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Key West, Lahaina Hi, Scottsdale, Las Vegas

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Dear Mall on Duval,

My name is David Smith one of the owners, and the operational aspect of DeRubeis Fine Art of Metal Galleries. I wish I could attend this town hall, but I am traveling at the moment and I have asked my business partner to read this letter on behalf of me.

I want to first thank you and commend you (especially Carl Fisher) on this forward thinking idea that came to be called Mall on Duval. I have been doing business in Key West since 2004 and first became a business owner there in 2006 with the Oh My Godard Gallery that was on the 700 Block. After I sold that gallery chain, we in 2010 opened our first DeRubeis Fine Art of Metal Gallery at 716 Duval. This business did ok, but in October of 2012 the Heart Break Hotel above the gallery caught on fire and forced us to move.

We built out a location on the 500 Block and this became the Flagship gallery of DeRubeis Fine art of Metal and opened December of 2012. The first year was very good, but we saw a decline in business from 2014 on. Our lease was up June of this year but the rents vs Square foot from that landlord was out of touch with the rest of the street. There are many empty locations as many businesses have failed over the last few years here.

I had made the decision in January this year to close Key West at the end of our lease and concentrate on our other locations in Maui, Vegas and Arizona, with future expansion into Aspen.

However, when you started the Mall on Duval everything changed.

In the beginning my staff complained that it was not a good thing and has harmed our business, so I flew down to see what this was all about. When I saw what you were doing, I was so excited that I then trained my staff on how to use this to our advantage. We then saw a 75% increase in business on the weekends on the 500 block.

From a location that I wanted to get rid of, I now want to expand in. Since our lease was ending we then signed a lease at 619 Duval and built it out. (pouring more money into Key West) We now stay open now till about midnight on these weekends.

Due to the Mall on Duval increase in business, I now pay an 80% higher wage then we did before, allowing our employees, (many of which are attending this town hall to support this program) to benefit from this success. Especially when our employees could barely afford to live in Key West are now living comfortably and spending

locally with the additional disposable income that they didn't have in the past. Again thank you very much. I have a staff that thanks you also.

Key West has always been the party location, and the huge evening traffic on the 200-300 block due to the bars and strip clubs has prevented much of the business from coming up the street. With Mall on Duval, we are seeing much more quality clients and families now traveling up the street for an area of fun that isn't as crazy.

Now there is a place for people to come to where they don't smell beer and watch people stumble out of a strip club. (not that there is anything wrong with that..... This is Key West!) But I am sure it is a nice break for tourists and for our wonderful police force to monitor an area that is family friendly and watching people enjoy the wonderful weather and beautiful galleries and restaurants.

I know there are business owners that are complaining about this, but I can tell you this... Most people hate change, and are not forward thinking enough to use this to their advantage. Do not let their stagnation be the downfall of this wonderful event.

I can also tell you, if and when a second location or a considerably larger location becomes available in the Mall of Duval blocks I will defiantly be taking a look at them for further expansion into this market. Give a big space and Mall on Duval and you will see a happy man with well paid employees.

I have been following this on the web, and know that there are complaints regarding the costs and that the estimated costs will be about \$4500 a month once the blockades are in place, I am in agreement that the Tax payer should not be responsible. Allow us that benefit from Mall on Duval to pay for that by charging a permit fee that covers this cost to use the street during the Mall on Duval hours. Those that don't want to participate do not need to apply for a permit for display in front of business. If only 20 of us businesses did this it would be \$225 per month.

SIGN US UP AND WHO DO I MAKE THE CHECK TO? I would pay \$500 a month for a permit!

And to the Naysayers to this, you are not required to stay open. You always closed anyway at 9 pm prior to Mall on Duval so why are you complaining about something that shouldn't affect your old style way of doing business.

I am now petitioning Scottsdale AZ, and Maui for this same program, when business benefits....employees' then benefit, and then the town benefits.

In closing I would like to thank you again, Chris DeRubeis thanks you, all my artists thank you, my employees thank you, and all the businesses where my employees now spend extra money at thank you. I wish you were running our federal government!

Warm regards,



David Smith
Managing Member
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