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4 **CITY OF ANN ARBOR**
5 **PUBLIC MARKET ADVISORY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**
6 **August 21, 2008**

7 1. Call to Order

8 The meeting was called to order at 5:08 p.m.

9 2. Roll Call

10 Members Present: (4) S. Brines, D. Black, G. Service, P. Pollack

11 Members Absent: (1) K. King

12 Staff Present: (1) M. Notarianni

13 Guests: (1) G. Trocchio

14 3. Approval of Agenda

15 4. Special Presentations

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17 a. Ginny Trocchio, Greenbelt Commission

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19 G. Trocchio: I actually work for the Conservation Fund; the organization contracted by
20 the Greenbelt to work on land acquisition. We are talking about a ballot initiative passed
21 in November 2003 to allow the City to protect land within Greenbelt outside of City. A
22 portion of our funding is used for parks within the city, and a portion for farmland outside
23 the city. Participation in the program is voluntary. Goals include protecting rural
24 landscapes, natural areas, and water quality, mainly through the purchase of development
25 rights, not fee simple acquisition. This means the property remains under private
26 ownership. In 2005, Commission worked on a strategic plan, and determined several
27 main priorities. They include preserving large blocks of protected farmland, ideally 1000
28 acres or more, as well as properties along Huron River. Another big priority is providing
29 matching funds for every property we've protected. 895 acres of land protected to date;
30 of that, 777 is farmland, 118 is open space & natural areas. To date, the farms we've
31 been able to protect are primarily row crop farms. There is an increased interest in how
32 farmland preservation programs can help new farmers get into farming, as well as
33 fostering local food production and consumption. Some obstacles include the fact that
34 funds can only be used for preservation (i.e. purchase of easements) and only 2-3 market
35 vendors are located within the Greenbelt district. We hope to build a bridge between
36 farmland preservation and fostering local food production, which is why we are here
37 today!

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39 P. Pollack: We talked about this a little bit last month, but the land owned by NATAC
40 that is currently farmed may be a good resource. Perhaps the 3 involved parties: the
41 Greenbelt, NATAC, and the PMAC, should discuss this. The concept of an incubator
42 farm is one way to explore this: land available to rent at modest rates.

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44 S. Brines: I would suggest trying to include, on your current application, the willingness
45 of the current owner to work with a potential nonprofit that might help lease land out to
46 new farmers in the future.

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48 P. Pollack: A useful next step would be getting members of the 3 commissions to sit
49 down together and discuss collaboration.

50

51 5. Public Commentary – Agenda items only (3 minutes per speaker)

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6. Approval of Minutes

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a. Meeting of July 17, 2008

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7. Commission Business

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a. Old Business

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57 P. Pollack: We should find a date for a second meeting; a working session, to discuss
58 seniority. We have many different sources of information, but now we must decide
59 HOW, if at all, do we make progress? A working session will be held September 11th, at
60 5 pm, in the market office.

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b. New Business

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(1) Winter season market utilization

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65 M. Notarianni: This is an ongoing issue, as we move into fall. How should we do this?
66 Should the winter market have different rules? Should we look for new vendors?
67 Shorten the market's hours in winter?

67

68 S. Brines: I think we should survey existing people who show up in the winter, and get
69 considerable input from them.

69

P. Pollack: What time of the year do things really change at market?

70

71 S. Brines: November and December are still relatively busy; January 1st is when it gets
72 really slow.

72

73 P. Pollack: In November, after the first frost, there is a shift into root crops, holiday
74 decorations, until January 1st, when the market changes again.

74

D. Black: Maybe we could seek out more prepared food?

75

76 M. Notarianni: Do we want to create a special classification for people who would like
77 to come for the whole year, but who we may not have space for throughout the entire
78 season?

78

S. Brines: I'm not sure a seasonal classification works, necessarily...

79

80 P. Pollack: Every time a season shifts, there is a way of announcing that; an event that
81 can herald that change; an opportunity for publicity. The Seattle market had 3 days of
82 events highlighting summer, and how it is "farm time." There are lots of ways we can
celebrate and publicize each season at the market.

83 S. Brines: An informational and advertising campaign may also be useful in attracting
84 potential new vendors. The one category I could see a seasonal, or even Wednesday
85 adjustment for, is food cart vendors.

86 P. Pollack: Perhaps on Saturdays in November and December there could be more
87 artisans. So we have 3 distinct time periods: March-October, January-February, and
88 November-December. Can you bring this topic up in the next newsletter, Molly?

89 (2) Fostering agriculture in SE Michigan

90 P. Pollack: This touches on Ginny's previous presentation. What did the Greenbelt
91 discuss about this when you were there?

92 M. Notarianni: It was very preliminary. We did discuss the concept of an incubator
93 farm, to some degree.

94 S. Brines: I think the point that ownership of the land is a main stumbling point is
95 important, because NATAC and the county already owns land. There may be other
96 groups to collaborate with, both local nonprofits and the City.

97 P. Pollack: What about MSU Extension? This would be a good topic to discuss in
98 greater detail in the winter. There is a consortium of area conservancies that meets
99 several times a year as well.

100 8. Reports and Communications

101 a. Market Manager

102 M. Notarianni: Many vendors were inspected in the previous month, both at their farm
103 and at market. We celebrated the market's 89th birthday, with free ice cream. It was a
104 very popular and busy day at market. Beautiful new signage has been created for
105 promotional A-boards throughout town. Market merchandise is being created. I working
106 on marketing the market to college students...so far, the dorms are disinterested.

107 S. Brines: Cultivating Community and Sustainable Ag Working Group are 2 student
108 groups who may be interested in helping promote the market among students.

109 G. Service: How about Family Housing, on North Campus?

110 S. Brines: I think Rackham would be a good avenue, as well as getting someone from the
111 Michigan Daily to write a story about the market, especially about students who shop at
112 the market...

113 D. Black: Try the ICC Co-ops, and area realtors as well.

114 M. Notarianni: Preparations for cooking demonstrations at the market are moving along.

115 P. Pollack: I like the idea of having such demonstrations really front and center at the
116 market.

117 M. Notarianni: I'm continuing to work with Ozone House to plan their large fundraiser
118 held onsite at the market. I've been in touch with many community groups who are
119 interested in having booths at the market. Tomorrow we are conducting our first
120 independent Rapid Market Assessment at the market. Gary Toller, the knife sharpener,
121 will begin to come on Saturdays as well as Wednesdays, and the wonderful Four Corners

122 Creamery will begin to bring cheese, butter, and yogurt to market. Two newsletters, both
123 for customers and vendors, have been distributed in the past month.

124 P. Pollack: Do you put the vendors' newsletter online? I think it would be helpful for
125 both vendors and shoppers.

126 M. Notarianni: Shannon and myself were 2 of 5 from the area to attend Slow Food's
127 biennial Terra Madre conference in Turin this October.

128 b. Related Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces

129 P. Pollack: Today is Nash Bash, put on by the KDA, at the market.

130 S. Brines: This is a good example of creative uses of the market space on non-market
131 days.

132 c. Items from Commissioners

133 S. Brines: HomeGrown Festival is Saturday, September 13th, 11 am – 4 pm! I think next
134 year we may use the market space instead of Community High. I opened myself up to a
135 meeting with the public, and it went well. There was a small handful of folks present,
136 although the inspector ended up walking by, and the group spoke with him. As someone
137 who recently was inspected, I think he is really professional and savvy. He is thorough
138 and doing a great job. We discussed the idea of creating a challenge form. Customers
139 were very interested in the idea of large campaign promoting the Ann Arbor Farmers
140 Market as the premier place to buy local food, especially in light of the inspections,
141 which verify the foods' local source. They also suggested that they would like to see the
142 rule requiring vendor signage enforced.

143 P. Pollack: Maybe the angle to take is that this is local food, and the customers would
144 like to know where their food comes from, and how local it *really* is! How about if you
145 put this in the newsletter, with a due date?

146 G. Service: I heard one of our artisans had some items stolen. How can we deal with
147 this? Should it be mentioned in the newsletter?

148 d. Transmittals/communications received

149 (1) M. & B. Oliver, 7/25/08

150 (2) L. Perlman, 7/31/08

151 (3) K. Melmoth, 7/31/08

152 9. Public Commentary – General (3 minutes per speaker)

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154 10. Adjournment

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156 The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.