

# Bloomington Community Farmers' Market Advisory Council

Monday, October 15, 2012  
5:00 pm

Parks Conference Room

## **Advisory Council Members Present**

Geoffrey Grodner, Bobbi Boos, Michael Salem, Susan Welsand, Sarah Ryterband.

**Notified Absent:** Bruce McCallister, Janice Lilly, Daniel Young, Julia DeBruicker Valliant

## **Market/City Staff**

Marcia Veldman, Nicole Wooten and Robin Hobson.

## **Public**

Doreen Power, Steven Hutt, Kate Cote and Jason Cote

### **1. Call to Order**

Michael called the meeting to order.

### **2. Approval of Minutes**

The September 2012 minutes were approved.

### **3. Public Comment**

None

### **4. Meet the Vegetables**

Susan is working on a project with Wonderlab, a part of their Savory Science program, which will be a one-time event focusing on vegetables and cooking for kids and families. Slow Food will be petitioned for sponsorship and she would like the Market to be involved in some way, perhaps in donations of food in August, 2013. Participation is limited to 10-20. Susan will let staff know how this effort can be supported by the Market. Marcia suggested that the Market may be able to assist by providing staff assistance and/or including requests for produce in the Market Beet. Bobbi offered seeds from Nature's Crossroad for participants to take home.

### **5. Vendor Requested Review of Staff Decision Regarding Soaps/Salves**

Doreen has been making balms and salves from her apiary wax and selling them at Market. Before the beginning of the season, Doreen was advised, through a conversation with Marcia, that these types of products would only be allowed for sale during craft season. Due to an alternative interpretation of the handbook guidelines, Doreen choose to put these items out for sale and was subsequently asked to remove them from her table. She was speaking at the FMAC meeting to request review of this action and to ask the rules be amended to allow for a wider range of products to be sold. She made a brief presentation about the production and ingredients of her products to familiarize the group with the items. Marcia passed out copies of the Handbook to all so the Grown and Crafted by Vendor and Crafts sections could be referenced. Herbs, wax, oils, natural scents, honey and lye are ingredients in soap. Take away lye, and the ingredients become those of salves and balms. Candles, which Doreen does not sell, can be made of wax, wicks and natural scents. Doreen pointed out that the language of the Grown and Crafted by Vendor could be taken to mean candles as well as balms and salves are allowed if made with a vendor's wax and therefore she should be allowed to

display and sell these items during the regular vending season. Marcia provided some background on the topic by recounting the decision to allow soaps in 2012 as a regular Market product after vendor requests to do so. She noted the openness of the Market in that producers are allowed to sell products they grow. There was hesitation to allow soaps in the regular season due to the desire to keep the focus of the Market on small producers. Grace MacNeil, a Vendor who already had been selling meats and other farm products at Market, approached Marcia to discuss how soaps might be incorporated while still honoring this commitment. Toward working to ensure that soaps would remain a farm product, any plant material and one major ingredient (i.e. milk, honey, other emollients) would be produced by the Vendor. Balms and salves were considered at the time the soap rules were formed, but given the conservative tendency of the staff when opening the door to new products, these products were intended to be left out while the impact of soaps in 2012 was being assessed. Geoff agreed the language does not indicate these limitations, but he understood the intent behind the staff interpretation. Marcia admitted the same and that focus at this point should be clarifications of the rules for next year adding that the Handbook and Contract are living documents and are revised and changed almost yearly as needed to keep the Market close to its mission. Geoff shared that he thought the salves and balms should be allowed for the rest of this year, but that revisions should be made based on what products are in the best interest of the Market to be sold. Sarah noted she agreed with Doreen's interpretation of the guidelines. Doreen said customers who come from a distance to purchase salves also shop for other items at Market. Jason Cote works at Swiss Connection with his wife (both are Vendors) and farms one acre at the Yegerlehners. Among their products are soaps, produce and kombucha. He appealed for plant materials, like cinnamon, to be allowed because it is a popular soap ingredient. He wished that plant material ingredient guidelines for soap could read "any plant material that cannot be reasonably grown by the vendor" be allowed. There was a discussion of the Value Added Foods guidelines and how they compare with the Grown and Crafted by Vendor guidelines. Marcia forwarded some rules from other Markets regarding the sale of similar products to demonstrate that BCFM rules are not unusual, that they are very much along the same lines of what other comparable Farmers' Markets are looking at and regulating. Doreen noted she has batch control over all her soaps and that she is open to sharing all ingredients and where they were grown. Robin asked about the major ingredients of the soaps. Under current rules, Doreen's major ingredient, that qualifies her soap as an allowable product, is honey, but there is only 10-12% honey in her soaps. Jason responded that the major ingredients in soap are lye and oil and that everything else does not comprise the majority of the content. This limits the diversity of soap that can be produced for sale at Market. He suggested that farmers be allowed to sell soaps with no vendor raised product. Geoff noted that if you remove the farm-grown ingredients from the soap, then you are left with a craft. Steven proposed having a certain percentage of the soap ingredients be Vendor-produced in much the same way as Value Added Foods require 50%. Marcia pointed out that what is at stake are high demand farm product Vendor spaces being displaced by soap sellers who are able to take up space to sell items for which they purchase the ingredients. She also acknowledged the current rules miss the mark and that interested parties are welcome to provide input on the new language formation. Staff will draft new language and forward it to the FMAC for consideration ahead of the December meeting.

## **6. Kombucha**

Kate and Jason were there to request that kombucha be allowed for sale. The SCOBY (symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast), which is the base ingredient, weighs less than a pound in a given batch and it is removed from the liquid before sale. An original culture needs to be purchased, then black tea and sugar are added resulting in a strained beverage. Jason likened the SCOBY to livestock in that it must be fed and cared for in order for it to produce. Marcia shared her opinion on kombucha in light of the current guidelines – 50% of a Value Added Food needs to be a farm product and that yeast and bacteria are not

considered to be farm products. Kate realized that her two major ingredients (sugar and black tea) are not able to be produced in Indiana, but asked nonetheless that kombucha be allowed for sale as it has many health benefits. Marcia related that kombucha has been determined by the FDA to be potentially hazardous. She pointed out that kombucha may be a good candidate product for the Prepared Foods area. The item will be considered further by the FMAC at the December meeting.

### **7. Market Still Photo Promotions**

Susan brought up the B-Line promotion by an area photographer who made photographs every few seconds of the action on the trail and produced a video piece from them. She thought there could be something of this nature done with the Market and wished the Market could support the artist to do this. She also voiced a desire for some of the Youtube videos that depict the Market to be put up on the Market webpage. Nikki will look in to this. A discussion ensued regarding the Market not having its own website and Facebook page while other City efforts like the B-Line and BEAD have their own. Marcia noted that she has requested a separate website and Facebook page for the Market, but at this time the City administration wants to keep the Market information on its website and the Parks Department wants to keep the Market on its Facebook page. Marcia felt this was a topic that could be broached again in the future. Sarah suggested discussing at the December meeting whether the FMAC wishes to advise the Parks Board to support more independent social media outreach for the Market.

### **8. Vosters Prepared Food Vending Request**

A recap of last month's discussion was given regarding Chris Voster's request that she be allowed to operate out of her current space as a Prepared Food Vendor. Also briefly explained was the process by which Prepared Foods Vendors are chosen. The issue will be taken up at the December FMAC meeting at length.

### **9. December Meeting Time/Location**

The December FMAC retreat will be December 10 from 5-8 pm upstairs at Finch's. The Department will purchase some appetizers, and those who wish to order food may do so at 5 pm, with the meeting beginning at 5:30.

### **7. Adjournment**

These minutes respectfully submitted by Robin Hobson