



2026 Palm Beach County Bar Association Bench Bar Conference

March 6, 2026

Time: 1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

Local Government and Land Use Session

State Power, Local Control, and Sunshine in the Digital Age: Key Issues Shaping Local Government and Land Use Law in 2026

This session begins with a 30-minute panel discussion examining how legislation like Live Local impacts Florida's land-use framework. This session will offer a brief introduction of Florida's constitutional home rule powers and state preemption. Panelists will discuss the Live Local Act, one of Florida's current preemption laws, and affordable housing policy.

The second half of the session features a 30-minute presentation on Florida's Sunshine and Public Records laws in the modern age. With local governments increasingly relying on digital collaboration platforms and even AI tools, new transparency and ethical questions emerge. The presentation will provide practical guidance for ensuring compliance in this evolving environment.

Moderator:

- Tara Duhy, Esquire – President, Lewis, Longman & Walker, P.A.

Panelists:

- Keith James, Esquire – Mayor, City of West Palm Beach
- Joanne O'Connor, Esquire – Town Attorney, Town of Palm Beach and Shareholder, Jones Foster

PART I - The Live Local Act: Affordable Housing Preemption After Two Years

- Introduction: Tara Duhy, Esquire, Lewis, Longman & Walker, P.A.
- Live Local: Early impacts, successes, and continued obstacles: Tara Duhy
- Double Density Bonus: West Palm Beach's innovative response to drive local housing affordability: Mayor Keith James, City of West Palm Beach

PART II – Public Records and Sunshine Law in the Cloud

- Top 10 Public Records Tips – a practical overview of the applications of Chapter 286 and Chapter 119 in the digital era: Joanne O'Connor, Town of Palm Beach / Jones Foster

Q&A Session (Combined) – facilitated by Tara Duhy

Learning Objectives:

- Examine how Live Local and preemption impact local land use, zoning and affordable-housing implementation.
- Develop practical approaches to align private development incentives with public infrastructure and affordability goals.
- Understand transparency obligations under Florida's Sunshine and Public Records laws amid emerging technologies.