

MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Market Advisory Commission

FROM: Sarah DeWitt, Ann Arbor Farmers Market Manager

DATE: October 20, 2016

SUBJECT: 2016 Food Truck Rally Season Review

After reviewing the status of the Wednesday Evening Market pilot after five seasons, staff recommended hosting monthly Food Truck Rallies in lieu of a weekly evening market in 2016. With the support of the Public Market Advisory Commission, these rallies were hosted on the first Wednesday of each month, May through October. The goal of this approach was to build upon the community-oriented, food-focused events that were well-loved as part of the Evening Market in past seasons. The change was also made in part to reduce the significant costs associated with running the Evening Market, targeting staff time toward these singular events and redirecting additional staff time toward other daytime market responsibilities.

The 2016 Food Truck Rally season saw great success. The market hosted between nine and eleven food vendors at each month’s rally, including food trucks, trailers, and one food cart. Food offerings included a wide variety of sandwiches, vegan burgers and shakes, pizza, tacos, local fruit-filled popsicles, gelato, freshly made apple cider donuts, and fun beverages like watermelon limeade, all satisfying the market’s producers-only qualification. Additionally, space was open to existing daytime market vendors and several vendors chose to participate throughout the six month season. Live musical performances by nine different musical groups enlivened the atmosphere each month and offered a wide variety of musical enjoyment, including jazz, pop, funk, folk, acoustic, rock, Celtic and country sounds.

While shifting the focus to these once monthly events staff aimed to continue to foster innovation in the local food system and provide a vibrant space for the community, fulfilling two key goals of the Wednesday Evening Market pilot project. With a diversity of tasty food options and a wide variety of musical genres, the community enjoyed six evenings at the market in 2016. The Food Truck Rallies welcomed four new food trucks to this year’s lineup, allowing for these local food businesses to expand into a new space and reach new customers.

The Food Truck Rally season saw much improved financial outcomes from those of the 2015 Evening Market season. Realizing just over \$400 in additional revenue in 2016, expenses were also able to be reduced by more than 50%.

	Months in Operation	# of Markets	# of Vendors Accepted	Average Weekly Vendor Attendance	Total Stall Fee Revenue	Expenses <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising
2015	June-October	22	17	7	\$2,352	\$5,500
2016	May-October	6	12	10	\$2,785	\$2,000

Staff recommends repeating the six-month Food Truck Rally season in 2017, offering continued support for innovative local food businesses, hosting vibrant community events, and providing access to local food with the community.