

To: Bight Board Members, City of Key West

From: Steve Talbott, Blu Q Adventures

Dear Board Members,

My sincere thanks to both current and past Bight Board members for all your efforts in preserving what many of us have called home over the past 25 plus years: The Key West Bight & Historic Seaport. Those efforts are reflected in the mix of successful charter boats that occupy the docks, the incredible restaurants and eclectic businesses that line the boardwalk and Caroline Street corridor.

The Bight is unique because of our stories. We came to Key West with a dream, became a part of undoubtedly the most successful venture the City has ever undertaken and one of the most beloved places in the World. Many started over 2 decades ago, like me. Each of us, thru hard work, and in spite of occasional adversity, succeeded in that dream. Employing 100's of talented people, supporting myriads of businesses in town, and giving a reason for people to come back to Key West are but a few of the benefits of our robust charter community.

The New Year started with optimism. Blu Q spent January in dry dock for her annual haul out & USCG inspections. Spending \$25,000+ out of reserves, and eager to get back in service before President's weekend, reservations for the year were ramping up. What was an occasional news item, soon became a threat to the United States. Within days, the COVID crisis manifested exponentially threatening our health and livelihood. Each day brought more emails, calls, cancelations and refunds. By March 18th, we decided to cancel trips due to concern for our personal safety and that of our customers. Monroe County and the City quickly followed with an emergency order closing all non-essential businesses. A vibrant, robust start to the 2020 season **spiraled** into an economic **crash** of unparalleled depth.

We're in the smoking crater. \$100K + to date of revenue lost from cancelations for my business equals a financial crisis for me. Three of the best 6 profitable months of the year are gone. In a survey that I made 57.3% of my customers have been severely to moderately affected by COVID. 48.2% said they were unsure they wanted to do a boat trip given their safety concern & CDC guidelines imposed. June, July and August will NOT be business as usual. And what about the months that follow? Stimulus & PPP programs? With just \$3000 received to date (hardly enough to be healed), I'm utilizing whatever resources I have; retirement accounts, savings, HELOC loans & applying for SBA disaster relief. Those alone dig a deeper crater for the future without help from our partner/landlord.

Our new reality is sobering. The City offered a 3-month dockage deferment. But that's not enough to mitigate the issues of the crisis. Many of the events that draw our customers have been canceled throughout the remainder of the summer and fall. **Without a scientific breakthrough, it is NOT going to be business as usual.**

Please consider: abating our dockage for the time we were forced to close our businesses; reducing and/or restructuring rent going forward to a suitable amount based on capacity limitations and demand. With that, we have a fighting chance. Without, many will be forced into decisions forever changing our businesses and the character of the Bight. The negative consequences will be felt for years to all of us and the many visitors that have come to love our unique, one of a kind place; the Key West Bight Seaport.

Respectfully, Steve Talbott

June 1st, 2020



June 9, 2020

City Commissioner
Mayor

To Whom It May Concern:

Almost 40 years ago this island captivated one with its historic houses and tree lined streets and night blooming jasmine up and down Duval. An unexpected jewel of an island without the expected grass huts and sandy beaches. (Now we even have sandy beaches..)

So with a lot of hard work and different enterprises (newsstands, Miss Key West sightseeing boats, ice-cream shops, etc.) we ended up securing one of the first 10 year lease in the newly acquired "Bight". The purchase of which was presented to the voters in Key West as a way to stop the advent of condo developers and to keep the area historically preserved. So our third of the new waterfront brewery was our first dive shop with the "Sea Eagle" parked conveniently in front. After 10 years the dive the shop was relocated to Green Street for 10 years and the boat was moved to the Ocean Key House. Shortly after the CRSC was opened they wre kind enough to allow the Sea Eagle to dock in front of their restaurant and allow us bring in a booth for check-ins.

Never in 40 years have we had zero income for 2 ½ months. Sadly those 2 ½ months were the beginning of the high season for water sports. The height of which is June, July, and half of August. I am not certain if we will be able to recover finically as the numbers are not anywhere near normal for the months of June and July. I am hopeful that we will regain our normal tourist next year but unfortunately in the short term I fear we will be unable to repay the 3 months of rent due starting in January (the worst time for water sports) and am hopeful that for July through December we can have a rent reduction so we can stay in our business.

So please consider forgoing the rent of our water sport tenants for April, May, June, and a reduction of rent for the remaining of the year so we can continue being your good an happy tenants taking good care of our tourists and contributing to the ambiance of the historic seaport as it was envisioned by the tax payers all those years ago.

Sincerely,

Leslie M Levis
Captains Corner
Scuba Dive School

July 16, 2020

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

We have been your tenant for 22 years. We always pay rent on time and operate with the highest standards, always following all rules and regulations.

We have survived the toughest of times...Hurricane George, 9/11, the 2008 economic crisis, the BP oil spill, Hurricane Wilma, Hurricane Irma and countless other storms.

Through all of these challenges, we persevered and remained committed. We have remitted roughly \$14,000,000 in rent and CAM and employed thousands of hardworking employees over the past 22 years. We were able to bring commercial fishing back to the Bight and support countless local charities along the way. All the while, prioritizing the "preserve and protect the working waterfront" motto that was echoed by the citizens of Key West when they voted to purchase the Bight.

When considering the terms of our lease renewal a few years ago, we struggled with the 235% rent increase that was proposed. Yes, 235%! One of the deciding factors to accept the terms was constant reassurance by City staff that, if there was a hurricane, the Bight Board and City Commission would help us survive by adjusting the rents.

True to their word, without even having to ask or lobby, we were offered relief. One month of rent abatement and one month of rent deferment after Hurricane Irma was an immense help, considering we were shut down for 13 days. Even though it was a struggle to get our employees back to work and our doors open, we were able to survive with your help.

It is an understatement to say the last four months have been a struggle. Being shut down for approximately 70 days was devastating and we are still unable to have full use of our property with the 50% capacity and no bar service directives. Although we appreciate the gesture, deferment is just another way of saying "pay full rent even though you don't have full use of your leased property but just pay us at a later date".

The business landscape in Key West is very bleak for the rest of 2020 considering all major events have been cancelled. As your committed tenant and partner, we strongly urge you to work with us and the other tenants by abating three months of rent and reducing rents going forward. We need compassionate, forward-thinking leaders if we are going to save one of Key West's greatest assets, the Key West Bight and its tenants.

I look forward to answering any questions or concerns you may have so please feel free to reach me at my cell phone number below.

Sincerely your tenant and partner,



Jeff Gunther
President and Managing Partner
Conch Republic Seafood Company
631 Greene Street
Key West, FL 33040
(305) 797-0165

6/8/20

To My elected officials,

My Name is Micky Perez I am the General Manager of the Conch Republic Seafood Company. I have had the privilege of Living in Key West for the past Twenty years. The Key West Bight and what all of the tenants including our elected representatives have created is simply unique. These past three months have put that into jeopardy. A working waterfront is an amazing accomplishment and watching it grow over the past twenty years gives me pride. It has allowed me to raise my twin sons and be a part of the community which I cherish. I believe working together with the city and getting all the businesses back on their feet can be done. To see all the businesses that have closed is disheartening and the help we need at the Key West Bight will help us avoid that fate. I love where I work, who I work for, the people I work with are my family and where I live. Working together we can accomplish anything and bring prosperity back.

Sincerely yours

Micky T Perez

General Manager

Conch Republic Seafood Company.



June 8, 2020

Dear City Commissioners,

Since 1972, the Half Shell Raw Bar has been a historic part of the Key West Bight, or Land's End Marina as it was known back then. This restaurant landmark has weathered its share of storms through private ownership and later a sale to the city of Key West; however, it has always come through as a positive partner to the city.

As an anchor tenant to the Bight, this area of the island relies on the Half Shell's foot traffic as both locals and tourists frequent our establishment. In this tight-knit neighborhood, we count on our neighbor's businesses to also thrive as we strongly believe a rising tide lifts all boats. We employ over 50 people in the community with a handful of them working under this one roof for over 30 years (and others between 15-25 years). This establishment has been home to so many people for so long because of our strong relationship with the city.

In the past, the Raw Bar has survived a number of hurricanes and the city has given rent deferrals and abatements over the years. In order for this iconic brand to survive the remainder of the year, and perhaps longer, we would strongly suggest a three (3) month abatement of our rent, then pay a monthly rent of 6% of sales going forward until we are operating at 100 % occupancy and/or the business is back up to the pre-Covid 19 levels. It is important that, as a tenant, we make money so that the city, our landlords, can profit from everyone's hard work.

The Half Shell Raw Bar and its staff are one big family that truly cares about their city and its neighbors. This pandemic and economic downturn has affected everyone in life altering ways and we are counting on the City to help our business so that we can continue to be one of the Historic Seaport's iconic restaurant brands for years to come.

Sincerely,

Michael Croce
Member
Moro Management, LLC

From: Jason Brewer <captjbfishpro@yahoo.com>
Subject: Re: UPDATED agenda: General Meting: ALL KW Bight and Historic Seaport tenants
Date: June 4, 2020 at 5:47:26 PM EDT
To: TOM STROH <tortugatom@bellsouth.net>

To the keywest bight board and city commissioners:

As a lifelong fisherman of keywest, chartering since 1992, it will be difficult to stay in business without some type of lifeline from the city. We appreciate your help after hurricane Irma. Losing nearly 3 months of business during peak season, not all of us will make it. Businesses at the bight are interdependent as we all send clients to our respective skill sets. We have a unique, respectable working relationship rarely found anywhere. We bring in untold dollars to the city. I'm asking for a 3 month abatement on my slip rent and a discounted rate for at least 3 more. I know you have many difficult decisions to make but your most urgent attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated by us all.

Respectfully,

Capt. Jason Brewer

Owner/operator.Seaborn charters

From: moe@bestkeywestfishing.com

Subject: Letter of abbatment

Date: June 3, 2020 at 6:34:22 AM EDT

To: "tortugatom@bellsouth.net" <tortugatom@bellsouth.net>

To all board members my name is Captain Moe Mottice I own the Lucky Fleet and have been a partner in the historic Seaport brand since its inception. First I would like to congratulate everyone that has worked hard at creating and developing this brand both management and the tenants because without both non of this would be successful. That being said we have found ourselves at a cross road of decision making that will no doubt change the face of the historic bight unless a compromise can be reached between our partners in this brand. The tenants association has come together as a group and determined that because of the recent Covid-19 state of emergency and the shut down of our city to operate our businesses during our most productive months that without help from our city partners most will be unable to make it into the next year without great financial difficulty, and for some loss of their businesses. As a group we are asking our partners the city to consider a 3 month abatement and 1/2 dockage till December to determine the future of the state of emergency and the opening of the city to full capacity. Thanks Captain Moe

Hello Barry,

My name is Keir Loranger. I own Dragonfly Imports on Lazy Way Lane. I have been a tenant of the city for 11 years. I am writing to you in hopes of abatement for rent due to Covid 19. We were having our first fantastic season since Irma this spring. Until we got shut down. I have always paid rent on time. But the times we are in are very troubling.

When the city announced non essential business could open, I re-opened on 5/19.. Exactly 2 months from my last day of work. I am currently in week 4 of being open. The locals came to support me the first week. And that is about it. I have been open 5-6 days a week 7-8 hours a day for near to nothing. Some days were zero days. But I am still trying daily. I would say that about 90% of my business is tourism. Even though we have been open to tourists for over a week, it is very slow.

I hope that the commission will consider abatement for the months we were shut down and moving forward pay 6% until we all get on our feet. We still had to pay all the bills the entire time we were closed so debt has increased.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Best Regards,

Keir Loranger
305 923 3802
Dragonfly Imports Lazy Way Lane

To all,

My name is Richard Joyce and I am employed as a manager at The Half Shell Raw Bar. I am writing to include my support for asking for a 3 month rent abatement and a rent reduction to 6% of our total gross sales. This would go a long way to free up funds necessary to keep our staff employed.

Thank you for the consideration,
Richard Joyce
Manager
Half Shell Raw Bar
231 Margaret St.
Key West, Fl. 33040

5-29-2020

TO: City Commissioner, AND Mayor of Key West,

I, CAPT. Michael Pollack, Am A FLATS,
BACK COUNTRY Fishing guide, AND TENANT OF THE
HISTORIC SEA PORT FOR 31 YEARS, I love the Bight,
IT'S PLACE AND it's People.

BECAUSE of Covid-19, AND The economic
down turn I received A P.P.P. loan that enabled
me NOT to TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RENT DEFERMENT
FOR the months OF April, MAY, JUNE.

BUT, Honestly, because OF this
UNFORTUNATE ON going economic disaster I FORESEE
A VERY UNCERTAIN economic future. THEREFORE,
I AM ASKING FOR HELP!! ANY KIND OF
RENT ABATEMENT, AND REDUCTION IN RENT
FOR the remainder OF 2020 is IMPERATIVE
FOR my business, & CONTINUED SUSTAINABILITY.

Thank-you!
Michael Pollack



5-29-2020

TO: CHARMAN KNOWLS, AND THE BIGHT MANAGEMENT BOARD,

I, Capt. Michael Pollack, AM A FLATS,
BACK COUNTRY FISHING GUIDE, AND TENANT OF
THE HISTORIC SEA PORT FOR 31 YEARS. I LOVE
THE BIGHT, IT'S PLACE, AND IT'S PEOPLE,

BECAUSE OF COVID-19, AND THE ECONOMIC
DOWNTURN I RECEIVED A P.P.P. LOAN THAT ENABLED
ME NOT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF RENT DEFERMENT
FOR THE MONTHS OF APRIL, MAY, JUNE.

BUT, HONESTLY, BECAUSE OF THIS UNFORTUNATE
ON GOING ECONOMIC DISASTER I FORESEE A
VERY UNCERTAIN ECONOMIC FUTURE. THEREFORE,
I AM ASKING FOR HELP!! ANY KIND OF RENT
ABATEMENT, AND REDUCTION IN RENT FOR THE
REMAINDER OF 2020 IS IMPERATIVE FOR MY BUSINESS, AND
CONTINUED SUSTAINABILITY.

Thank - you

MICHAEL POLLACK

