

# **Bloomington Community Farmers' Market**

## **Notice of Meeting**

**Monday, December 9, 2013 5 pm**

**Community Room, Near Westside Bloomingfoods  
316 W Sixth Street  
(812) 349-3738, veldmanm@bloomington.in.gov**

### **AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes – September 16, 2013
3. Public Comment
4. Old Business
  - Market Ingress and Egress
5. Report
  - Vendor and customer survey results
  - Vendor and customer attendance
  - Marketing Sub-committee
  - SNAP program and matching funds
  - WIC program and IU Health funding
6. Adjournment

**Bloomington Community Farmers' Market  
Advisory Council**

Monday, December 9, 2013  
5:00 pm

Bloomingfoods Community Room

**Advisory Council Members Present**

Bobbi Boos, Michael Salem, Sarah Ryterband, Janice Lilly, Daniel Young. Absent with advance notice: Geoff Grodner, Susan Welsand and Linda Chapman. Note: Julie DeBruicker-Valliant withdrew from the council in fall of 2013, citing an availability conflict due to a new position.

**Market/City Staff**

Marcia Veldman, Les Coyne, Nicole Wooten and Robin Hobson

**1. Call to Order**

Janice called the meeting to order.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

The September 16, 2013 minutes were approved.

**3. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**4. Old Business**

**A. Market Ingress and Egress** - Including past discussions, feedback from vendors during the season, and answers to the question on the vendor survey, the issue of how to deal with traffic congestion at the beginning and end of Market was taken up again in order to arrive at a policy which will guide the ingress and egress, especially with regard to a timeframe during which trailers over 12' in length can move about the Market. The policy under discussion is worded thus: "In order to alleviate congestion in the Market lot, in the months of July - September, trailers over 12' in length are required to either be parked in a vendor space or unloaded and removed from the Market by 6:30 am. Also, these same trailers must wait until 1:20 pm (or a the prompt of Market staff) before re-entering the Market at the end of the day. These trailers may be loaded/unloaded from the curb on Morton St. and items carted into or out of the Market." Sarah asked if this applied to trailers greater than 12' in length which have been parked during the Market and which a vendor would like to move out at the end of the day. Robin clarified that those trailers parked in the Market would be able to leave once hooked to the towing vehicle after the whistle at 1pm. Sarah motioned the policy be recommended as worded and a second was made. The motion carried by the group.

**5. New Business**

**A. Selling t-shirts, hats, totes etc. with farm logos** - Janice reported that Susan had forwarded her an item concerning some other vendors' desire to sell printed items (t-shirts and baseball caps) with their farm logos on them at Market. She asked Marcia to give background on this subject as it has been discussed a couple of times in the past. Marcia said the conclusion has been to not allow items of this nature because they aren't produced on the farm and it is difficult to

know where to draw the line as far as what products of this type can be sold (shirts and caps, but not mugs and totes, etc., for example). Marcia and Janice met in advance of the meeting to discuss this item and brought an idea of allowing these items only at the Holiday Market. To Janice, tote bags are an item that fit with the Market as it is useful and promotes ecological shopping. Sarah suggested having dual logos - the farm's and the Market's printed on a tote bag. Bobbi noted that the vendors may want to sell their bags in other venues as well. Janice asked if the opportunity to sell totes could be tied to the level of vendor participation in the Market that season. Mike Salem suggested having vendors wear a printed item like a t-shirt to Market and communicating that the item is available on their website. This resonated with the group and all agreed that this is the way the Market will proceed with regard to the sales of non-farm produced logo printed items.

## **6. Reports**

**A. Vendor and customer survey results** were shared with the group. Marcia commented that about half the customer respondents used the on-line option, which seemed to yield more in-depth answers. The link to the survey was available on the website and in the weekly newsletter and these links may have captured those market-goers who are more deeply engaged. She pointed out a high level of satisfaction in the responses, even with regard to pricing which 90-95% of those surveyed reported opinions ranging from good to excellent. Two versions of question about Market growth indicated the need to further explore the expansion of Market. As the Market is growing on both the customer and the vendor side, the task is to maintain high levels of satisfaction among all participants and to serve a greater percentage of the community, including those who avoid coming to the busy Saturday Market. Janice asked if Nikki could arrange the survey results so that a unique identifier could be assigned to each respondent that, while protecting their anonymity, could be used to track a single respondent's answers all through the survey. Nikki said she could forward the results configured in the is way in January. Sarah noted an absence of any questions regarding how customers feel about buskers in the Market and asked that a question could be included in a future survey about opinions on performers, especially those who play regularly at Market. Les asked the group to consider: given how crowded the Market is, what do the buskers contribute to the event? Sarah responded that the buskers do contribute to the festive atmosphere to Market. Robin spelled out the policy by which buskers may occupy spots in Market and noted that times are enforced. She pointed out that when the busking policy was put into place, the B-Line was not in existence and asked the group their thoughts on moving all busking out to the B-Line. Janice thought it might disturb those eating at picnic tables. Currently, aside from Plaza 1-A, there are no monitored busking spaces. Performers who choose to set up informally on the B-Line are asked to be considerate of the events and people around them. The group decided to survey the customers about buskers and stage entertainment in the future and to pay attention in the coming year to how the busking activities may have shifted since the opening of the B-Line. Les asked if Nikki could link the zip code of the respondent to how much they spend at Market and she agreed to do that. Les added that a professional survey might be called for at Market as it would capture a broader base of responses and cross-tabulated answers and thus help guide the many types of decisions that are guided by survey responses.

Regarding vendor surveys, Nikki said that of the surveys that came back from vendors, only one came from an on-line submission. Sarah and Dan spoke to every vendor present the day the Market Beet with the survey went out in order to help stir them to fill out their surveys. Sarah said a lot of vendors say they do not fill out the survey for fear that the comments they provide would identify them and they would fear retribution from staff in some manner. Janice asked

how many is "a lot". Sarah responded that she spoke to 15 or 20 vendors who gave this as a reason for not answering the survey. The other comment she got from people was that the survey was not laid out to provide enough space for answers to open questions. Dan said he did not hear this type of feedback when he spoke with vendors about the survey. Bobbi pointed out that it is difficult to look at concerns that people refuse to voice. She felt there were plenty of ways people could turn in an anonymous survey. Les stated that he takes issue to this reasoning of fear of retribution in potential vendor survey respondents. He suggested sending in a trained survey team to gather information from all vendors in order to put the issue to rest. Janice points out this fear-based notion on the part of vendors has never stood on an instance where any retribution has actually occurred and until it has been proven that retribution was dealt out as a result of someone's survey answer, then she does not want to hear about it. Les says that this type of current can often be stirred by a few individuals who want to make it seem as if the response is coming from many, but who really are only just a few. He felt that the only way to do this is the way he suggested and that he would be willing to find the funding to carry out a professional team survey solution or a graduate student focus group. He would like to gather information from all vendors when they are unconcerned by what they think will happen if survey results come through staff's hands. Janice said this would allow FMAC members to say to vendors who cite survey anxieties that we don't want to hear about it unless you can give specific instances of negative consequences of filling out a survey. She also pointed out that many confuse being heard with getting the result you want from Market management. Dan pointed out that surveys generally do not pull a lot of responses and that many people do not do them simply because it does not provide much benefit to them. Marcia said next year vendors could be told that if they choose to put their name on the survey that it would give staff an opportunity to follow up with them. Les suggested having a sub-committee examine issues around how to proceed on survey logistics. Nikki commented that the Survey Center at IU is available to help non-profit agencies form improved survey methods.

Dan noted that tent legs seemed to be an issue for some. Robin noted that tents come in lots of size and vendors use a variety of tent weights, all of which contribute to a need to share the space where tent legs intersect and this is normally sorted out among those involved to the satisfaction of all. Janice brought up a comment about labeling of organic versus non-organic and that she realizes that the Market leaves the monitoring of these claims to the USDA and that this has been communicated to the vendors. Marcia plans to reiterate information about this stance in the February Market Beet. Bobbi pointed out that there was a customer suggestion to have a uniform indication at each stand that indicates the culture methods of each farm, whether conventional, organic, or in-between. A discussion ensued about City liability for truthfulness of the vendor response to this reporting. If the communication about culture practices stays between the customer and the vendor, there is no liability or responsibility for the Market to make sure the reporting is true. Marcia spoke of including the customers' request for cultural practice information in the February Market Beet as well as providing some pamphlets for the public that include a glossary of farmers' market terms so consumers can be better informed and ask better questions of vendors. Les commented on examining the commitment of vendors to the mission of the Market and the responsibility of meeting the needs of the larger community through the Market in terms of sustainability.

**B. Vendor and Customer attendance** findings were given to the group. As can be expected, the weather bears in these areas. Marcia commented that the new method of counting customer attendance fewer times during the Market day yielded numbers consistent with what trends have shown themselves in the past and thus seems to be a viable method for the future of counting customers.

**C. Marketing sub-committee** - Janice reported this group met to discuss the types of promotions the City takes to market the Market. The Parks Department social media policy was discussed as well. Janice said she felt the staff behind the marketing were doing a very good and thorough job. Sarah suggested using the proposed larger survey to gauge what people think of the marketing methods and how they hear about the event and to see if any particular method is effective or should be discontinued. Opinions on parking could be examined in this way as well.

**D. SNAP program and matching funds** - Nikki talked about SNAP and the Double Your Market Bucks (DMB) program and that it was promoted through area non-profits and indicated that the word of mouth quickly spread awareness of the program in the season. She reported \$33,000 in SNAP benefits were claimed at Market which represents a 543% increase over 2012. On Tuesdays, \$2600 in MB issues showed a 1000% increase over the previous year. The acquisition of a wireless EBT machine for that Market expedited the process greatly. She is working on an annual report of the program which will be available in January. The Market has re-applied for funding the DMB program (note: since this meeting, as of late December the funding for DMB has been renewed). Nikki will be a part of a group looking at streamlining the MB intake and redemption process as well.

**E. WIC program and IU Health funding** - Marcia said the Market anticipates receiving \$3000 from IU Health (note: these funds were received before the end of 2013) to continue the WIC and Positive Link voucher opportunities before the end of the year. She believed there would be additional funds from IU Health to add that amount in 2014. Staff hopes to interface with the WIC office and IU Health to make the program run more smoothly for best user results. She looked forward to finding out if WIC participation was higher due to this program.

**F. End of Advisory Council terms** - The following members terms are ending in after March 2014: Mike, Dan, Sarah, Geoff, Bobbi. They are able to re-apply to continue with the Council. A customer representative spot is also opening with Julia's withdrawal from the group. Applications are due Feb. 1 and have been sent to all via email.

## **7. Adjournment**

Minutes submitted by Robin Hobson