



THE CITY OF KEY WEST

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Public Comment Summary: Townhall Meeting on the Historic Diesel Plant

Location: Zoom

March 3, 2022

- Mayor Johnston: We need more input; there are not many community members on our call. We need to move the project ahead.
- Staff: RFP release is planned for mid-late March 2022.
- Emily Smith: The site should have a food market/grocery which supports the local community and is walkable. It makes sense to not duplicate services provided at the proposed Frederick Douglass Gym Community Center. A balanced use that generates some money but also provides a community service or benefit makes sense. The site could be a Montessori high school that engages in practical learning, like gardening/farm school.
- Staff: The property is limited in outdoor space and there is little daylight for gardening.
- Emily Smith: Another option could be a climbing gym/rec center with biergarten.
- Monroe Holloway: One option for this site is to function as an expansion of the park, especially if Admiral's cut offers visitors more direct access. Another vision is more looking to coincide with neighbors and the immediate area. A grocery could be beneficial. There is no creative space in this area, where folks can participate in art. There are limitations on outdoor space and parking.
- Participant: The City should look into other cities' examples of food halls/vendor markets in public spaces such as Ponce City Market in Atlanta, GA.
- Monroe Holloway: Nashville offers recording studios in spaces like these. Career Source and the College of the Florida Keys are potential partners or resources, similar to The Beacon Council in Miami-Dade County.
- Staff: the Frederick Douglass Gym will have a recording studio and flex spaces that can be used by adults.
- Participant: The site should be integrated with Truman Waterfront, potentially Mallory Square through Admiral's Cut.
- Roger McVeigh: Timing is important; shouldn't be delayed – building stabilization needs to occur ASAP. Site should have uses that coexist with the neighborhood. We have issues with businesses not being good neighbors all over town right now. We should limit special events here and mitigate the impact to neighborhoods. The asset should be design to be inclusive of visitors (including park users) and residents. We should close off vehicle access to nearby streets, reduce the number of cars in our neighborhoods, and increase public transportation. We should complement the park. This will be costly, and we need to plan for ongoing maintenance of the historic structures. The park already costs @\$300,000 yearly, a commercial use could pay for some of that maintenance.
- RFP should clearly define intended uses and integration with community/tourists/surrounding spaces.
- Traffic and parking are an issue, but it's also a City-wide issue that needs to be addressed holistically