

**Bloomington Community Farmers' Market
Advisory Council Minutes
September 18, 2023**

FMAC Members Attending: Tracy Bruce, Cortland Carrington (Chair), Ben Gardner (virtual), Mike Gleeson, Chris Manansala, Karen Saint Rain, Kip Schlegel, Lynn Schwartzberg, and Macaulay Ward

FMAC Members Absent: Rebecca Vadas, and Phrueksaphong “Cheng” Visuthduangdusdee

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

Members of the Public: Eric Schedler, Mike McCord, and Kyle Smith

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:32 pm by Cortland Carrington.

Approval of Minutes: July 17, 2023 minutes were reviewed and accepted.

AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes from August 21, 2023

2. Old Business

- 2024 Price Schedule 2024 Price Schedule The rationale for pricing remains the same (refer to August 21 minutes). \$24 for Farm Vendors (\$2 increase - we suspended an increase to \$23 this year). Also, a lowering of the FBA fees to the projected 5% level. (Refer to five-year projections if needed). So far this year, we have collected \$5,565 from FBA and \$25,724 from FV.

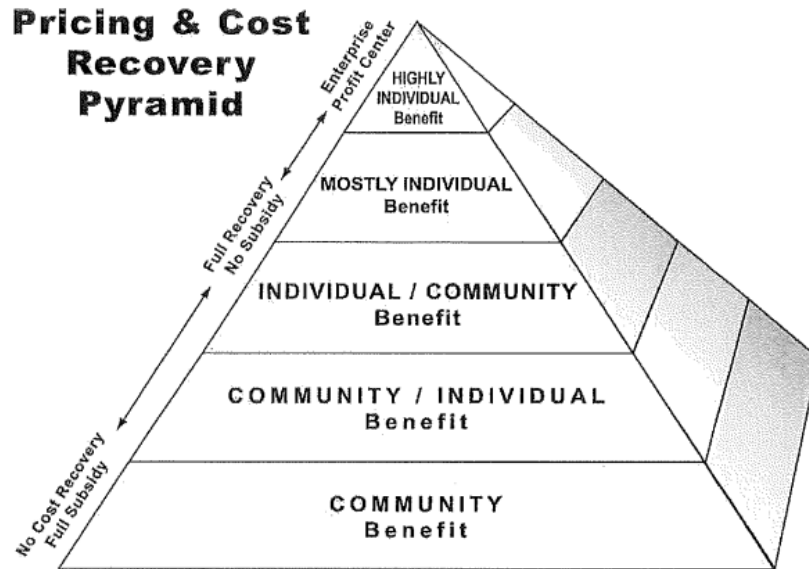
- i. What follows is a summary of Leslie’s extensive insight and institutional perspective from Parks & Rec:

Departmental Practices for Parks & Rec: The Park Board does not have any representatives on Department advisory councils. The Park Board is kept up to date weekly on Department activities, programs, and concerns.

Overview of Parks Budgets and Process:

- **General Fund** = supported through taxes and is a set amount split between all City Departments and then balanced among Parks Program Areas
 - Increasing in one area means decreasing in another area
 - If the City were to fully support the Farmers’ Market those expenses would have to come from that set amount
- **Non Reverting** = supported through fees and charges (like a checkbook) and allows Parks to run additional programming that cannot be supported by the General Fund

Cost Recovery and Pricing Model- triangle model (handout provided)



- Set by Park Board on a yearly basis and based on this model, revenue projections, expenses and service provided by the Farmers' Market program
- Cost Recovery means that revenues have to cover that percentage of the budget- so for the Market that is 50% - was 100% in 2019
- No Parks Programs that are not one time events are 100% covered by General Fund
- **Parks is a business-** our service is to provide opportunities for our community - but those come at a price- we balance that price with the opportunity to the community
 - Increased expenses to the Market
 - 50% increase in seasonal staff wages
 - Supply costs- restroom supplies, sound equipment, tents
 - Services- entertainment, cleaning, security, water, electricity

Philosophy has been Farm Vendors, then FBA and then added value activities - those include Information Alley, Entertainment, Tastings and Special Programs & Events

- You can debate whether that philosophy is still the best way forward or if it is time to adjust that thinking
- We have limited the number of FBA at the market to keep a focus on Farm Vendors
 - (10 -12 spots)
- That percentage or number of vendors could also be debated
- Other revenue sources could be looked into for future years

There have been too many changes and experiences for us to continue to compare to 2019 and before. For example:

- Leadership changes, staff changes, Market structure, attendance, finances

We have to look forward and look at our market now and determine “what is best” - not to get us back to where we once were, but to make us the best we can be now.

2024 Master Plan Process and Data Collection

Currently looking for a consultant to begin work early in 2024

Process could include:

- Focus group discussions
- Surveys
- Review of policies and documents
- Best Practices and comparisons

The findings will guide future decisions on things such as pricing, point system, overall policies. We believe that any large scale changes should be made at that time with true data in hand. We have been and will continue to strive for a fair and equitable pricing structure- that looks different to different people - perhaps not on the timeline that some would like.

5 year plan and upgrades we have made since its adoption:

- 10% to 5%
- Moved many FBA under awning- allow car to stay with vendor
- FMAC members
- Marketing priority
- Moved Clarence’s Salary to General Fund
- Decreased Sarah’s salary by 10%

Keep in mind that FBA have limited competition at the market- ***we intentionally limit similar services***

There is no proof that with more FBA’s that there is an increase in farm vendor sales

- Farm vendors tell us they are making as much money now as they did in the past when we had larger customer counts

FBA area asking for a flat fee rental and no percentage of sales:

- Want to pay for the space and not for what they are selling in that space- feels like they are being punished

A few farm vendors expressed an interest in paying more to help cover any losses with lower FBA revenue

FMAC was asked to prepare a statement supporting a flat fee - similar to what was prepared in 2020

Assumption that the community feel of market increases as FBA increases

2022 FBA Payments = \$11,965

2024 Option

12 FBA spaces available x \$25 per space x 30 Saturdays = \$9000

➤ **November Market:** (11 vendors to date)

Morningside
Graber's Produce
MKONO
HI-Acre
Olde Lane Orchard
McMahan's
The Goat Conspiracy
Seldom Rest
Rhodes Family Farm
Serendipity
Scholars Inn

3. New Business

➤ August and Mid-September Farmers' Market Updates

○ Vendor & Customer Counts ('23/'22)

- August 26th Vendors: 53/49 Customers: 2151/2964
- September 2nd Vendors: 55/45 Customers: 2247/ 1050
- September 9th Vendors: 50/49 Customers: 2178/ 2004
- September 16th Vendors: 44/47 Customers: 2016/ 1647

Tuesday Market

- August 22nd Vendors: 9/7 / Customers: 134/198
- August 29th Vendors: 6/6 / Customers: 206/144
- September 5th Vendors: 7/6 / Customers: 118/90
- September 12th Vendors: 5/6 / Customers: 212/204

➤ **Holiday Market (November 25th)**

- Applications have gone out
- 18 vendors have signed up
- We'll be here at City Hall both inside and outside the facility

➤ **Preview of Upcoming FM Events**

- **Harvest for the World (September 23rd)**
 - Anticipating that we'll have 6 Ethnic Vendors
 - 5 Entertainers.
 - Scavenger hunt for the kids
 - Will report on this event at next month's NRPA National Conference in Dallas
- **Apple Tasting (September 30th)**
 - 3 vendors will be supplying the apples.
 - Expecting 20-25 Varieties
 - Press release has gone out today
 - Expecting 10 volunteers

4. Public Comment - anything unrelated to agenda items

5. Adjournment at 6:55 p.m.