

Farmers Market Advisory Council Meeting Minutes - February 24, 2020

Council Present

Bruce McCallister, Rachel Rosolina, Robin Kitowski, Suzanne Mann, Kathy Aiken

City Staff Present

Marcia Veldman, Sarah Mullin, Leslie Brinson

Council Not Present

Becky Vadas, Cortland Carrington, Leslie Sommer

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from January were approved.

Review Committee for Food & Beverage Artisans

Marcia explained that the review committee met and prepared recommendations for the 2020 Food & Beverage Artisan selections. Typically these recommendations would go in front of the Park Board in February, but they have been pushed back to the March 24th Park Board meeting. The staff will likely be recommending 5 new food and beverage artisans. The Department increased the marketing of the RFP to places such as the Bloomington Independent Restaurant Association, Downtown Bloomington Inc, and Community and Family Resources Department contacts. The review committee is excited about the possibility of the mix of vendors for this season.

FMAC Openings and Changes to Terms

Marcia explained that due to the changes with the food and beverage artisan timeline, the application for the Farmers' Market Advisory Council was extended until April 3rd and recommendations for new members won't go to the Park Board until the late April meeting. The Parks Department is requesting that current council members extend their term one month to cover that shift. The new FMAC will meet for the first time in May. There are 4 of the 5 customer representatives whose spots have expired, 2 new food and beverage artisans, and 3 farm vendors whose first term has expired but they can reapply, and one farm vendor whose 3 terms have expired so he cannot reapply.

The FMAC opening will be promoted through a press release, the Market Beet newsletter, the customer e-newsletter, and a list of organizations that work with people of color and other marginalized populations, and through work with the Broadening Inclusion subcommittee.

Broadening Inclusion Subcommittee Update

Bruce talked about the last meeting: Barbara McKinney from the City Legal Department, attended the last meeting and answered questions about what the City can and cannot do related to the First Amendment. After she talked they worked to identify priorities for the

subcommittee. One was having events at the market that celebrate the cultures and food of the community. Another priority is writing an anti-bigotry statement that they will try to get broad sections of the community to sign onto, saying that white supremacy is not acceptable. They will reach out to faith communities, businesses, educational institutions, as far as they can to get as many people/organizations to sign on to it. Another priority is reaching out on social media.

A member of the public asked if the Broadening Inclusion group was going to ask for a boycott of the vendor in question. Bruce responded that the intention was just to make a clear statement that bigotry and religious intolerance are not acceptable.

Space Reservation Meeting Updates

Marcia explained that on February 17th the Parks Department held a meeting where farm vendors could reserve spots for April and May-October. The number of reservations for April is a bit higher than in the past and in May-October it's lower. There are 21 spaces open for day spaces this season and usually 9 are held aside for day-space vendors. The Market still feels really full. Some of the peripheral spaces are not filled (mainly in the E row). Vendors appreciated the opportunity to just pay for ½ season this year. Suzanne recommended that the Parks Department publicize that day vendor applications are still being accepted. Marcia followed up that the application deadline is March 16th at which time all applications will be reviewed and ensuring that they meet the guidelines of the market. Suzanne clarified that even day space vendors need to apply before the deadline. They can't just show up. Marcia confirmed that's correct.

Marketing Plan/Market Opening

Marcia explained that the Farmers' Market is focusing on 3 primary messages that they will be promoting: sustainability, health and cultivating community including programs to make the market more accessible to people with lower incomes. Rachel said she thought it was important to mention the environmental aspects of the local food movement under sustainability. Kathy asked where the WIC and SNAP promotion programs fit into the marketing plan. Marcia said that they fit under the cultivating community section. Kathy said that's important because there's a good chance people don't know they can use those benefits at the Market. Marcia mentioned this year's new program to triple WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Suzanne recommended connecting with the Endwright Center to promote the Senior FMNP. Suzanne and Kathy recommended Evergreen and Cambridge Square and other apartments for seniors and working with Area 10 to connect to seniors.

Marcia explained that there are preliminary plans to make welcome signs in various languages for the different points of entry to the Market.

Parking is another focus of marketing. The west lot at Showers will not be available to customers during Market hours due to the 10th St. entrance being closed during construction. They did, however, make available a temporary gravel lot just north of 10th St with the same number of spaces that have been removed from the West lot. Suzanne asked if the Morton St.

garage will be free again with validation. Marcia is not sure. In the future, when the new parking garage is built on the west side of the building, there will be around 350 more spaces available. Kathy asked if "Veggie Valet" is still an idea that's under consideration. It would be a good use of Market Ambassadors. Marcia said they hadn't confirmed anything yet, but it's still an idea in the hopper.

A member of the public asked what the timeline is in regards to the limestone blocks. Leslie responded that they have been ordered and are to be in place no later than April 3rd.

Kathy asked if we could again review the security to clear up the dollar amount being spent to get on the record. She feels that there are a lot of misconceptions out in the community about what has been spent. Leslie said that the figures came out in a recent public safety report. What she remembers reading was around \$100,000 for the season and that is a Bloomington Police Department decision as to what is spent. Parks does not have control over it. We do not have final plans about what Market security looks like right now. We will know more closer to Market opening. Ultimately, it will be BPD's decision.

A member of the public asked if there's a way to get BPD's numbers. Leslie said she assumes they'd have to make a public records request.

Request for Public Comment

None

Adjournment

Adjourned at 6:05pm