

1 **Public Market Advisory Commission Minutes**

2 Thursday, October 6, 5:30 pm

3
4 **Meeting Agenda**

5 1. Call to Order

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7 The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

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9 2. Roll Call

10 Members Present: (4) D. Barkman, S. Brines, A. Germain, D. Santacroce

11 Members Absent: (1) L-J. Hard

12 Staff Present: (1) M. Notarianni

13
14 3. Approval of Agenda

15 4. Special Presentations

16 a. Dave Borneman, NAP Manager

17
18 D. Borneman – I am the NAP Manager and have been around and NAP has been around for
19 about 18 years. Our mission is to protect and restore Ann Arbor’s natural areas and foster an
20 environmental ethic among its citizens. I grew up among farmers in Illinois and even collected
21 Oriental Bittersweet with my family and made beautiful decorations in the fall and my family
22 still does that. Bittersweet is a beautiful plant, but we know now that it is an invasive plant.
23 Bulldozers are not the only threats to our natural areas, a lot of non-native species, many brought
24 in for ornamental purposes around 100 years ago and many with no natural predators here. So
25 native species competing to survive diseases and pests etc can’t out compete these non-natives
26 that by definition have no natural predators over here. Things like garlic mustard, etc out
27 compete others, and Oriental Bittersweet, or Asian Bittersweet is like a kudzu of the north. It
28 encircles trees and spreads throughout the landscape and can really take over. There is a native
29 bittersweet and the two look very similar. You can go to the store and think you’re buying
30 native only to find once it gets growing it’s invasive. You can’t always see the warning signs
31 when the plant is small. We advise people not to buy them unless they know for sure they are
32 buying the native. So, I gave to Molly some notices that can be put up so people don’t dispose of
33 their wreaths in the woods where it can spread and take over. It spreads when birds eat the
34 berries so it doesn’t stay where it’s planted. We’re simply asking people to dispose of them in
35 their fireplace, or the city compost. To make this as simple as possible, we’ve made cards so that
36 vendors can tag these to the wreaths and inform customers how to dispose of them when they
37 buy them.

38
39 5. Public Commentary – Agenda items only (3 minutes per speaker)

40 6. Approval of Minutes

41 a. Meeting of September 13, 2011

42 7. Commission Business

43 a. Old Business

44 (1) Vendor / Customer Survey

45 M. Notarianni – I was out of town and sick in this short time, but I did draft up questions for
46 customers, and would love input on questions for vendors and how the format is feeling. We
47 suggested for vendors, physical changes to the market and potential changes to the market hours.
48

49 D. Santacroce – It might be nice to allow people to choose more than one answer on the
50 questions where it is relevant. Are you going to do another dot survey?
51

52 M. Notarianni – I was going to send it out electronically and have paper copies to fill out, not
53 dots on a board at market.
54

55 D. Santacroce – It would be helpful to see the old questions.
56

57 M. Notarianni – Most of these are taken from old surveys.
58

59 S. Brines – Would we have volunteers asking people to take the survey? I was recently surveyed
60 on the bus on AATA.
61

62 M. Notarianni – I have a glut of U of M volunteers so that would be great. Would it skew the
63 results to have it taken on multiple days?
64

65 D. Santacroce – As long as you don't have repeat takers, it would be fine
66

67 S. Brines – Dot surveys are easy but perhaps less informative since everyone can see how others
68 have answered before them.
69

70 M. Notarianni- Any other ideas for vendor questions?
71

72 A. Germain – We discussed the breaking of the rule of leaving early. People might be more
73 willing to answer an open-ended question about why they're leaving early if it was anonymous.
74 Maybe questions about what they bring to find out if there's some type of missing vegetable.
75

76 M. Notarianni- Or just a general question on the vendors' take on the product mix. I will finish
77 that up in the next week and have my student volunteers help with it.
78

79 S. Brines – I think we have another few weeks that we can do it in if the weather stays like this.
80

81 b. New Business

82 (1) New Vendor Discussion

83

84 M. Notarianni – Seasonal fruit tarts and pies, chocolate bars, mungbean bars, savory tarts, fruit
85 jam, homemade nutella. A large variety of pies in panetone. Granola, seasoning, and hibiscus
86 elixir. Quiche. More baked goods – cinnamon rolls, sticky buns, cake. Variety of body care
87 items. Handmade original design bead-woven jewelry. Different kinds of chocolates and
88 chocolate covered oreos. Butterfly and dragonfly light covers, hairpins, garden wares made out
89 of recycled pop bottles. Roasted chickpeas.
90

91 D. Barkman – Sound like some good people to come in the winter.
92

93 D. Santacroce – I’m still a little fuzzy on how this works... So these people would be replacing
94 people who don’t have anything left to sell this year?
95

96 M. Notarianni – It’s tricky because once someone is accepted to become a vendor they are
97 essentially a vendor until they quit or drop out or get kicked out. They can keep moving up the
98 list if they come often and other people leave. Historically, there is more room for new vendors
99 in the winter, but what I sometimes have a hard time with is the fact that there is less customer
100 traffic, so I’m hesitant to fill the market with seasonless products like baked goods when it’s just
101 a slower market, there’s a smaller pool of money.
102

103 D. Santacroce– So say this Saturday, it’s going to be a full market, right? So how is it decided
104 who if there?
105

106 M. Notarianni – Whoever shows up that morning! Then there’s a stall assignment based on
107 seniority.
108

109 D. Santacroce – Do you ever get more people coming than there are spots for?
110

111 M. Notarianni- That’s what I try to avoid.
112

113 D. Santacroce – How do you do that? Do you tell them?
114

115 M. Notarianni –It’s more of an educated guess. People will apply, and they want to come on
116 Saturday but I tell them market is full until approximately the first frost. But essentially it’s a
117 guessing game and people are willing to take that risk.
118

119 S. Brines – People sort of self-sort. We’ve been pretty packed before though, we’ve been as far
120 down as moving down the sidewalk toward Catherine and the ivy area next to the office. And
121 those never used to be market spaces.
122

123 D. Santacroce- I guess it’s more of an art than I science.
124

125 S. Brines – I tend to agree that we can’t pack the market but maybe for the long haul it would
126 bring more people? If you build it they will come?
127

128 D. Santacroce- It sounds like you’re afraid of diluting the money. Or having too many cookies.
129

130 M. Notarianni- Well, afraid of having too many things that are too similar.
131

132 S. Brines – Another question is that you have people who’ve been coming forever and if we
133 don’t grow the customer base the same amount of people end up spending over a wider base of
134 vendors.
135

136 D. Barkman – People get loyal customers, so you have some who only shop with a few vendors
137 they are loyal to. And then other shoppers will purchase a little bit here, a little bit there, because
138 they feel like they're helping out
139

140 S. Brines – To put it another way, are we doing a disservice to the businesses that are already
141 there by slicing the pie too thinly? By having more vendors with a small customer base. . .
142

143 D. Santacroce – How do other markets do this?
144

145 M. Notarianni- Most markets do have anonymous gross sales data from vendors on a daily basis.
146 But I've never seen any other farmers markets that do stall assignments this way. I never know
147 who or how many people are going to be there on any given day or how much space is going to
148 be available because some people who normally take 1 stall may take 3 stalls in August, so if
149 you got a whole market of people doing that, it makes it really unpredictable and hard to plan
150 ahead.
151

152 D. Barkman – There are times when the annuals don't come if they know there's a football
153 game, or they need to work on other things, and so that variation can be unpredictable for the
154 tail-end folks, but the Wednesday Evening Market is a place for these folks to try it out. Or
155 there's lots of little markets around the area that would love to have them. But you have to build
156 up customers, you have to have places for them to park. .
157

158 S. Brines – We certainly have a space allocation issue, and I was sort of bringing up the
159 economics of flooding the market with vendors and the effects that might have.
160

161 D. Barkman – That's part of the risk of the farm market. Growing a crop, baking 50 dozen
162 cookies or whatever, do I pick the day in the middle of May where I'm low on the list or do I
163 pick a nice day in November?
164

165 S. Brines - But at the same time Molly has been adding vendors.
166

167 D. Barkman – Of the tail-enders have many of them tried it and pulled out?
168

169 M. Notarianni- I'd say probably about 70 percent come. There's a bigger percent than I'd expect
170 that continue coming.
171

172 D. Santacroce- In the winter, are there more people that want to come than you let in?
173

174 M. Notarianni- Not really.
175

176 D. Santacroce – So if you want in the winter, you're basically in?
177

178 M. Notarianni- That's the tricky part because there's no seasonal component to the application,
179 so once they're in they can come whenever they want. It's different if they have something
180 really unique that we don't have at any point in the year, but if they have something that's

181 somewhat redundant to what we have on Wednesdays and Saturdays during the year, once I let
182 them in they could overlap with the others not there in the winter.
183

184 D. Santacroce- So you're worried about them coming in May and not having space for everyone?
185

186 M. Notarianni- yes, but I'm less worried about space and more so with the product mix that we'd
187 have on a less-busy Wednesday in May with all those vendors coming.
188

189 D. Barkman- Yeah, those cookies are a small investment for people to start doing especially with
190 people being able to bake in their home kitchen now.
191

192 D. Santacroce – But wouldn't the market regulate itself? If it's a bad cup of coffee, you're not
193 going to be Starbucks. The one group you didn't mention is comparison shopping. There's a fair
194 amount of that that goes on and I think it's healthy. In the 13 years that I've been going to the
195 market there's a lot that's gotten more expensive. A little competition allows the bad cookie
196 person to go away in favor of the good cookies.
197

198 S. Brines – And we've run into this before so the question is do we let them all in and let the
199 customers decide or not and have a hybrid. The concern is that they wouldn't regulate and then
200 we'd be flooded and would that be shooting some of the existing vendors in the foot?
201

202 D. Santacroce – And some of them wouldn't come back?
203

204 S. Brines – Well maybe for some of the longtime vendors it's just in their blood it would take a
205 lot not to come back.
206

207 D. Santacroce – Seeing the demographics of this town, we're probably one of the more desirable
208 markets around, right?
209

210 S. Brines – Well and do you think the customer base is growing? I think it definitely has in the
211 winter which could be clouding my judgment of the rest of the year.
212

213 D. Barkman – When the market's at its best in the middle of May people come to enjoy the
214 gardens that people bring in the traffic on Detroit street you have to weave through people, but it
215 seems on other corners, it seems there are more times is not so congested. Is that the economy?
216 Could be, or that people have so many choices with more hours than us. But all of these people
217 are independent businessmen and they need to figure it out for themselves.
218

219 D. Santacroce– To the extent you're trying to increase volume in the winter it seems it might be
220 worth trying for a year. Maybe having to turn people away would help people drop off if that's
221 what needs to happen. It's definitely busier than since I started coming to market.
222

223 A. Germain – So if people come in the winter and then don't come for 6 months they're not off
224 the list?
225

226 S. Brines – They have to come 15 times per year.

227
228 M. Notarianni – Yeah July-June they have to come 15 times on Wednesday or Saturday.
229
230 A. Germain – So if you had a rush of people to come in October they could still get their 15 that
231 year?
232
233 M. Notarianni – Yes. People don't get kicked out if they don't come 15 times they just move
234 down in seniority. And if you come 15 times you can move up.
235
236 D. Barkman- But you haven't turned people away recently?
237
238 M. Notarianni- There are people with delicate products who've left after they didn't want to set
239 up where there was space for them, but I haven't had to say there is not one single other spot for
240 you.
241
242 S. Brines – I might research the economics of an expanding market. I'm curious if there are
243 other studies of other markets.
244
245 D. Santacroce: When I'm there at 10 it's busy but I look across the street and there's room there.
246
247 D. Barkman – In terms of expanding the market, I think you're better off looking at alternate
248 days, alternate sites, you have the Cobblestone Farm, those would be opportunities.
249
250 D. Santacroce – You'd want to be careful because you wouldn't want to dilute a customer base
251 from the Kerrytown Market.
252
253 D. Barkman- It's the numbers from a customer point of view, a lot of these farmers either go to
254 multiple markets so the farmers become a limiting factor too so the product has to be grown.
255
256 S. Brines – The other thing, Peter Pollack formerly on the commission would remind us of
257 customers complaints of the lack of space as well. The lack of room to eat the tamale or
258 something like that. So that fits into the design we have to consider. By the way I noticed for
259 seats along the Kerrytown building. We didn't give direct comments, but maybe some overall
260 considerations.
261
262 (2) Sale of Invasive Species at the Market
263
264 M. Notarianni- This was related to what Dave talked about a minute ago. We've done this for 2
265 or 3 years now.
266
267 S. Brines – We've done these in the past and how has it worked? The vendors got a half sheet to
268 put on to product?
269
270 M. Notarianni – Initially it was having the information on the vendors' table, then it was half
271 sheets with the product, and this year we'll hand out these. I think the information is good, we
272 can't prevent people from selling bittersweet.

273 D. Barkman – Just a suggestion as you drop it off that they can work up their own description.
274

275 S. Brines – Barring a new ordinance that will mandate something, just getting the information
276 out there is good.

277
278 8. Reports and Communications

279 a. Market Manager

280

281 M. Notarianni – Our new inspector is doing a bang-up job and has inspected a lot of people in
282 the last month: Shetler, Bremmer, Carpenter, Schwartz, Hochstetler, Much, Meissner, Coblenz,
283 Marks, Melmoth, St Clair, and Wilson. I will try to get her to come to the meeting next month.
284 We have had conversations about how to make the inspections effective, so that might be
285 interesting.

286

287 S. Brines – So that would be a special presentation and Q and A. Since she’s already done so
288 many we can get come feedback from her on the documents she’s filling out.

289

290 M. Notarianni – Well they get a copy of their inspection report back. We talked in the past about
291 putting a check on there that says you passed you didn’t pass but the idea is we’d take action if
292 we needed to.

293

294 D. Santacroce – Why don’t we approve them?

295

296 M. Notarianni – I guess one thought is that it’s a fluid thing, say they get inspected and seem fine
297 and the next week they bring pumpkins but I didn’t see any pumpkins at their farm, that’s a
298 problem.

299

300 This month the market was part of the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Solar Energy Tour, and
301 hosted the Ozone House’s Annual Fundraiser, and a Wedding. And this month we’re hosting
302 our annual Halloween event with many U of M student volunteers, and the amazing Apple
303 History Museum is coming back.

304

305 S. Brines – Oh great, that was really well-received!

306

307 M. Notarianni- Yeah, I think it might only be for one day, but it’s exciting. I’ve had
308 representatives from Food Gatherers continuing to be at the market helping sign people up for
309 bridge cards, and representatives from the county health department are educating folks about
310 SNAP and how to cook the food they’re getting. This is the last month of the Double Up Food
311 Bucks program and at the end of that next month I should have some numbers for you about how
312 all of that went. I’ll have more on how that affected sales and stuff.

313

314 D. Santacroce- Why is that ending?

315

316 M. Notarianni- It’s just a finite sum of money and the program runs through June – October,
317 that’s just the program’s dates. I think a lot of other participating farmers markets end at the
318 beginning of October. So for them it was just the end of their season.

319 S. Brines – So EBT is the only thing that goes through the end of the year.

320

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

322 c. Items from Commissioners

323

324 A. Germain – I have a question – So I noticed the lights completely off in the market at like 9:30
325 and it was completely dark. And I've noticed when they're on and that makes some sense, but I
326 was curious for the sake of public safety.

327

328 M. Notarianni- That's good to know. It's a somewhat complicated system which we haven't
329 fully mastered yet, but yes the lights are supposed to be half on during non-market hours and
330 kick back on with the timer for market. Sometimes when people have events there they'll mess
331 with the settings and I won't notice since they're on during market hours. But that's good to
332 know and I'll look into it.

333

334 d. Transmittals/communications received

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

336 10. Adjournment

337

338 The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.