

Bloomington Community Farmers' Market

Notice of Meeting

Monday, December 8, 2014 5:30 pm

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

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes – October 20, 2014
3. Public Comment
4. Business
 - Consideration of GMO Labeling
 - Update on Homegrown Indiana Farm Tour
 - Update on Double Market Bucks Program
 - Consideration of Discount for Senior Vendors
 - Vendor and Customer Attendance
 - Consideration of Market Expansion
5. Adjournment

**Bloomington Community Farmers' Market
Advisory Council**

Monday, December 8, 2014
5:30 pm

Community Room, NWS Bloomingfoods

Advisory Council Members Present

Bruce McCallister, Bobbi Boos, Kathy Aiken, Carmen Siering, Rachel Rosolina, Janice Lilly, and Christina Jones

Market/City Staff

Marcia Veldman, Katie Lay, Robin Hobson

1. Call to Order

Bruce called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Minutes

The October 2014 minutes were approved.

3. Public Comment

No public comment.

4. Business

A. Consideration of GMO Labeling

Marcia explained this topic came to be on the agenda because of the frequency and amount of questions she receives about GMO labeling at Market from customers and visitors who are concerned to know what items are engineered, what aren't, and how to tell the difference. She would like to introduce the topic to farmers though the newsletter in February and a quick mention at the space reservation meeting. A little later in the season there could be a panel discussion for anyone interested. Surveys of farmers and customers could be conducted to see what concerns they may have and whether or what type of action will come next, possibly in 2015. Currently there are very few stipulations on the production of food for Market; it needs to be grown where the food is safe and no growth hormones may be added to dairy or animal products. Marcia introduced guest speaker Marti Crouch, who has worked on issues related to genetic engineering and agriculture since 1980. Marti presented to the group about GMO technology and developments and highlighted GMO foods that may be on Market tables.

Marti reminded the group that in the United States GMO foods are not labeled and the consumer is charged with doing their own research on production methods. Currently, there are two food types that might show up as modified versions at Market: sweet corn and summer squash, particularly zucchini and yellow crook neck. Sweet corn can possess two types of modified traits: one is an insect resistant trait called Bt, which makes an insecticide protein present in every cell of a plant, which presents concerns from some who do not wish to consume it. The other is glyphosate (Roundup) resistant corn that has another bacterial protein inserted into the gene sequence of the corn to make it able to withstand the application of that herbicide without killing the plant. Concerns around this type of modified food are there may be higher amounts of glyphosate residue on the corn

when eaten and the associated environmental impacts of this compound on other species, like monarch butterflies, when runoff and drift contaminate habitats of other beings. Squash are modified to be resistant to viruses. Other modified foods in the pipeline in the next few years may include potatoes, which are engineered to not turn brown and to have lower levels of acrylamide when fried, and a packaged snack food apple, also that will not brown when cut.

How do farmers feel about these crops? If farmers were surveyed as to the type and amount of GMO crops they grow and sell, how could this be verified and how would they know they were supposed to label? When GMO seeds are sold, there is an accompanying technology use agreement that tells how to manage traceability, exports, not save seeds, etc., that must be signed by the grower. It is unlikely growers would not be aware they are growing something with biotech traits. One way to inquire with farmers would be to ask if they have signed this document when they purchased seeds. Or, because of the limited number of GMOs available to market growers and the companies that produce them, lists could be assembled that could be used to quiz growers about their engineered crops production.

There were several questions and answers following. Marcia told the group there is definitely sweet corn being grown and sold at Market. Marti wondered if there was a panel discussion, if a GMO corn grower would describe what their regimen is when growing these crops in order to highlight the unique protocols around the cultivation of that food. Christina related a story that pointed to a need for education around the difference between hybridization, varietal development, and GMO technology. Rachel suggested having information about this topic and the labeling issues in the Market e-newsletter. Bruce noted that he felt any mandatory labeling would be met with resistance on the part of growers and may alienate them. A better approach, he thought, would be to give consumers the tools they need to make a determination on produce they wish to buy.

B. Update on the Homegrown Indiana Farm Tour

Marcia updated the group on the tour and rough plans for the upcoming year. The Local Growers Guild has a grant to put on five farm tours throughout the state and a collaboration around that is being discussed.

C. Update on Double Market Bucks

In 2014, over \$42,000 in Market Bucks (MB) were distributed. Almost half of that were matched by the privately donated funds. \$20,000 in new Double Market Bucks (DMB) funds were received for use in 2015 which, along with the funds remaining after the past season, should be enough to get through next season.

The Market is working on a community collaboration research grant with IU School of Public Health. The component that involves the Market is evaluating the current DMB program with the participants. The Market will receive just over \$4,200 for its participation with that research and the money will go toward continuing to double MBs. In December, the Indiana Cooperative Development Center submitted a grant to the USDA for the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program which, if awarded, will assist more markets and coops throughout the state to participate in SNAP and doubling programs over three years. The grant requires 1:1 matching funds. Marcia reported the application asked for about \$400,000.

D. Consideration of Discount for Senior Vendors

Currently, Market rules state that anyone who is under 60 on a senior vendor's contract makes that vendor ineligible for the discounted senior space rental rate. Bruce asked if the rules could be made more flexible to allow for long-time vendors who are seniors to bring a helper who is not. The current senior discount is 30%. Janice noted that there could be complications in the instance of when the vendor's children wish to take over the operation and that this change may qualify a lot of people for the discount. She said she did not agree with this determination made on a case by case basis and that it should be a static rule; she was not in favor of a change. Bobbi wondered if the stand assistant could be under 60. Of the 130 vendors who were contracted in 2014, 26 claimed the senior rate. Three senior vendors who qualified paid the full rate in anticipation of needing younger help. Discussion ensued and a motion was made by Bruce to explore changing the rules to reflect that if all vendors are over 60 on a contract and they have been coming for ten or more years, that they may have a stand assistant who is not over 60. The motion did not receive a second.

E. Vendor and Customer Attendance

Robin presented the customer and vendor attendance numbers to the group. Vendor numbers were slightly down in nearly every category except Holiday Market. Customers totals trended in the same way, except for April and Holiday Market. Overall, a decrease of 5% in Saturday customer attendance was offset by larger increases in the past few years. The Tuesday Market is not enjoying any increases in customers and the vendors were fewer. But this means that there are fewer vendors for the mass of customers and some Tuesday vendors report that Tuesday sales are good for them.

F. Consideration of Market Expansion

Marcia lined out ideas for a change to the Market in 2016 because the Saturday Market crowds are so large and due to there being few growth opportunities for vendors and prepared food vendors. Tuesday Market numbers are somewhat underwhelming as well. In the coming year, Parks will be working on a comprehensive plan and the Market will be evaluated by survey in that process; the opinions of people who do not attend Market will be collected. The current location has reached saturation and opportunities to expand are possible, but may prove to be cumbersome. Staff has examined an additional weekday market and a smaller Saturday market in an area which is underserved, possible on the south side of town. Prepared foods and a concert music event could be elements of a weekday market to create a festival atmosphere. This would perhaps take the pressure off the Saturday Market. A question is whether we would have separate rules for a new market which may be confusing. Also discussed was expansion onto Morton St. Janice said she felt this would be too disruptive to drivers.

5. Adjournment

Minutes submitted by Robin Hobson