

## **Bloomington Community Farmers' Market Advisory Council**

Monday, August 18, 2017 at 5:30 pm

Parks Conference Room

### **Advisory Council Members Present**

Leslie Burns, Don Rhudy, Rachel Beyer, Bobbi Boos, Bruce Mc Callister, Mary White, Carmen Seiring,

Absent: Rachel Rosolina, Kathy Aiken

### **Public Present**

none

### **Market/City Staff Present**

Les Coyne, Marcia Veldman, Leslie Brinson, Robin Kitowski

#### **1. Call to Order**

Leslie called the meeting to order.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes**

The February minutes were approved.

#### **3. Public Comment**

#### **4. New Business**

##### **A. Introduction of New Member and New Community Events Manager**

Leslie Brinson introduced herself to the group as the new CE Manager, a role she's filled since February. Leslie has served in the department for 15 years, most recently engaged at the Banneker Community Center prior to her current role. Introductions were made all around, including that of Mary White, new customer representative FMAC member.

##### **B. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Nobody present expressed interest in serving in these roles. Two members not present were discussed as candidates for the roles – Kathy and Rachel. Marcia will contact them to extend the opportunity to them.

##### **C. Report on Farm Vendor Inspection**

Marcia and Robin made a farm inspection based on the suggestion of another vendor who questioned whether the produce a vendor was bringing was being grown by them based on the condition and packaging of the product. From the time these vendors made their application showing two people in their 70's running 16 acres of produce, they were flagged as a party to watch. The complaint came within the first couple of times they sold. Marcia and Robin found many acres planted, but not much of it was tended and showed evidence of drought symptoms. There was a very dried out patch of corn that could not have yielded such a high quality of corn as the vendor had brought to the previous market that same week. The vendor told staff that he tilled the harvested patch in, but this information was conveyed in a couple of conflicting timeframes. Staff viewed no evidence of recently turned under corn crops. Also, the vendor stated his neighbor was growing even better looking corn the next door, but Marcia purchased some at the neighbor's roadside stand and found it not to look all that great. Also at issue were onions sold by the vendor, but neither the variety nor the condition of what was seen on site matched what was offered for sale at previous market. At the end of the visit, the vendor stated he was not likely to sell at the market again and so the situation has been resolved. Don asked for clarification of how farm visits work and Marcia related that inspections are based on expression of concern from staff, other vendors or

customers. She said the number of contracts terminated in the last decade number about ten. The contract states that staff can do unannounced farm visits, although most are scheduled at least a short time in advance. The contract also provides for an appeal process if the vendor wished to dispute the staff's inspection results.

#### **D. General Market Report**

Market attendance has been very good over all so far this year, mostly owing to the weather. The April Market attendance was up from 2016 both in customers and vendor categories. Mid-summer figures for customer attendance this year were up 22% over last year due to more dry market days in 2017. Saturday vendor numbers showed a slight increase over last year. Tuesday Market customer attendance at this point is up by about 100 attendees and TM vendor numbers now include Prepared Foods vendors on Tuesday, but this group was not counted in last year's vendor figures so no comparison is available at this point.

Other areas of change over last season include the food truck/cart contracts. There were three: Greenskeeper, who sold savory items for only a few Saturdays before withdrawing, Wild Alaska Salmon, who sell once a month at both Saturday and Tuesday, and Kind Kombucha, who participate as food cart vendors weekly on Saturdays and most Tuesdays. The latter two seem to be a good fit for the Market and Marcia feels it is worthwhile to offer this type of vending opportunity again in the future. Innovative Farm Arrangement applications were made by two vendors, who also happen to be on the FMAC – Bobbi and Rachel. Bobbi recapped her arrangement by relating that she has her own farm and own contract. She sold last spring in that capacity. She also works with another vendor, Grant Pershing, on his farm several days per week. Her request was to be able to sell at Market as a vendor on the Pershing contract on days when she does not sell her own product. She collects neither points nor money from sales on these days. It is simply to allow Pershing to have days away from Market while still representing his farm. Rachel also recapped her arrangement where her husband, prior to their marriage and into the present, has an interest in Bread and Roses Nursery with another party. Together, they operate another vegetable farm operation. Due to rules limiting a vendor to financial interest in only one farm contract, their innovative arrangement allows them to collect points separately from each venture. This specific information was provided to all farm vendors via the Market Beet, but Marcia has not heard any feedback on the arrangements. Bobbi reported that there was some surprise on the part of other vendors when she first set up, but those people were satisfied by a brief explanation on Bobbi's part. This year, Marcia sought to collect information from Prepared Foods Vendors about the locally purchased products they utilize in their offerings, as this is an expressed preference in the RFP. In this year's PFV contract, the vendors to whom this applies were to report as of August 15 to Marcia on how they have fulfilled this. That information was just starting to come in at the time of the meeting, but it is intended to compare this data to what was submitted in the vendors' RFP. Wild Collected Mushrooms inspections have gone as planned and Sean is working out well as a vendor/inspector. Marcia reported on the upcoming fall farm tour, which will be a new model of having a pizza party at Muddy Fork and featuring beverage "labs" given by PFV beverage vendors Kind Kombucha, Aahaa Chai, and Uel Zing. Due to concerns on the part of the state representative of Homeland Security, the Market now parks cars at the points of vehicle entrances to the Market to prevent any vehicular intrusion on Saturdays. These cars represent an immediate quick fix in this effort and staff will be researching other means of blocking vehicles coming in street entrances to Market. There are also newly installed limestone blocks to prevent drivers from entering the Showers Plaza from Morton St. Leslie is the point of contact with Homeland Security for the Department and would be interested to hear of anyone else's experience with these means at other venues as she feels this is a requirement that will have an effect on many events that call for street closures, open parks, etc.

#### **E. Potential Changes for 2018**

Grant Pershing has requested that fermented food products be allowed for sale under the Home Based Vendor (HBV) exhibit. In 2009, the state passed the HBV legislation that allows for the sale of non-potentially hazardous foods prepared by vendors to be sold at Market without requiring permits, with the notable addition of frozen, home-processed chicken and rabbit. The Market adopted a version of the state rules, but staff decided to uphold another,

simpler version of these rules. Staff has notified local health department personnel about this potential change and will be awaiting feedback from them before making a rule change in this area. Bobbi opined on the matter by drawing a comparison between the Value Added Foods (VAF) and HBV as they stand now. For VAFs, the vendor must include “a significant portion of vendor-grown/raised/collected foods” (specifics given in the VAF exhibit to the contract), whereas the HBV items must include 100% of vendor-grown/raised/collected ingredients, with the exception of sugar or gelling compounds in the case of jams and jellies. Bobbi argues it is not reasonable for vendors to have access to a certified kitchen to be allowed to include a lesser amount of vendor-grown/raised/collected ingredients than those HBV items. Bobbi is petitioning for the inclusion of fermented foods as HBV items and, by extension, salt for the production of these. Marcia related that the proportions of vendor’s products allowable in VAF foods is reasonable due to the considerations for products like yogurts or sausages which may require ingredients not supplied by vendors due to processing regulations.

There is a vendor who is interested in selling herbal tinctures. Staff have lent consideration to this in the past while considering soap products and other crafts and found the federal regulatory oversight for this product to be very complex. The vendor, Grace MacNeil, who has a high level of experience in crafted herbal products, agreed to look into the regulatory requirements of this type of product and meet with staff on the topic to help determine the path going forward. Staff will share information at a future meeting.

A points and heritability discussion with a sub-committee took place to consider if it is possible to pass points from a vendor across generations to grandchildren as inherited points. It is an understood mission of the market to help ensure the survival of the Market. Children of a vendor can inherit points of a parent because they are considered immediate family, as defined by the Market contract. A question was posed by a current vendor regarding passing points to grandchildren or other descendants and it was to consider these that a sub-committee met. Bruce, who served on the sub-committee stated it is a complex consideration and that it would be a very unusual circumstance for the passing of points to skip a generation. Another item of clarification that arose from the conversation was that points can go to a child from a vendor parent for the period of time that person was their child, not for all the points a vendor held outside of that time.

Spirits (liquor) sales and sampling at the Market was recently allowed by the state legislature. The Simmons have sold wine at Market, but have not done so this season. Two other local winemakers have sold wine by the bottle as PFVs in the past. Staff is examining the possibility of extending this opportunity locally through the PFV RFP. Additionally, the Parks Board would need to approve such an opportunity as it does for other Parks events involving alcohol. Les pointed out that this type of activity would need to take place in a clearly delineated area. There is more to consider in this area as a change for 2018.

**5. Old Business**

None

**6. Adjournment**

Minutes submitted by Robin Kitowski