

Attendance: All members present.

Meeting was called to order at 5:32pm

Approval of June minutes

Janice Lilly commented that her experience in the past is that motions are written word for word. Melanie McQuinn commented that there were some technical difficulties during the last Zoom meeting that prevented at least one FMAC member from participating in and contributing to floor motions. Cortland Carrington made a motion, "that the June minutes be accepted." Melanie seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously. No opposition to June minutes. No abstentions.

Cortland asked if anyone wants to volunteer for the vice chair position. It's not required by the bylaws, but the position is open. No member volunteered for the position. The FMAC can have someone fill if Cortland is unavailable for a meeting. The selection can be tabled until someone volunteers for the position. They would need to get a nomination and a second. There was no opposition to the idea of tabling the selection of a vice chair until someone volunteers for the position.

New Business

Vendor and Customer Update

Leslie Brinson shared a PowerPoint about customer and vendor data. The May vendor survey took place just after moving from the Switchyard Pavilion to Showers Common when we were only allowing online sales. There were 64 vendor responses. 62.5% were currently selling on the online platform, 17.2% were planning to sell, but not currently selling yet, 18% said maybe. They were also asked how online sales compared to what they normally would expect in April-May. Over 50% were selling about the same or better (out of 41 responses). They were asked about selling onsite sales, 63 vendors responded. A majority were interested in selling on site. In July, vendors were surveyed again to determine who would be interested in reserved spaces. 32 vendors responded (Some vendors had moved to other markets at this time). A majority of vendors surveyed wanted to reserve a space through October. Some vendors surveyed did not plan to sell at market at that point. Vendors were asked about our COVID protocols, the majority were generally satisfied with the protocols. Vendors were asked about how their sales compare to what they expected. Most respondents indicated that their sales were near what they expected. Vendors were asked about overall satisfaction with the market in 2020. The majority were satisfied although some were not satisfied.

Leslie covered important dates for this season and the changes that have been made throughout the season to help the market adapt to COVID protocols. In April we hosted a drive-thru. In May we continued with online sales only but with pick up at Showers Common with vendors. In June and July we opened with online and onsite sales but vendors remained in alphabetical order to accommodate online sales pickup, and in July we adjusted to online and onsite sales in reserved spaces with day spaces available.

Leslie explained that once we started onsite sales, online sales decreased. However, onsite customers are increasing. In April we had 1932 online orders. There was an average of 38 vendors per week in April. In May, there were 3259 online customers with an average of 43 vendors a week. In June, there were 1791 online customers and 2761 onsite customers with an average of 51 vendors. In July there were 671 online customers and 4504 onsite customers with an average of 39 vendors per week. In August, online sales continued to drop but onsite customer attendance was the highest of the season this past Saturday at around 1400 walk-in customers.

A FMAC rep asked if we were still limiting attendance inside the market. Leslie responded that we can only have 150 people in the market at one time. The rep asked if there have been lines waiting to get in. Leslie responded that there have been waits but they're typically around 2-3 minutes as customers flow in and out.

Cortland asked a clarifying question about the online customers and Leslie responded that before last week, we had sold over \$470,000 on the online platform alone. Cortland commented that as a vendor, a lot of his customers appreciate the online ordering system. They can order and arrive at any time they can make it without worrying about vendors selling out of items.

Leslie presented on the food assistance programs offered at the market including Double Market Bucks (DMB), the Farmers Market Nutrition Program(FMNP) for WIC recipients and Seniors and the Farm to Family Fund. There had been \$8901 in sales through the DMB Program for onsite sales at Saturday and Tuesday Markets and another \$12,769 in online SNAP and DMB sales. We increased the double amount from up to \$18 to up to \$27 midway through the season. We are also tripling WIC and Senior FMNP vouchers and so far we have passed out \$7584 to WIC recipients and \$2583 to Senior recipients. Farm to Family Fund has paid vendors \$20,769 so far this season for products. The total value of products donated to Mother Hubbard's Cupboard up to this point is \$41,500 at this point.

Janice clarified that in the past the Hoosier Hills Food Bank has sent a truck to the Saturday market to pick up extra produce from vendors. COVID-19 complicated that this year and it's wonderful that Farm to Family Fund was able to step in.

Cortland asked where the funds come from to double the Market Bucks. DMB is grant funded from a private organization. Funding for WIC & Senior FMNP tripling comes from Bloomington Hospital Foundation. Cortland asked if there has been an increase in participation from WIC and Senior FMNP. Sarah Mullin said that they data hasn't come back in yet, but she spoke to the coordinator from Area 10 who manages the Senior program. They have made some changes to their outreach program and included volunteer proxy shoppers as an option, so anecdotally, it does seem like there has been an increase in participation. Cortland also asked how often representatives from the FMNP programs attend market. Sarah responded that representatives attended most markets from mid June until they ran out of vouchers recently.

Cortland asked about our vendor numbers compared to other farmers markets in town. Leslie said that we had 40 vendors that reserved spaces and we're averaging about 38 spaces rented per week. This average includes a few day stall vendors each week. Michael Gleeson asked if we know how many vendors are going to both the Woolery and the City Market? Leslie and Sarah said they know of 3-4 vendors that are attending both. It may be worth asking in a survey or comparing vendor lists.

Lynn Schwartzberg asked what our capacity is for vending due to COVID. Leslie said that there are currently 4 day spaces available if all reserved spaces are used. There are also some "overflow spaces" available if we should need it. We probably can't accept many more than 50-55 vendors with the current space limitations. Melanie asked about customer counts over the last few months. Leslie responded that they were on the graph and in the chat and paraphrased that the online customers + onsite customers for the month is the customer count. Cortland asked why some vendors aren't vending online? Is it because of religious purposes, and if so, can we offer a proxy to help them with that? Leslie responded that we offer options if vendors need technological assistance. She also added some vendors just have trouble estimating what they will have available early in the week.

Becky Vadas asked if we have customer counts from 2019 to compare this year's numbers to. Leslie said she could look it up and send it to her, but it would be comparing apples and oranges since we are limited in how many people we can allow into the market due to COVID. Sarah added that she has heard from a few vendors that the people who are coming to the market now are coming to shop. In the past it's also been a gathering place and a community event space. Whereas we used to count all visitors as customers, now, for the most part, those who are at the market are customers spending money with vendors.

Whitney Schlegel asked if we can remind vendors who are using the online platform that they can post a minimum amount of product at the beginning of the week and update their availability later in the week.

COVID Update

Leslie commented that there's not much new since early July. The mask mandate has gone into effect and for the most part we've had a pretty good response. We are still requiring vendors to create space between themselves and customers. We're asking that customers follow one way traffic arrows. We count customers as they enter and exit. We provide hand sanitizer and a hand washing station at both the entrance and exit. We will be reminding customers and vendors in upcoming newsletters to keep up the protocols. For the most part vendors and customers are accepting and appreciative. If anyone has any suggestions, we are open to hearing them.

Cortland asked about Monroe County and state numbers. Leslie said that the mayor does a weekly press conference and the Herald Times tracks updates. The info is readily available to the public.

Michael said that as a customer he's appreciated what we've done. He asked what happens when the students come back? Leslie says it's a concern community wide. We will continue to educate and share the rules and do our part. At Tuesday market we have a time slot from 4-430 for older adults or people who are immunocompromised to shop in less crowded conditions.

FMAC Questions/Answers

This is time for FMAC to ask any questions regarding the federal lawsuit or any other questions about the farmers market. Michael asked who are the parties in the federal lawsuit and where does it stand? Leslie said it's between Schooner Creek Farm and the City and Parks Department plus two Parks Department staff. Leslie doesn't have a lot of details because City insurance lawyers are overseeing the suit. Melanie commented that as a new vendor she has concerns over her safety and security with respect to the market She feels concerned about their participation going forward, so they are looking forward to the resolution of existing lawsuits so that there can be a conversation about mitigation of risks in the future.

Mara Lee Rosenbarger asked why the City legal representative could not attend. Leslie said that it was just a scheduling issue. Mara would like to hear from City legal at some point. She said that customers who have valued the market have questions and concerns but responses are hobbled by the suits. It's hard to get information that people in the community would like to have and with which an advisory council would be able to advise. Leslie said she is happy to make the connection if the FMAC wants a City legal rep to join a meeting in the future.

Lynn read comments from a member of the public, Alex Goodlad. Alex asked if there was any information on the other 2 lawsuits. Leslie said to her knowledge they were tort claims and they have not moved forward to filing the suits.

Leslie brought up the community survey for the Parks Department which is online now. It is helping to inform the next 5 year plan for Parks. There is an opportunity for anyone to fill out the survey. The link is on the Parks & Recreation webpage. There isn't a specific question about the farmers market on the survey, but it is entwined in several questions within the survey. All FMAC members will be invited to a focus group meeting with the consultant on Wednesday, September 2nd.

Michael asked what, if any, changes will be made to the contract that might help clarify what acceptable behavior is. The response was that there were changes made in 2020. His question is what were they, what was the motivation for them, and have they helped? Leslie stated she could share information with more detail, but as an overview, some of the updates included clarifying some rules, adding information about outside behavior, adding information about signage and what the rights of the City and the vendors. She can't say if they've helped this year since some of them aren't as relevant right now with COVID restrictions. Leslie suggested looking back at the January park board meeting which covered the vendor contract and customer rules.

Melanie said that Shawnee Hills Farm has 2 key questions: First, she's interested in the processes by which a vendor can bring forth a harassment claim and have those addressed, and also asked about time, place and manner restrictions. She's looking forward to having those questions addressed so that she can resume participation in the market. Leslie replied that time, place and manner is on the customer rules and they try to address what can happen inside the boundaries of our market. Leslie can share them again. As far as the harassment claim process, there is always room for improvement. In the past, it would be reviewed by staff, legal and the Human Rights Commission. Looking at a process that would be outlined more clearly in the future is a possibility. Cortland said that the process isn't that clearly outlined in the handbook and maybe the council could bring best practices to the park board.

Mara commented that she really appreciates the online ordering option. She likes not having to rush to market to get what she wants and she also likes how efficiently she can move through the market. She asked if there is every intention to continue with the online market and for how long. Leslie said we plan to continue the online sales through the end of the year. She is unsure about the future of the program although it obviously has value to customers and vendors. This year was funded through grant funds. Lynn asked if any vendors are selling strictly online. Leslie responded she didn't believe so. Melanie commented about an online market that Arianna Torres is managing through Purdue as another option for vendors.

Public Comment

There was a comment from Alex Goodlad: The rules of behavior aren't conducive to freedom of speech. What respecting the first amendment means is that it has to be for all. It can't just be when it's convenient for the parks board or convenient for X group. Even when that gets uncomfortable, that has to be respected. There's the time, place and manner excuse but there's a legal and moralistic rejection. Legally, see how the law suits play out. Moralistically, the precedent registers as we're going to police the manner in which you express speech when it's uncomfortable to me. It's different if you have a protest that blocks a road that's one thing, having someone hold a sign doesn't inhibit sales any more than a bunch of people holding guns. It's silly to criminalize and I think the City should privatize the market. There are other ways to enforce rules consistently.

There were no other public comments.

Cortland motioned to adjourn at 6:58pm. Melanie seconded. There was no opposition to adjournment.