

**Bloomington Community Farmers' Market Advisory Council
Broadening Inclusion Subcommittee**

Thursday, November 7, 2019, at 5:15 pm

Advisory Council Members Present

Amanda Sheridan, Juliana Crespo, Eduardo, Judy Klein, Gracia Valliant, Gavin Everett, Bruce McCallister (called in), PDVNCH

Public Present

Jason M. (IU student)

Staff Present

Marcia Veldman

1. Call to Order

Bruce called the meeting to order.

2. New Business

A. Introductions – With this being a new subcommittee, we went around the table and introduced ourselves. One public individual introduced himself.

B. Structure of Committee/Selection of Leadership – Bruce discussed the structure by explaining that we are meeting for about one hour per month. He discussed the need for a chair, a vice-chair, and a notetaker. He mentioned he would be happy to act as chair if no one else wanted to resume the role. However, PDVNCH offered to act as chair, and Judy offered to act as a co-chair. The subcommittee then unanimously decided that PDVNCH will act as chair, Judy will act as vice-chair, and Juliana will act as the notetaker.

C. Dates for Meetings – The subcommittee decided to meet on December 12th at 5:15 p.m. From thereon, the subcommittee will meet on the second Thursday of the month instead of the first Thursday.

D. Existing Programs Related to Broadening Inclusion – Marcia passed out and discussed an informational sheet detailing Farmers' Market history, Market initiatives and programs, and newer Market programs. Information shared includes the various facts: Farmers' Market is a grower-only Market with 121 farm vendors and includes around 19 prepared food vendors; a monthly art fair includes more than 80 art vendors; each Saturday a couple of performances are scheduled on the stage; there are hosted events as well. Farmers' Market also has a long-term commitment to food justice; this includes WIC, and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, as well as Plant a Row. Farmers' Market is also the first Market in the state to accept SNAP benefits, and in 2013, benefits were

doubled up to \$18. There are three new programs this year, including the Farm to Family Fund, Farm Fresh Field trips, and MarketRx. Gavin mentioned that some of the programs in place would fall into the category of broadening inclusion. He then said that we can increase our impact by creating a strong public sense that more individuals want to attend the Market, and once they're at Market, they want to stay. Eduardo then asked whether the committee would be creating a more inclusive Market with the understanding that a white supremacist vendor may be present. Gavin said that he didn't know whether there will be a white supremacist vendor at Market next year but clarified that the subcommittee's goal is to change the face of the Market and to encourage a more representative group as far as vendors and customers. The subcommittee will want to increase representation at the Market so that it doesn't feel like such a white space. Gracia shared some concerns regarding the Market being a white, middle-class space; she wants to see a stronger representation at the Market on all Saturdays, not just special events that draw certain groups. She pointed out that most musicians and vendors are white. She suggested we invite those people to talk to the subcommittee so that an understanding is reached regarding what could be done to make the market more welcoming to all. Amanda pointed out that minorities might feel that the Market is a racist space because white supremacy is tolerated. Eduardo then shared his personal concern that the Market is unsafe; he hasn't been attending for some time because he is concerned that a large crowd of people at Market support white supremacy. Judy asked if there is a contractual agreement that establishes ground rules for civility; she then said that people feel unsafe at the Market because of white supremacist vendors and protestors. She said that it might be naïve to create a welcoming environment with white supremacist vendors present. PDVNCH said that there is an involuntary tolerance. Eduardo then said that he would feel reassured if vendors displayed flags expressing a welcoming space for all. PDVNCH then returned to Judy's question. Marcia clarified that vendors do sign a contractual agreement stating that they must create a welcoming environment while at Market. However, the Market cannot control vendors' beliefs outside of the Market; this would deny their First Amendment rights. Gavin said that the city doesn't have much ammunition to fight against a white supremacy presence at the Market; however, strong representation can help to push out undesirable representation. Gracia then pointed out that the presence of guns at Market is another issue; she suggested talking to people to learn what would help them feel safe. She said they may still feel too terrified to come. Bruce said that what he's learned from students and his own children, persons of color, is that white supremacy is everywhere they go. These experiences go beyond the Market, and Bruce wants to see this being a long-term effort that results in white supremacists feeling uncomfortable and eventually leaving. Gavin discussed the need to take this subcommittee seriously because it might end up being a model for other communities.

E. Ideas for Broadening Inclusion – Amanda suggested advertising events in other languages so as to reach a wider community. Gavin responded by saying

that culturally relevant Food Days might be appealing to particular ethnic groups and writing up materials in other languages. Amanda suggested that Asian students, in particular, may want to attend American events as well. Eduardo asked about demographic data and whether any has been collected. Marcia said that James Farmer, formerly in the SPEA school at IU, did a study looking at SNAP and non-SNAP users at the Market which includes demographic information. She mentioned that he would be willing to come to a meeting. Eduardo said that goals must be set based on data. PDVNCH agreed and discussed its usefulness. Gracia said we should look at the Monroe County Quality of Place & Workplace Attraction to learn more about the demographics; Gavin then shared his copy and said it's also available online. PDVNCH suggested a survey that wouldn't feel intrusive to collect demographic data – he said that the wording is important and that someone congenial could pass them out at Market. The subcommittee followed this by discussing the subtleties of writing and conducting surveys. PDVNCH also suggested social media as an important way to demonstrate diversity at the Market. Marcia said the weekly newsletter intentionally attempts to capture diversity at Market; PDVNCH asked if the subcommittee could be added to the letter, and Marcia said she would add us. She also mentioned the Farmers' Market Facebook account. PDVNCH then asked if Farmers' Market has a Twitter and Instagram account, and Marcia said neither but that the subcommittee could pursue the idea of creating these accounts. Eduardo said that portraying diversity through these social media accounts might help to show that Farmers' Market does welcome and promote diversity; this could help minorities to feel safer at the Market. PDVNCH said that social media sites would give individuals the opportunity to participate in a conversation that others would then see and observe that community members support Farmers' Market. PDVNCH said that all demographics (not just minorities) need to speak up on these social media avenues, especially someone like Gracia who has been going to Market since its beginning. Marcia then proposed the idea of doing a weekly customer highlight in addition to the weekly vendor highlight. On a different note, Eduardo said he would like to see Farmers' Market and vendors displaying signs or flags stating a welcoming environment for all; he said he would personally return to Farmers' Market if he felt. Juliana then suggested that vendors be required to participate in implicit bias training. Others agreed this might be a good idea although some concern was mentioned regarding whether the Amish community would be able to participate in this because of religious beliefs. Eduardo said that the city could put up welcome signs. Marcia said that only neutral signage may be allowed next Market season, the Farmers' Market could put up signs at entries that immediately create a welcoming environment for all.

F. Action Items Prior to Next Meeting – Gavin asked for subcommittee members to attend at least one Farmers' Market before the next meeting and to observe obstacles and also observe how we might be able to collect demographic data.

3. Public Comment

No public comment.

4. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40.