

Madam Mayor and esteemed Commissioners

My name is Walter Kirchner. I am a lease holder at Key West's City Marina.

I have worked on boats at this marina, in one capacity or other since it's inception in 1974, and ten years before that when the docks were on US1.

In June of 1983 I purchased my first vessel and entered into a dockage agreement with the City of Key West.

Through the years I have owned charter boats, party boats, and more charter boats.

From the beginning, I have worked with the City, putting on marine flea markets, fish fries, festivals, art shows, and many other operations designed to bring tourists to our docks. I even had Bill Kroll drive his full Conch Trains around the causeway, to try to drum up business. I have sat through countless lease revisions, did work on the capital improvement fund, and helped invent many of the provisions in the current lease. We have been through a lot together and, for the most part, I think it has been a great partnership.

However, COVID 19 has put an unimaginable burden on all the boat owners at our marina. Everyone of us has a story to tell and we are telling you that this time we need **YOUR** help (and just so you know, asking for help is a very difficult thing for a fisherman to do.)

Many of these boats and businesses are a part of Key West's history. It has been proven that Charter Boat Row helps drive tourism. It would be a terrible thing to see these boats fade away.

As was noted at the June 21 commission meeting by Doug Bradshaw, "almost 100% of the dock rents were paid for July." That proves that if we can work we can pay our rent.

When we were forced to shut down, because we were deemed non-essential, it took away our only income stream. That action made it impossible for us to pay the City, (or anyone else for that matter.)

The money for the abatement, as I understand it, would come entirely from the equity fund at our marina. That fund has an excess of \$1,000,000 this year. It would not be funded with any tax money what so ever. So now I ask you once again; please help us by approving the rent abatement for April, May, and June at Key West's City Marina home of:

"Historic Charter Boat Row."

Thank you very much,

Captain Walter Kirchner

Kirchner Marine Inc.