



THE CITY OF KEY WEST

Post Office Box 1409 Key West, FL 33041-1409 (305) 809-3700

Public Comment Summary: Townhall Meeting on the Historic Diesel Plant

Location: Frederick Douglass Gym "Annex" Building

Date/time: Wednesday, February 9, 5:30- 6:30 p.m.

Summary:

- Future redevelopment at the historic Diesel Plant should provide community benefits.
- Redevelopment should not be entirely commercial uses, with revenue generation as the principal function. There were significant concerns related to impacts anticipated from a bar or sizable restaurant.
- Many noted existing traffic problems in the area and voiced concern about worsening impacts: Any use that worsens traffic and congestion particularly on Geraldine and Angela Streets should be avoided.
- Multiple participants suggested that the City should identify grant funding to remediate and redevelop the site given the distaste for an impactful but profitable commercial use.

Public Comments:

- There's already limited parking down here. We don't want any development that will make parking and traffic worse.
- If the renovation and restoration will cost \$5 million, can the City really afford it?
- Is it worth saving giving the cost?
- Grants are available – historic restoration tax credits are available.
- What does BVRAC think about it? Trisha Eables of BVRAC said there was no specific resolution.
- We shouldn't rush the RFP.
- The redevelopment of these buildings is very important to the community, maybe more so than the 3.2 acre project. It impacts a residential neighborhood. Residences are 15 feet from the plant. Why was this meeting held so late and how will the City incorporate our input into the RFP if it's going out mid-February?
- How will this affect the neighborhood considering the 3.2 development?
- The City should do a traffic study on Geraldine – traffic is so bad here.
- Truman Annex Navy traffic blocks up the area. We should coordinate with the Navy about how their employees enter and exit the base.
- Environmental considerations/contamination needs to be considered. Site probably has lots of contamination.
- When they dig, how will the air and surrounding streets stay clean? I live across the street.
- Can we restrict access to Geraldine?
- How will construction deliveries get to the Diesel Plant?
- How can the government support this project so that private industry doesn't have a negative impact on the neighborhood?
- The community needs meeting space, business incubators, services
- This RFQ/RFP makes us feel like this property is going to be commercially exploited



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- There's not enough room for a commercial use in terms of traffic and parking. We need it to be a community space that serves local residents
- 3.2 future homeowners are investing in homes nearby, they don't want a bar or brewery where their children play outside
- Community based services at the plant should include: media centers/computers for seniors community access, barbers, multi-use facilities for the community
- The local community is getting edged out. This project going commercial would make it worse. We live here and want to raise our kids here.
- A local, affordable food market would be a beneficial use for the site.
- Wi-Fi access and computers – kids without laptops can't do homework at home!
- The City should rethink constructing a new Frederick Douglas Gym Community Center and should instead utilize that CRA money to create a community center at the Diesel Plant.
- The Frederick Douglass Gym Community Center being moved to the Diesel Plant would create safety problems for children leaving the gym.
- Other cities have grocery stores/markets with no parking because it's intended to be pedestrian oriented.
- This program needs Bahama Village leadership and input; community members need to organize.
- We should be looking for grants, private donations, to fund a redevelopment project that benefits the community.
- Economic modeling of the building from KEYS Chair showed that commercial use will never be viable; therefore it MUST be grant funded, government supported.
- There's a lack of community vision and leadership.
- This is an incredible opportunity for Bahama Village and the City and it shouldn't be squandered by making this another Duval Street.
- We should bring the wonderful history of the buildings to the forefront.
- We need to all form one group and work together.
- It shouldn't just benefit the wealthy.
- This shouldn't be conceptualized as a revenue generator; it must support the community.
- Food-based rooftop, raised beds, seniors can garden and teach kids. They can all bring home fresh nutritious food.
- There are many grants available that can make a community vision for this possible. We don't need to focus on revenue generation.
- Lots of local youth, Bahama Village youth leave because there isn't opportunity. There's brain drain from Key West. We want to fight that, so we need to invest in the community, not have outside developers invest in themselves.
- Hospitality/culinary programs would be beneficial here.
- Botanical garden component – could be the first ethical cocoa producer in the world.
- There are grants to fund projects like: STEM, a multi-use arts space.
- The TDC could be a resource.
- There are community members that would want to provide private donations; such as to name a room.



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- Need to delay the RFP to give time for more community input, and time for that input to be considered thoughtfully and fully.
- We should survey more of the public about what they want at the Diesel Plant.
- Needs to be more opportunity for public comment.
- The community needs to come first. So much of Key West has been transformed into a profit generating project for people out of town. It is time that we come first, or we will lose.
- The City should employ someone to seek out all of the grant opportunities for this project and let grants lead the way, the way a consultant was hired to help with the 3.2 RFP.

Potential uses discussed:

- Media/computer lab for community
- Community arts program/community arts collective: artists rent out studio space, money and expertise then used to run arts programs for kids
- Business incubator
- Meeting spaces
- Open air markets
- Community garden
- Bee apiary and wildflower garden on the roof
- Barber shop and other community-oriented services
- Climbing gym
- Cocoa producer/chocolate production
- Youth science museum – STEM grants