



**CITY OF BLOOMINGTON  
parks and recreation**

**AGENDA**

City of Bloomington Board of Park Commissioners  
Special Meeting: Tuesday, September 7, 2010

McCloskey Conf. Room  
401 North Morton

**CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL**

**A. PUBLIC HEARINGS/APPEARANCES**

Public Comment Period

**B. OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board of Park Commissioners will meet on Tuesday, September 7, 2010 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. in the City Hall McCloskey Conference Room. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the Bloomington Community Farmers' Market program.

**ADJOURNMENT**



**CITY OF BLOOMINGTON**  
**parks and recreation**

A-1  
**09/28/10**

Board of Park Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes

Tuesday, September 7, 2010  
4:00 – 6:30 p.m.

McCloskey Conference Room  
401 N. Morton St.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Carter at 4:00 p.m.

**Board Present:** John Carter, Les Coyne, Joe Hoffmann Jane St. John

**Staff Present:** Mick Renneisen, Judy Seigle, Paula McDevitt, Becky Barrick-Higgins, Marcia Veldman, Bradley Drake

**FMAC:** Bruce McAllister

**A. PUBLIC HEARINGS/APPEARANCES**

A-1. Public Comment Period

No public comment at this time.

**B. OTHER BUSINESS**

B-1. Bryan Park Market Discussion

Mr. Coyne gave a brief history of the request for a Market at Bryan Park. He stated that a policy was established several years ago requiring groups to obtain a Special Use permit prior to selling on any Parks property and prior to having any type of fundraiser or special event on Parks property. This limits selling in the parks significantly and allows the staff to manage those sales. Recently an itinerate vendor selling items in the Bryan Park Henderson parking lot sparked an interest in some of the neighbors who expressed an interest in holding a regular farmers' market in Bryan Park. He added that Department policy, as it is now, does not allow this.

Mr. Renneisen stated he received two e-mails regarding vending in Bryan Park. One was from a neighbor that was interested in discussing the idea because of sustainability issues. Another e-mail stated that they were pleased that these types of markets aren't located in different parks because there is one really nice Market downtown and they are not interested in having those crowds in their neighborhood. Staff have discussed the possibility and have concerns about expanding the Market to the Bryan Park Neighborhood and the subsequent requests that may come from other neighborhoods near parks. Staffing issues with the Market are a big concern and expanding it to other locations could potentially increase the subsidy.

Mr. Carter stated he is not comfortable with expanding the Market to other parks if for no other reason than the staffing concerns.

Ms. St. John asked if there were other folks that expressed interest in holding a Market at Bryan Park. She stated without a strong interest, that this not even be considered.

Mr. Hoffmann stated that the only plausible argument for holding a Market at Bryan Park is there are no commercial grocery stores near the fairly large residential neighborhood. Otherwise, he is not in favor of it. He states this

appears to be less of a sustainability issue and more of a convenience issue.

Mr. Coyne stated that once we open up the door to one neighborhood, it provides too many opportunities for others to want the same. There are not enough staff resources to expand the Market this way.

## B-2. Farmers' Market Financial Summary

Ms. Veldman presented the Board with the Farmers' Market financial summary. She thanked the Board for placing enough value on the Market that they wanted to hold this Special Meeting to discuss its operation. She also offered her thanks to Mr. McAllister, president of the Farmers' Market Advisory Council. She stated that the Saturday Market is rapidly growing, with a 41% increase in customer attendance compared to this same time last year. The September 4 Market reached a milestone with more than 10,000 customers attending. Staff project more than 230,000 participations by the end of the 2010 Market season. To put these numbers in perspective, in 2000 the average was nearly 2,800 customers per Saturday. In 2010, the average is more than 7,000 per Saturday. The Tuesday Market is down somewhat this year, although the vendors still seem pleased. Ms. Veldman attributes this downturn mostly to the extremely hot conditions experienced this summer and since the Market is at the hottest part of the day and that may detract some people. In addition, road construction near the Market also has restricted access to the site. This year the Market contracted with 151 farm vendors representing 27 counties. Nine prepared food vendors occupy seven food spaces. Typically, two performances are scheduled at each Saturday Market and Tuesdays one performance is scheduled. Many special events have taken place and are still scheduled for the remainder of the season: Volunteers in Medicine B-Line Walk, Save Our Schools – Rally, Transition Bloomington – Great Unleashing (April); Asian Fest, Dalia Lama programming (May); BloomingNeighbors Award Ceremony and Tabling (June); Active Living Coalition Walk, Volunteer Fair (July); Tomato Tasting, Habitat for Humanity Celebration, Salsa Contest (August); Fall Fiesta (September); Apple Tasting, Breast Cancer Awareness Walk (October); Soup Tasting, Holiday Market (November). In addition to the scheduled performances, busking is also allowed at the Market. Staff has taken a more active stance in managing the busking by providing seven spaces specifically for buskers. Twenty-one busking agreements have been signed in 2010. Info Alley has 72 groups signed up to distribute information this year and 24 of those groups were there on September 4. Ms. Veldman added that staff works really hard to make the Market a welcoming place for everyone, including making it more accessible to low income individuals. This Market is the only farmers' market in Indiana (that staff is aware of) that accepts food stamps. In 2009 an average of \$96 per market was purchased using food stamps. In 2010 that average is \$206. The Market also participates in WIC (Women, Infant, Children) and the low income senior voucher program. The senior voucher program has distributed \$12,000 in vouchers and staff estimates about \$20,000 in WIC program purchases this year. Ms. Veldman stated that this week the South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) purchased \$7,000 in gift certificates for low income Head Start families to encourage them to attend the Market. The Community Kitchen distributed \$1,000 in gift certificates in the Backpack Buddies program. Over 30,000 pounds have been collected for the Plant a Row for the Hungry program. This allows for the farm vendors to give back to the community by donating unpurchased produce to the local food pantry. In addition to the Saturday and Tuesday Markets, the staff has provided three Homegrown Indiana Farm Tours in 2010. These tours provide an opportunity for customers to connect with the vendors that provide the produce at the Market. The A Fair of the Arts is not included in the Market budget but is part of the overall Community Events budget. All of these other aspects comprise the Farmers' Market budget. Total revenue collected year to date is \$69,800 and \$102,448 in expenses. This puts the cost recovery in line to be at 69% for 2010. Not included in the budget is support provided by the Operations staff (trash removal, cleaning the B-Line Plaza, banner hanging, tent set-up for large events, and support received from other City departments). The cost to the City for the Farmers' Market was about was \$33,000 in 2009. In 2010, the Market is getting a little closer to the cost recovery goal set by the Board of 75% with projections of 69% in 2010.

Mr. Hoffmann asked to be reminded why the Board set the subsidy goal of 25% for the Market.

Ms. Veldman stated the Board reviewed each of the Department program offerings and determined that the community benefits hugely from the Farmers' Market and that justified the subsidy rate.

Mr. Renneisen asked where else are there private business entities making money off of a City facility and being subsidized by the City? He feels the subsidy exists because it has traditionally been subsidized, not because it has been evaluated closely. As the vendor fees have increased most vendors are still willing to pay the cost and he feels

that most vendors would still be willing to pay even more for vending spaces.

Ms. Barrick-Higgins stated that the Market is a free event that's offered to the community justifying its subsidy.

Mr. Hoffmann feels the answer is much more complicated than that. He feels the Market has different value for different vendors. He feels the more equitable thing to do is to charge what the Market would bear which is different for each vendor, depending on what they sell and how much they sell. He feels there are vendors that do lose money and set up at the Market only for the exposure.

Mr. Coyne stated that the Market has become a phenomenon in Bloomington and has yet to find one in the country that compares to what is offered here on Saturday mornings. He doesn't want to make any recommendations or decisions that may compromise that. But he has to weigh that against the fact that, especially during these difficult economic times, subsidizing a program that has potential to make money is a compelling reason to withdrawal any subsidy.

Mr. Hoffmann stated that perhaps another avenue for graduating fees for vendors is to charge different prices for "prime" spots. He added that he is not proposing a 100% cost recovery goal. However, he feels the subsidy should be for local, sustainable produce.

Mr. Coyne added that he is also in favor of subsidizing local, sustainable produce.

Ms. Veldman stated that she feels some of the smaller "quirky" vendors that don't sell much add to the culture of the Market experience and charging fees that are too high may make it difficult or impossible for them to participate. She feels too much rapid growth in the fees would have a negative effect on the vendors.

Mr. Hoffmann asked what would be the side effect of bidding for stalls (prime sites only). The other stalls could go to those vendors that did not want to bid.

Mr. McAllister stated that the "sense of community" felt at the Market applies to the farm vendors as well as customers. He feels that a relatively new vendor could bid on a site that has been used by another vendor for 20+ years and is concerned about how that would impact the sense of community amongst the vendors. He stated that the current point system, while not fully understood by many vendors, is at least accepted.

Mr. Hoffmann added that big vendors paying more than small vendors makes sense!

Ms. St. John suggested that staff begin thinking about other ways to sell and price the stalls. The money must come from somewhere and feels the staff and the FMAC have more expertise and a better feel for coming up with the ideas.

Mr. Coyne and Mr. Hoffmann suggested the Board revise the cost recovery rate for the Market and phase in a 90% cost recovery rate over 2-3 years.

Ms. Veldman expressed some concerns that cost recovery and subsidy rates are not being calculated consistently throughout the department.

Mr. Renneisen stated that educating staff on how the cost recovery rates are calculated will continue and that discrepancies will get corrected. He added that budget cuts in the future are inevitable so staff must capitalize on the areas that can bring in additional revenue to offset other events and programs that are free. The Farmers' Market has opportunities that not every program has. Mr. Renneisen also stated that most of the vendors at the Market are not City residents, but live in the county or surrounding counties.

Ms. Veldman stated that, of the 151 contracts, 35 of the vendors live in Monroe County and about five live within the City limits. Surrounding counties represent the other vendors.

Mr. McAllister thinks there is a way to assess fees to vendors based on their revenue while still protecting the vibrancy of the Market.

Mr. Hoffmann stated that he is very open to hearing the practicality of how to make fees more equitable.

Mr. Renneisen stated that the bottom line is the Market can not continue to be subsidized much longer. He suggests staff give a proposal to the Board on how and when changes can be made that will allow the Market to thrive without being subsidized with City tax dollars.

### B-3. B-Line Impact on the Market

Ms. Veldman stated that the B-Line impact on the Market has been very positive. It's great to see folks walking/biking in on the trail. The B-Line has solidified the Market as one of the premier farmers' markets in the country.

Mr. Williams stated that the flip side of the impact of the Market on the B-Line Trail is another story. There are definitely more than usual resources needed to clean up after the Market. A larger weekend presence is needed during Market season to keep the trail clean. However, Market customers are the kind of crowds staff wants and likes to see using the parks and facilities.

Ms. Veldman stated that an increase in the prepared food vendors sales could help offset costs to clean. The location of the prepared food vendors is ideal and many people take advantage of the wall and the grassy area on the B-Line and picnic tables near CFC to sit and eat and gather. In addition, staff has not received any parking complaints this year (as they have in the past)! The B-Line Trail allows folks to park farther away and walk to the Market.

### B-4. Prepared Food Vendor Update

Mr. Coyne stated that he does not have an issue with prepared food vendors as long as there is an appropriate balance. The way it's set up now is fine. It works and he feels additional tables would be a great idea. The current set up is a significant part of the dynamics of the Market. However, the prepared foods vending must be balanced, carefully managed, and segregated from the rest of the Market.

Ms. Veldman stated that this year the proposals and selection was exceptionally challenging. Staff and the FMAC have established criteria, which helps make the determination; however, most of the criteria is subjective. She asked the Board if they have any thoughts on the criteria?

Mr. Hoffmann and Mr. Coyne both stated that preference for prepared food vendors should definitely be given to City vendors.

Mr. Coyne stated that the process must be transparent, giving preference to City businesses.

Ms. Veldman added that, as discussed at a prior Board meeting, a Board member will be part of the selection committee in the future so the Board's preferences can be reflected in those decisions.

Ms. Veldman stated that staff believes there is a need and the potential exists to expand by three additional vendors on the B-Line Plaza. That could potentially increase the revenue by approximately \$6,000.

Mr. Coyne suggested trying this on a one-year trial basis and reporting back to the Board.

### B-5. Farm Vendor Point System

There was very little discussion on this item. Ms. Veldman stated most of the vendors get the idea behind the point system and most vendors feel it is a fair system. The point system has been in place since 1983.

### B-6. Future Growth and Expansion of the Market

Mr. Coyne stated that he feels this is the most important item for discussion. It comes down to how well the staff and Board recognize the importance of the Market and recognize the phenomenon of its success. He suggests that the staff be very cautious about future expansion. He suggested the possibility of contracting with a consultant to provide

some guidance for the future direction and long range planning of the Market. Additional growth will put real pressure on the Market as it becomes too crowded.

B-7. Wine Tasting at the Market

Ms. Veldman stated that in 2008 the Board approved the sell of beer and wine by the bottle. So far, only wineries have been interested in selling at the Market. Staff has been very pleased and not one negative customer feedback has been received. Both wineries that have participated in the Market have been very appreciative of the opportunity to sell at the Market. However, both wineries have expressed a desire to have the opportunity to offer wine tasting as they feel this would greatly enhance their sales. This could be done in a responsible, family-friendly manner. Staff feels it could be done as well and would be an enhancement to the Market. If approved, a designated tasting area would be provided with a barrier. Signage would be provided indicating that participants must be 21 and over to enter that area. All customers that taste, and look 30 and under, must provide an ID. Anyone that purchases must provide ID. The rules for tasting allow for up to 4 ounces but that could be decreased for the Market.

Ms. St. John suggested, once all of the legal approvals are obtained, that staff try the wine tasting for one year and see how it works.

Mr. Carter suggested that staff hold off on beer tasting for now, and just stay with trying the wine tasting.

Mr. Coyne expressed concerns that the Market not lose its charm. He is worried about its future and doesn't want it to turn in to a flea market type of event.

The Board approved a one year trial period for wine testing pending additional approvals.

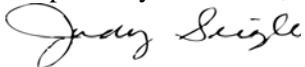
B-8. Farm Inspection Update

Ms. Veldman stated that she thought it would be beneficial for the Board to understand how many farm inspections are made each year. In the past few years, two vendors have appealed to the Board to overrule sanctions imposed by the staff and the FMAC. Staff feels it is essential that the "grower only" rule be enforced. Farm inspections are made when complaints are made by fellow vendors, or when staff suspect a vendor is selling produce that does not meet the guidelines of the farm vendor contract. In 2009 three farm inspections were made which resulted in the termination of two contracts permanently and prevented the department from entering into a contract with one. In 2010 four farm inspections have been made, resulting in the department not contracting with one vendor and terminating two contracts permanently. In 2002 staff received approval from the Legal Department to permanently terminate a contract when warranted.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Judy Seigle, Secretary Board of Park Commissioners