



City of Ann Arbor

301 E. Huron St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104
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Meeting Minutes Public Market Advisory Commission

Thursday, October 18, 2012

5:30 PM
301 E Huron City Hall, 2nd Floor Council Chambers, 301 E Huron Street

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 5:35pm

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved as is.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTARY

(4 SPEAKERS MAXIMUM - 5 MINUTE SPEAKING TIME - SIGN UP MUST TAKE PLACE PRIOR TO THE MEETING BY NOTIFYING THE CHAIR OR CITY STAFF. THIS SECTION OF PUBLIC COMMENTARY IS LIMITED TO ITEMS RELATED TO THE AGENDA.)

No public present.

A APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approved as presented

B OLD BUSINESS

Appointment of Vice Chair

Lindsay-Jean Hard is approved as vice chair for PMAC.

Lindsay-Jean Hard was appointed vice chair for PMAC.

Improvement Plan for Gravel Lot

Sarah DeWitt, market manager, reviews sand lot improvement ideas that were put forth by PMAC at the previous meeting. Curb removal, lot paving, landscaping, extension of the middle aisle sidewalk. These will be discussed with the Parks Planner, Amy Kuras. Ultimately the commission is focused on what project can be completed by May 2013.

Wednesday Evening Market Season Review

Market manager reviews Wednesday evening processes.

Areas of Progress in 2012

1. Further established operational procedures
2. Added new, high quality vendors
3. A more balanced product mix
4. More consistency in vendor attendance
5. Utilization of a vendor application review checklist

Goals in 2013

1. Solidify a stall assignment process & market location that accounts for vendor, staff and customer needs
2. Create a cohesive marketing campaign to facilitate more community engagement with the market
3. Establish a more satisfactory season length (i.e. June – October)
4. Recruit new vendors to fill important gaps in the product mix (i.e. meat and eggs)
5. Establish high-quality, consistent live music

Stall Assignment & Attendance

- Each market day, the manager utilized the vendor attendance spreadsheet to create the stall map for the day by 2 pm. Vendors were to start setting up at 3:30 pm at the earliest.
- Mid-season the produce and food cart vendors were aggregated in their respective groups to improve customer perception of the availability of various products.
- The produce and food carts were thought of as the “anchor” products that form the backbone of the market (based on customer feedback). All other vendors were assigned stalls around these based on their attendance, products, need for electricity, shade and other necessities.

Challenges

- Stall assignment process needs to be flexible enough to account for vendor non-attendance.
- Non-produce vendors experienced more variation in stall assignment due to inconsistent attendance among these vendor types.
- In 2011 and 2012, a cancellation fee policy was in place to encourage consistent attendance, but this policy was difficult (and seemingly unproductive) to enforce.

Recommendations

- A more consistent stall assignment process should be explored and established prior to the 2013 market season.
- An incentive for consistent attendance could serve as a viable alternative to the penalty for cancellation. (For example: offering a reduced annual rate for the following year based on the current year’s attendance)

Market Promotion

- Radio interview and discussion of local food efforts (WCBN).
- Print advertising (ads, posters and fliers) and press releases to promote the market and its events.
- Email newsletters & social media updates at least weekly.

Challenge

- Distinguishing the evening market from the daytime markets and managing customer expectations.

Recommendation

- Continue education and marketing efforts to help customers understand the distinction between the daytime and evening markets.
- Form partnerships with local organizations, schools, hospitals, or businesses that can help promote the market.

Live Music

- Rap for Food helped book local musicians to perform at the market and helped with market promotion.

Challenge

- Musicians cancelled at the last minute and the market manager was left scrambling to provide a musician for the market.

Recommendations

- Establish relationships with music non-profits or other organizations in the community to tap into local music networks.
- Recruiting higher quality, more committed musicians to play for the duration of market each week.
- Offering an incentive for market musicians in order to bring in more established artists (stipend, promotion, discount)

Beer and Wine Garden

- The beer garden had approximately 30 customers at its highest point during the season
- Slow Food Huron Valley sponsored and staffed the beer and wine garden from August through the beginning of September and promoted the market to their established network.
- Kerrytown District Association sponsored the garden in June and July, but was not able to staff the garden. Their promotions of the market were limited.

Challenge

- Recruiting sponsors is challenging because the requirements of sponsorship are difficult for many non-profit organizations to provide on a weekly basis (staff, materials).

Recommendation

- The Beer and Wine Garden provides the market with a unique feature that distinguishes it from other evening farmers markets in the area. Earlier and more committed sponsorship of the garden will be explored well in advance of the 2013 market season.
- Live music fulfills similar goals, is easier to execute, and therefore may be a more sustainable and viable alternative for distinguishing the evening

market.

Observations and Feedback

- Consistency in stall assignment benefits market staff, vendors, and customers.
- Early counts showed approximately 200 customers attending the market each week; it is likely that at the market's peak in customer traffic (roughly late July through the end of September) there were around 300-350 customers per night.
- Market staff, volunteers, and vendors agreed that customer traffic seems to be highest between 5:00 and 7:30 pm, with the least amount of customers entering the market after 7:30 pm.
- Vendors observed that customers often wanted to purchase items at 4 pm, before vendors were set up and before the market officially started.
- A near consensus among the vendors expressing a desire to have a longer season.
- Vendors and customers spoke very highly of the live music as an important aspect of the market.

Market hours and months will change for 2013: June-October 4-8pm on Wednesdays

Rule regarding underutilization of market stalls

Lindsay-Jean Hard recommends no rule be created for stall underutilization. Commissioners feel that this undermines the financial and historic commitment of annual vendors. Commissioners discussed reimbursing vendors who make their stalls available (a reimbursement system). Ultimately this was not an idea that continued to be of interest to the commission. Commissioners feel that annual vendors will oppose any rules pertaining to stall underutilization. Jill Sweetman suggests a point system for attendance, to more accurately consider seniority for daily vendors based upon total attendance.

The market manager will make an effort to communication recommendations to annual vendors for purchasing only the number of stalls they think they will use fully.

Commissioners move discussion to look at more specific tally of attendance for daily vendors. Market manager to look into this possibility.

A discussion was held about the idea of allowing a seasonal vendor pool, for vendors wanting to sell during the winter when stalls are not all full.

Discussion of Winterizing the Market

Commissioners revisit how the market could help vendors and customers stay slightly warmer during the winter months. An ongoing discussion of the winterization efforts will be had throughout the next year, so as to have more concrete and substantial solutions for sustainable winterizatons. Market manager proposes an evaluation of existing "curtains" currently held at the

Park Operations facility.

C NEW BUSINESS

Application, inspection, rule update process

Application Updates:

- Application and inspection report updates will occur during November and December 2012
- Market vendor applications will be suspended beginning November 1, 2012 and will resume in January when the updates have been completed
- All existing vendors and new applicants will be required to submit a 2013 market application

Nature of the updates:

- o Inspection report to function as a verification of application information, more so than as an information gathering tool
- o Application will reflect the information needed to accurately verify farm information during an inspection
- o Drafts of the updated application and inspection report form will be presented to the commission in the coming months

D Report from Market Manager

Market Manager Report

Presented October 18, 2012

New Vendors:

Xiong's Fresh Produce – Asian variety produce (Wednesday PM vendor, recommended highly by several customers)
Owl Hollow – Local fruit pies, coffee cake, cupcakes

Market Updates and Events

- Due to the highly volume of applicants and the limited space in the market, applications for prepared foods and value added products are being evaluated with specific consideration for applicants making efforts to use local ingredients
- Wednesday October 24, 2012 is National Food Day
- Saturday October 27, 2012 from 11am-1pm: Pumpkin Carving, Face Painting and a Flash Mob at the market! Join us to celebrate Halloween
- Wednesday December 26, 2012: Vendor feedback has almost entirely been in support of cancelling the market on this day

F COMMUNICATIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTARY (5 MINIMUTE MAXIMUM SPEAKING TIME - NO LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE SPEAKING IN THIS SECTION.)

No public present.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:37pm.