



City votes for screening Fantasy Fest body painting

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KEY WEST — There were plenty of snickers and giggles at the City Commission meeting Tuesday night.

But the conversation was not just for fun, but about an ordinance designed to help the city get more of a handle on public nudity at Fantasy Fest.

Body painting is a tradition during the annual festival in October, and each year a debate ensues about how much breast and other more personal parts of the anatomy should be shown. Some years, the city has cracked down on nudity and other years it has turned a blind eye to it.

Mayor Jimmy Weekley proposed an ordinance, and the City Commission approved it, that would force business owners to put up screening when they painted people. Several Duval Street artists paint people in the front of their stores or on their front porches.

Weekley reminded those who attended the meeting that public nudity is illegal. However, painted breasts and thongs are allowed.

"There are families in the streets," Weekley said.

Commissioner Ed Scales was the only commissioner who voted against the ordinance.

"Has this been a major problem?" Scales asked. "Do we really want law enforcement or code enforcement officers spending time

on this during Fantasy Fest?"

Fantasy Fest is the biggest annual event in Key West and attracts more than 50,000 additional people to Duval Street, according to some estimates.

The Key West Police Department has to schedule overtime for officers to help respond to fights and help with crowd control.

Some asked if the ordinance be modified.

"Can we go with Commissioner (Merili) McCoy's proposal that no one under 200 pounds be body painted," Commissioner Carmen Turner joked. "I don't think there is another City Commission on Earth that is having this discussion."