

## Farmers' Market Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2022, 5:30- 6:30 pm

**FMAC Members in Attending:** Cathy Bayt Mike Gleeson, Janice Lilly, Mara Lea Rosenbarger, Whitney Schlegel, Lynn Schwartzberg, and Rebecca Vadas

**FMAC Members Absent:** Cortland Carrington

**Parks Staff in Attendance:** Clarence Boone, Sarah Mullin, Leslie Brinson

**Members of the Public:** Deborah Piston-Hatlen and Jim Shelton

**Call to Order:** Meeting called to order at 5:30 pm by Janice Lilly (stepping in for Cortland Carrington)

### Approval of Minutes:

December minutes were reviewed and accepted.

### Old Business:

- **Advisory Council Recruitment** – Upon a request from Clarence, this was moved to New Business.

### New Business:

- **Current Farmers' Market Vendor Application Count - Clarence**
  - As of February 28, there are 49 vendor applications (several still need to be vetted and classified).
  - **Leslie:** While the number appears low at this point, this also accounts for 6 brand new vendors. We anticipate more as the start of the season approaches. Some may be reserved and of course others will be day-stall vendors.
  - **Whitney:** Will the upcoming reservation meeting be virtual or in-person?
  - **Clarence:** We're looking at whether or not to host a hybrid or in-person meeting.
  - **Leslie:** Based on the time-line, we had hoped to have the acceptance letters sent out last week, but we were waiting for further guidance related to COVID-19 protocols. This year, we were attempting to make it worthy of the time of the farm vendors, especially since we have so many returning vendors. We've been thinking of even just hosting the meeting for new vendors. Regardless, we'll be making a decision in a day or so.
  - **Whitney:** I appreciate the thought that has gone into designing the meeting, but I would like to advocate for an in-person meeting to help build some vendor "community".
  - **Leslie:** Good point, and we are trying to strike a balance with vendors, who are still hesitant to join in mass indoors vs. those who are comfortable with doing that. We'll definitely take all of this into consideration when we make a determination.
  - **Janice:** I echo what Whitney has shared. As a Customer Representative on the FMAC, I would prefer being there in-person to introduce myself and develop some rapport.
  - **Leslie:** Getting a chance to talk to each other and know each other and have that camaraderie is important, so we'll develop a means to promote this and finalize those plans here in the next few days.
  - **Janice:** I have requested a list of vendors who have applied and while I agree that we can hold off until the vendors are notified first, I want to ask that a list be shared with the FMAC members.

➤ **Current Food and Beverage Artisan Applications - Clarence**

- As of February 28, there are 9 Food and Beverage Artisan applications

➤ **Letter of Appeal from Hannah Esh**

- A conversation ensued on a request from Hannah Esh to permit her to sell decorated pumpkin gourds with glued flowers on top (pumpkin bouquets) during the month of September instead of waiting until October. The guidelines currently state that when such items are decorated, they are considered crafts, and must be sold after September.
- **Sarah:** I wanted to just make sure that we were being consistent, so I asked her not to sell them until October, but I do think that there's probably room for conversation around that. I don't really have the answer and I'm definitely not saying that this is the only way that things can go.
- **Lynn:** It is such a funny gray area and I've visited so many markets around the country and, here we have a honey producer who brings candles and things molded from wax and I know it's their wax from their bees but, it's not functional it's crafty and decorative. I feel like we're really splitting hairs to not allow this, and I think we need to really focus on energizing this market, thereby giving the vendors the opportunity to sell as much as they can and create an environment, so that we can regain the traffic that we once had. I don't know a downside to this, except for the fact that it's a slippery slope and we don't want spray painted hydrangeas so, with this one, let's permit it.
- **Cathy:** It is a slippery slope, and I do agree with Lynn. But I also see Sarah's point, because here it is just a glued on flower, but then it opens up a lot of dried flower stuff and as a customer I'm seeking produce and stuff I don't want to wade through to find the produce. I know that sounds like I'm being mean, but Hannah said, "Why can't I just do this", and it's because I agree, because we are revitalizing. I don't know. My point is that I think a lot of people will say, "Well, great I'm going to put my craft out there now." And, so maybe we should have a craft area.
- **Janice:** I'd like to hear some thoughts on this from vendors.
- **Whitney:** Well, I weave wool and then that wool is processed into yarn and it's also plant dyed with plants from our farm so that we can offer different colors in it. So there's lots of ways to look at this, in parallel to what Hannah's asking. I also process the wool into insoles and things like that that and so, while it is 100% wool that is grown on our farm, there are some that might argue that what I offer at the market in terms of wool products is a craft. Other markets have similar restrictions and it's still considered as it is here – a farm product. But it's not. It's not a vegetable and so I think yeah it's a challenge. I agree with Lynn's take on this. I think the question is bigger than this. While we have already published our handbook for this year, as we move forward let's think about what enhances our market, what makes it have broader appeal. For instance, on a football weekend when college parents or visitors are in town, they love to come to the market for the ambience of the market and they compare us perhaps to their own farmers market but they often walk away with products that aren't perishable, and so I can do quite well on a football weekend, especially you know, on a cold football weekend. You know I don't have a good answer for this issue, and so, I figured that maybe we should just say, it's products from your farm and yeah they're arranged in a way that makes them cute and enticing and Hannah's table ornaments look like a beautiful bouquet of flowers.

- **Janice:** One thing I appreciated Hannah saying in her letter was that, “The point of the market was to support small farmers and to see that they could make a living”.
- **Mara Lea:** I guess I have two things to say. One thing is, I think there will always be something that comes up that's in one of these little gray zones and I think it's really difficult to try to codify all that. So, I think that it makes sense that someone like Sarah has some discretion to make a decision at the time, but then bring it to the council.
- **Sarah:** Thank you for putting my thoughts into words. I definitely think that hearing other people's perspectives helps and, especially, in this case that it seems so ridiculous to write a whole other policy, just to be able to fit this little piece of glue into the policy.
- **Leslie:** If you guys collectively believe that moving forward with allowing her to sell this in September, as well as October or year around -- a consensus endorsement would help Clarence, Sarah and I move forward on this as well.
- **Janice:** Well, I think you know what Clarence said that while people do not want to begin to see vendors having lots of crafts on their tables, that people feel pretty comfortable with Hannah selling those items and am I correct in summarizing our discussions?
- There was overall consensus to allow Hannah to sell her pumpkin bouquets at the Market.

➤ **Farmers’ Market Advisory Council Recruitment**

- **Clarence:** I have to start this conversation off with a little bit of sad news. I did get a correspondence from one of our Council members. After this meeting, this will be Whitney Schlegel’s last meeting and she will not seek another term. I also want to share, her husband’s request to come on board the FMAC at the earliest opportunity. I will also share that looking at our council roster, everyone aside from Cathy Bate will conclude either their 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> term in office. Our bylaws state that **“Members of the Council shall generally serve for a period of two (2) years, except those representing the Food and Beverage Artisans which will serve for one (1) year. No member shall serve more than three (3) consecutive terms.”** At this point, I want to poll council members to determine their desire to either continue or step down after March 31<sup>st</sup>.
  - **Cortland Carrington** (President and Farmer representative) indicated that he wants to continue and desires to remain as President.
  - **Rebecca Vadas** (Farmer Representative) indicated that she wants to continue.
  - **Michael Gleeson** (Customer Representative) indicated that he wants to continue.
  - **Janice Lilly** (Customer Representative) announced she will be relocating to another state and as a result, she will be stepping down after March 31<sup>st</sup>
  - **Mara Lea Rosenbarger** indicated that she is undecided at this point.
  - **Lynn Schwartzberg** (Customer Representative) indicated that she wants to continue.
  - **Whitney Schlegel** (Farmer Representative) officially announced that she will step down due to a conflicting appointment to another board. Once again, she did express that her husband Kip desires to join the FMAC as a farmer’s representative.
- Closing comments included next steps with regard to filling council slots including a consideration to reach out to new Food and Beverage Artisans. Finally there was a request from Janice to strongly consider recruiting younger representatives.

➤ **Public Comment**

- There were no other public comments and the motion by Janice Lilly to adjourn was accepted.

➤ **Adjournment**

- Meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m. by Janice Lilly.