

Duval Street Committee Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2008

2:00 p.m.

Present: Jimmy Weekley, Chairman
Paul Clayton
Gloria Sellers
Melissa Kendrick
Janet Kelly
Roger McVeigh
Christine Russell
Bob Schettig
R.B. Havens, City of Key West Public Works
Jim Scholl, City Manager
Barry Gibson, City Commissioner District IV
Vivian Perez, City of Key West Mayor and City Commissioners Office

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Chairman Jimmy Weekley began the meeting by discussing the letter to the Mayor and City Commissioners. Chairman Weekley decided to go with revised version from Melissa Kendrick. Roger McVeigh suggested a small change to the letter, the Committee agreed with the changes and the letter was approved.

Chairman Weekley opened the floor for discussion on a Pedestrian Mall on Duval Street. Chairman Weekley explained to the Committee that during the last meeting it was discussed as a demonstration (pilot program) on weekends closing different block of Duval Street.

Bob Schettig stated he strongly support a Pedestrian Mall on Duval Street and suggest not putting the tables and chairs in the street instead bring them out to the sidewalks, this way the City of Key West could rent sidewalk space to the businesses.

Gloria Sellers stated she has a problem with placing the tables and chairs on the sidewalk. Ms. Sellers believes by putting the tables and chairs in the sidewalks people will be walking in the streets and this puts them further away from the businesses. Ms. Sellers thinks the tables and chairs should be placed in the street and use those sidewalks for the foot traffic.

Commissioner Barry Gibson stated his concern will be fire and police safety.

Chairman Weekley mentioned he planned on consulting with the Fire Department and the Police Department.

Bob Schettig brought information (handouts) to this meeting that will explain why the City of Key West needs to have a Pedestrian Mall.

Chairman Weekley asked the Committee to come up with thought on how to approach the business and which blocks of Duval Street should the pilot program begin with.

Chairman Weekley asked Jim Scholl, City Manager if he could have representative from the Fire Department and from the Police Department attend the Committees next meeting so that the Committee their concerns/opinion and how to address their concerns.

Chairman Weekley and Roger McVeigh suggested the Committee look at the big picture and then take the steps necessary to get to that outcome.

Bon Schettig stated believes that Pedestrian Mall should be defined as far as traffic is concerning (no vehicles), he think bicycles could be allowed. Mr. Schettig also could envision a City owned or privately owned small electric trolley going up and down so that tourist/locals have access to all of Duval Street. Mr. Schettig said this could be done with a bracelet they can purchase.

Melissa Kendrick is interpreting that the Committee is trying to get local's downtown to Duval Street to utilize the existing businesses. Ms. Kendrick believes that Mallory Dock was created for that purpose and used as a focal point for gatherings, since it is set up that way.

Chairman Weekley believes that a big reason why locals do not come to Duval Street is because they do not want to pay for parking. Chairman Weekley believes that one of the Committees goal is to try and bring back the locals to Duval Street, whether it is to shop or to enjoy the restaurant's that are on Duval Street. Chairman Weekley stated that until the resolution of the parking issue it will be an uphill fight to get the local back to Duval Street.

Kevin Boucher thinks that Duval Street has never been solely a local's avenue and the survivorship of Duval Street depends on both the tourist and the locals.

R.B. Havens recommends that during the planning process of the Pedestrian Mall the Committee gets the help of an architect and landscaper to has designed successful malls for our communities to make sure that the design will address issues like emergency vehicles having access to the area, along with delivery trucks.

Janet Kelly believes that the City of Key West should not be responsible for cleaning the sidewalk in front of the businesses. Ms. Kelly thinks it should be the responsibility of the storefront owner to clean their sidewalks.

R.B. Havens agrees with Ms. Kelly that every business owner should maintain their right-of-way as per the current Code Ordinance states, but he stated that the City of Key West

owns a high pressure, high water volume machine that will remove the heavy dirt of the streets better than a pressure washer bought at store.

Bob Schettig mentioned that he sat the table with Carolann Sharkey from the Botanical Gardens at the Beachside Duval Street Summit and Ms. Sharkey brought someone with her who designs Pedestrian Malls and he has offered to do a study for the City of Key West free of charge.

Chairman Weekley asked Jim Scholl, City Manager if there would be a problem with obtaining these services from this person. Mr. Scholl stated at no cost it would benefit what this Committee is trying to accomplish and that it would be well worth it.

Bob Schettig asked the Chairman if he would like him to contact Ms. Sharkey, Chairman Weekley stated both will contact Ms. Sharkey.

Jim Scholl asked about enforcing the alcohol permits for the business that move out into the streets during this closure. Chairman Weekley explained that it would only be the restaurants that serve food and they usually already have an alcohol license.

Melissa Kendrick asked why only restaurants are allowed to move out of their buildings and not the other business. Chairman Weekley explained that the merchant would be allowed twice a year end of May and then again the beginning of the October other than that it would be a sidewalk café atmosphere.

Bob Schettig mentioned that some of the surveys that were done it stated that outdoor dining is very attractive to the people.

Melissa Kendrick asked a question regarding restaurants paying impact fees for their current seating and was wondering if this was going to be additional seating or would the restaurants would redistribute the seats they have now. Ms. Kendrick stated that she would have to report back to the Chamber and they will have two particular questions asked of her 1. what makes a restaurant better or worse than any other type of business and 2. current codes regarding impact fees (realignment).

Chairman Weekley stated that what he understands the space will be leased to the restaurants.

Commissioner Barry Gibson asked Kevin Boucher from Margaritaville his opinion as to which of the two options he would prefer 1. paying for more seating or 2. redistribute your current seats.

Kevin Boucher replied that he would prefer the option of paying for more seats.

Commissioner Barry Gibson stated that one of thing that will come up is the determination of meaning of a restaurant. Commissioner Gibson stated for example a hot dog stand would like to set up and try to sell beer.

The Chairman informed Vivian Perez the agenda items for the next meeting are continue discussion of Pedestrian Mall with the Police and Fire Department and Carolann Sharkey. Also move forward Recommendation to the City Commission

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, May 14, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. at 525 Angela Street in the ADA Conference Room.

The meeting ended at 3:15 p.m.

(Recordings of the meetings are maintained with the Executive Aide to the Mayor and Commissioners)