Beds	Baths
\$2,790 - \$3,045	2	2

#### Affordable – For Working Folks?

Most people support affordable housing, especially *Workforce Affordable Housing*. Yet, decades after the problem was identified and many recommendations from the Affordable Housing Task Force, it continues to be an issue. As to the question of “why”, there are lots of answers – the Keys are an expensive place to live, land is scarce on a chain of islands, building to hurricane-force wind speeds/current codes is pricey, and so on. But consider these recent developments:

- Wrecker’s Cay – Developers request road abandonments to provide their Stock Island project with private oceanfront access, while removing the last public access to the water, in opposition to statute. Let’s see how many of these units are truly affordable.
- Happening now... A density increase from 16 to 40 units per acre is proposed for Bahama Village by developers from the Key West City Commission. Unless the Commission puts

into writing the requirement that “Residential units resulting from any density increase shall be only for low- and very low-income workforce rental housing”, it just won’t happen.

→ *Last Stand will advocate for this important distinction.*

- For more information on this subject, follow this link to Last Stand’s Affordable Housing position statement: [www.keyslaststand.org](http://www.keyslaststand.org).

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### Did You Know?

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As promised in the last newsletter, let’s meet our second of three alternate board members. These alternate directors provide our board with a wealth of information and resources. We’re excited to introduce:

#### Alternate Director Ann Helmers

Many of you in the Upper Keys are likely already aware of Ann’s excellent work as part of a citizens’ team that organized the Friends of John Pennekamp, a non-profit organization for the State Park. She is currently President of this volunteer group which supports conservation and advocates for enhancing environmental, educational and recreational experiences at two Upper Keys State Parks.

Ann and her husband, Terry, live in Key Largo where she is also membership chair of the Upper Keys League of Women Voters and a board member of the Key Largo Federation of Homeowners Associations. Ann enjoys diving, boating and exploring the offshore waters of the Keys and feels very fortunate to call this beautiful area her home.

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### Invitation to Join a Board Meeting

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As you may already know, the Last Stand Board typically meets the third Monday of each month via Zoom, and we encourage members to attend and learn more about our ongoing work on critical issues. Please speak with a Board member or consult our website for specific meeting dates.