

Duval Street Committee Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2008

2:00 p.m.

Present: Jimmy Weekley, Chairman
Christine Russell
Judi Bradford
Leslie Kanter
Perry Johnston
Frank Garner
Janet Kelly
Paul Clayton
Kevin Boucher
Raviv Grinberg
Gloria Sellers
Tony Falcone
Dominique Falkner
Kyle Caskey
Fran Decker
Michael Guadagno
Molly Goodwin
Dianne Soloton
R.B. Havens, City of Key West Public Works
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 noticed new faces in the room and gave a brief update on how the Committee was formed and that it is not an appointed Committee and that the meetings are open to anyone who would like to participate.

Chairman Jimmy Weekley asked for motion to approve the minutes of June 11, 2008. It was moved by Frank Garner and seconded by Christine Russell to approve the minutes of June 11, 2008. The Chairman asked if everyone was in favor, the response was unanimous.

Chairman Jimmy Weekley mentioned the article that was in the Citizen on Tuesday. The Chairman also said that he received the list of business owners late Friday. The Chairman stated that from the article he has received phone calls from people who are interested in participating.

The Chairman mentioned that he again spoke with Mark Barrack from La Te Da and that he is still interested in hosting the meeting at La Te Da. Chairman Weekley informed everyone the date of the meeting has not yet been determined. Chairman Weekley did mention that they would talk later in the afternoon about some dates.

Judi Bradford stated that since she is coming in late into this process she would like a little more information than what she read in the newspaper article. Chairman Weekley explained how the Committee came up with upper Duval Street as the demonstration block. Chairman Weekley basically said that the selling points for the upper Duval Street were the fact that the street was wider and that there is more parking at that end.

Chairman Weekley said that when the Committee meets with the business owners of upper Duval Street and give them the option to pick a date and length of street closure but stated that the target is sometime in September. Chairman Weekley stated that discussion was were to have the closure Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Friday, Saturday or Saturday, Sunday.

Chairman Weekley mentioned that the restaurants in the demonstration area will be allowed to bring out tables and chairs out into the sidewalks sort of like a sidewalk café atmosphere but have decided that merchants (hard goods) would not be able to set up racks and merchandise outside their stores.

Ms. Bradford asked if the City would be charging fees to the business associated with closure. Chairman Weekley said that the Committee is not asking for any fees to be charged and went on by saying that Committee volunteers would be in charge of placing the barricades.

Chairman Weekley also mention the discussion of having trees and plants from the MARC House, having some type of entertainment like the High School Jazz Band, Bahama Village Music Program and even the jugglers. Chairman Weekley stated this would also bring locals to the street closure since the parents of the kids that participate would come and support their children.

Frank Garner mentioned that he took photograph of the blocks for the street closure and he was concerned that the sidewalks in some of the areas would not be wide enough for café type of tables and chairs and was wondering if the Committee considered using the street.

Perry Johnston mentioned that the MARC House is willing to help with the demonstration but their biggest issue was security for the trees and plants. Mr. Johnston is not sure how the Committee will be able to address their concern.

Tony Falcone suggested having the demonstration one night as opposed to two or three nights for the first time. Mr. Falcone believes this would take care of some of the issues regarding workers and security.

Christine Russell remembered talking about how the first night would generate talk in town amongst neighbors and then more people come out the next night. Ms. Russell believes that it is way to much work to do for just one night.

Tony Falcone and Judy Bradford were concern with the cost of this event. Ms. Bradford recalls the City of Key West is going to start charging for festival/events.

R.B. Havens mentioned that this is not an event believes this entire thing came up because the City is trying to figure out new ideas for Duval Street. Mr. Haven stated that as far as he is concerned this is all research and development that was asked the Committee by the Mayor and his recommendation would be that the Commission absorbs the cost of public works or what ever is necessary for the street closure. Mr. Havens is willing to attach a justification memo to the Resolution.

R.B. Havens believes that the intent would be if these demonstration works well the City would design or engineer things that may have a small capital or up front cost in the future but it would used as operating cost for on going events. Mr. Havens stated for example if upper Duval Street was closed every weekend as a pedestrian mall the City could install pop up bollards on Duval Street that would shut the street down in matter of minute with minimal staff involve. Mr. Haven also said that the City can not go out and spend money for such things unless the closures work.

There was a discussion that this is not to be called an event.

Kevin Boucher mentioned the vision was the way Duval Street should evolve and mentioned the handout that was provided to the Committee by Bob Schettig at one of the meeting on which researched Pedestrian Malls. It was requested the handout get email to the new attendees of the meeting.

Judi Bradford asked if Mobile Vendors would be allowed to set up within the closures. Chairman Weekley answered no.

Christine Russell believes that it is real important to stress to the businesses why the City is doing this, and that this is for existing business (not a street fair) in order to try to increase your business, trying to get people out of their cars and into your shops and restaurants.

Since there were so many new faces in the room Chairman Weekley asked for introduction around the room.

Paul Clayton suggested doing a survey during the demonstration i.e. why they are there; what they like and what they did not like. Chairman Weekley doesn't think that a survey is need for the first time.

Janet Kelly thing the event should be called The Happening.

Michael Guadagno asked if there will be a sharing of money for advertising. Chairman Weekley stated that the Committee is not looking into advertising and taking advantage of newspaper articles, radio and word of mouth from the businesses. The Committee does not have any kind of advertising budget.

Christine Russell asked if the Committee would be putting together a PR Team made up of Committee Members and Businesses. Chairman Weekley stated that he believes that Commissioner Barry would be the PR person.

Tony Falcone suggested adding the 900 block of Duval Street to the closure to make it more of a stroll. Chairman Weekley stated that the Committee really wanted to keep this first demonstration small in order to see how it works.

Kyle Caskey asked about offering discounts in order to attract locals. Chairman Weekley replied that it would be up to the business to offer discounts and specials.

Judi Bradford asked when this resolution will be brought to the Commission for approval. Chairman Weekley stated that it would be as soon as next month in order to have it in September, because it is required to have 60 days prior to the street closure. Chairman Weekley reported that the only thing the resolution would ask for is permission to close the street and to waive parking in those blocks, those dates and hours.

Molly Goodwin was concerned with parking while the street is closed, she believes cars would spill over onto the side street and into the neighborhood. Ms. Goodwin was also concerned with noise from the music/entertainment during the closure. Ms. Goodwin feels like the residents in that area are being pushed to the back and businesses are being assisted. Ms. Goodwin was wondering why this Committee was created. Chairman Weekley explained how the Committee was created.

Chairman Weekley stated that he would be calling Mark Barrack of La Te Da right after this meeting and confirm a date for the meeting. Chairman Weekley will have Vivian Perez email everyone with that date and time.

Frank Garner asked if that is when he will need to have the sketch drawing of what the closure of upper Duval Street would look like. Chairman Weekley stated that yes he would need the sketch for the meeting with the business.

Chairman Weekley asked Mr. Garner if he was still able to get someone to do the drawing. Mr. Garner shook his head yes.

R.B. Havens reported to the Committee that the City does not have benches, but the City does have 10 ADA compliant picnic tables. The City has been systematically removing and disposing of all of the benches due to the homeless/vagrants.

R.B. Havens mentioned to the Committee that the City is working on two things for Duval Street, 1. is the artificial mulch that is made of a recycled product there will be a

proposal within the next month to do all of Duval Street and 2. is to do some major tree replanting on Duval Street.

The next meeting was set for Wednesday, June 25, 2008 at 2:00 p.m. at 525 Angela Street in the ADA Conference Room.

The meeting ended at 3:00 p.m.

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