

August 06, 2019

Kenny Weschler, Owner of "In Touch With You"  
706 Duval Street Street  
Key West, Florida 33040

City of Key West  
Mayor Teri Johnston  
City Commissioners

RE: Mall on Duval

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

I have many thoughts about the Mall, from its beginning to the present day. Here are some of them:

- When the weather was much cooler, people tended to stroll the streets of the three blocks designated as Mall blocks. From a social standpoint, this was a plus, a chance to bring family and pets downtown. This all decreased as the temperatures increased.
- From a retail business viewpoint, there tended to be far less foot traffic on the sidewalks, resulting in far fewer folks actually looking at store windows, or venturing inside. My business was about normal in sales over the period. There was no bump in sales as had been hoped. As a store owner milling around my own storefront, I would regularly see familiar faces waving hello but not breaking their cadence. It became apparent that this nightly event was really a wider Duval Crawl.
- I know that the lack of retail participation is due in large measure to minimal staffing, with no one available to watch over merchandise placed streetside. Rents, wages and insurance squeeze margins to the max, with next to no wiggle room to increase staffing.
- The beauty of Duval Street is that nobody has to really DO anything but stroll. It is the retail establishment's goal and responsibility to have people actually go through the door. Our calling card is an attractive window. This is always the case, with or without a closed street.
- \* If anything more is to be done with The Mall, I would suggest that it take a breather until January. With Fantasy Fest, Veterans Day Parade, New Year's festivities approaching, blocking streets is impossible. With the available funds, I would make certain that the trash cans are wiped clean, not just emptied, every day; that the sidewalks are steam cleaned of gum and food twice weekly, that the little side alleys are included in the cleanup. These things make a lasting impression on locals and tourists alike. I believe that no tourist will come to Key West for the Mall, but a clean City will make a lasting impression.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Kenny Weschler, Owner, In Touch With You