



1
2
3 **CITY OF ANN ARBOR – PUBLIC MARKET ADVISORY COMMISSION**
4 **MEETING MINUTES**
5 **March 20, 2008**
6

7 The regular meeting of the Public Market Advisory Commission was held on Thursday, March 20,
8 2008 at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located in City Hall, 100 N. Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor,
9 Michigan.

10
11 **1. Call to Order**
12

13 The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by P. Pollack.
14

15 **2. Roll Call**

16 Members Present: (5) G. Service, S. Brines, K. King, P. Pollack, D. Black
17 Members Absent: (0)
18 Staff Present: (2) J. Black, M. Notarianni
19 Guests: (0)
20

21 **3. Special Presentations**
22

23 **4. Public Commentary-Agenda Items only (3 minutes per speaker)**
24

25 G. Thompson: What I want to speak to today is the marketing of the market. Before you rush off and redo
26 the experiences of other markets, I urge you to research their experiences. 2 good sources are Nina Plank,
27 currently recognized as the guru of markets, and Stephensen and Gary Lev. I like them because they tend to
28 actually look for data, instead of relying on opinions!
29

30 Ms. Plank states, "Focus on the sales, and everything else will take care of itself." There are lots of things
31 that can be done at the market to directly encourage sales. One thing that we have been talking about for a
32 long time is vendor signs. Market regulations require a vendor to post a sign stating his name and location,
33 but in many cases, this is not done. This kind of personal interaction is one reason customers prefer
34 markets over supermarkets. Vendor nametags would increase this personal awareness and contact.
35 Another point would be to insist that vendors be there when the market opens. This is more of a problem in
36 the winter, when vendors arrive as late as 10 am. It would also be very helpful if vendors had visible
37 pricing on products. Encourage attractive presentation and packaging.
38 Remember that you are selling produce, not entertainment. The summer Art Fair recently moved the
39 performance stage away from the artists, because they said the music was hurting their sales. Stephensen &
40 Lev say the traditional forms of advertising aren't very successful at bringing customers to a market. I
41 suspect there are 2 reasons why this happens: the primary customer is a repeat customer, and the market
42 has a relatively small amount of dollars that can be spent on advertising. I encourage you to try some
43 unconventional, inexpensive forms of advertising. Several restaurant chefs shop at the market. Try to get
44 them to put on their menu that the market is their source of fresh produce, and return the favour by putting
45 on your webpage that these are chefs that shop at the market. There are many similar low-cost things you
46 can do, with a little imagination. You can hit all the schedule and announcement pages in the Observer and
47 in the AA News. Come up with reasons to send out press releases, such as a new vendor joining the market.
48

49 **5. Approval of Agenda**

50
51 **6. Approval of Minutes**
52

53 P. Pollack: Moved to approve minutes from meeting on 21 February. 4 ½ pages, 261 lines referenced.
54

55 M. Notarianni: Would the commission prefer future minutes verbatim, or just a summary?
56

1 P. Pollack: That is almost a question of city policy. I think, for the most part, its not verbatim, but a
2 summary.

3
4 J. Black: There's city policy, and then there's how each board operates. I have been doing these minutes
5 how PAC asks for their minutes to be done, which is pretty much verbatim. But I don't know what you
6 want...if you want a summary, that might be easier? We can try and find a nice mix, and focus more if
7 there is a topic you discuss in detail...verbatim with a group this small isn't that hard.

8
9 G. Service: I think they've been great. I guess you can consolidate a little bit more?

10
11 D. Black: They've been helpful...I've found a few typos, but that's just something I notice. Line 190 is
12 "too," not "to." Line 266, says "only think," should be "only **thing**." That's it

13
14 P. Pollack: With those two revisions, minutes are unanimously approved.

15
16 **7. Commission Business**

17 **a. Old Business**

18 **(1) Market Mission Statement**

19 P. Pollack: Here is our draft mission statement. We've aired it a few times, it was actually handed out at
20 the vendor meeting the other day, and we haven't received any comments back on it, so if we are content
21 with it among ourselves, we could deal with this today, and remove the "draft" from the title.

22
23 G. Service: We can always revise it, if needed, at the next meeting. I move to approve the mission
24 statement.

25
26 Seconded by S. Brines. Unanimously approved.

27
28 P. Pollack: We should probably date the market mission statement.

29
30 **(2) Commission Mission Statement**

31 P. Pollack: Any additional thoughts about a market commission mission statement? It currently contains 3
32 items related to what we think we do. This includes market commission as an advisory body to the public
33 market, which includes, but isn't limited to, the famers market.

34
35 D Black: Does that include the Sunday market as well?

36
37 P. Pollack: Well yes; not as an advisor to the artisans, but as an overviewer of the market space + the
38 activities that take place there. I think one of the characteristics, as we talk about "local and national
39 governmental agencies," is that is a subtle reference to the DDA and PAC, because those are 2 agencies we
40 especially want to collaborate with.

41
42 D. Black: When you read "**businesses**," I thought that was more correct. It says "business" here. I also
43 think it should say "**governmental**," instead of "government."

44
45 P. Pollack: Again, as we said before, we can add and adjust as time goes by.

46
47 G. Service moved to pass PMAC mission statement. D Black seconds. Unanimously approved.

48
49 P. Pollack: We should also date this as of today.

50 **(3) Vendor Public Meeting, 11 March 2008**

51
52 P. Pollack: Christy Summers, of Beckett and Raeder, provided a very thorough summary of the meeting.
53 Any thoughts about what took place at that meeting?? It was mostly about the physical plan, and changes
54 that are going to occur; how to keep the market whole during the renovations, and at the end, Molly led us
55 through some ideas for the market.

56

1 S. Brines: I had to leave early, but I thought it was a good meeting. I thought it was good that we had the
2 meeting, and think we should have more, and have had positive feedback from vendors.

3
4 M. Notarianni: I agree, it is important to continue to have public meetings as we move through the
5 renovation process, to keep people involved.

6
7 D Black: I thought it was a positive meeting.

8
9 J Black: I was really happy to see that so many vendors attended. I think it will be helpful to continue to
10 have these meetings, two or three times a year, not in response to a crisis, but to reflect on the year past,
11 and talk about the year ahead.

12
13 S. Brines: I think it is important to continue to have more meetings, because of the renovations.

14
15 P. Pollack: We should think about having more public meetings, as we move into Phase 2. Hopefully the
16 design team, and Jeff Dehring, will be able to issue minutes to the vendors and the public, so everyone will
17 understand where things are at, and what to expect ahead. A weekly, or biweekly memo, about what is to
18 come, could answer a lot of questions even before they are asked.

19
20 D Black: It would be helpful to have a couple of copies of this report in the market office.

21
22 M. Notarianni: I mailed out copies to all of the vendors, and the report it is posted on the website, but I
23 agree it would be helpful to have copies in the office for vendors who don't have internet access.

24
25 P. Pollack: I'm glad. One of our goals, when we first formed, was to make sure our communications were
26 open to everybody.

27 **b. New Business**

28 **(1) A program of Promotional and Educational Events**

29 M. Notarianni: I've given you a handout with two sides. One is the suggestions that the vendors gave at
30 the public meeting, the other is the suggestions commission came up with at our working session. (reads
31 through idas).

32
33 P. Pollack: What do we think our next steps could be?

34
35 S. Brines: One idea might be to set up a sub-committee. Can we include the general public on sub-
36 committees?

37
38 P. Pollack: I don't see why not.

39
40 S. Brines: I think we could engage other groups, like Slow Food. I don't feel like, at our working sessions,
41 we really have enough time to delve into these issues. I would suggest it meeting on Saturdays, as markets
42 are winding down...

43
44 P. Pollack: The important thing is understanding what the charge for the sub-committee is.

45
46 S. Brines: One goal of the committee could be to rank these idas as far as importance and also feasibility.

47
48 D Black: Does the market itself provide signage?

49
50 M. Notarianni: Yes, several types. We have small blue "postcards" with information about the market,
51 larger green wooden A-boards that can display news within the market, and I recently applied for a grant to
52 create individual placards for each vendor that will contain their name, and hang in their stall.

53
54 P. Pollack: We have 2 volunteers for the "promotional and educational events sub-committee", Molly and
55 Shannon.

56

1 S. Brines: We could meet at 2 pm on Saturdays. The group's purpose is to focus more energy on exploring
2 ideas that are difficult to find time to during PMAC meetings or working sessions. I think there are 2 kinds
3 of signage we should focus on: the signage that says the market's hours, which I think should say "year
4 round," and the signage of the actual stalls.
5

6 M. Notarianni: I've been trying to update the website more frequently, to help the public become more
7 aware of the market's year-round offerings. I would also like to create a newsletter to email to the public.
8

9 G. Service: That's great! We should make people aware that the website is being frequently updated, and
10 to check it out. Could you email us when its been updated?
11

12 M. Notarianni: Sure! www.a2gov.org/market
13

14 Service, D Black: We'll tentatively join the committee as well.
15

16 K. King: Would this committee handle the advertising budget itself, and the routine advertisting?
17

18 S. Brines: I don't think so. I think it should only serve to brainstorm events.
19

20 G. Service: As the sub-committee is brainstorming, we can think of other people who can help.
21

22 J Black: Gina and I formed a similar sub-committee last year with a member of the old commission, and
23 we found that it is really important to make sure that the group will not only brainstorm ideas, but actually
24 act on those ideas.
25

26 M. Notarianni: I am hoping to build a volunteer base this year, through both ongoing (writing articles for a
27 newsletter) and one-time tasks.
28

29 P. Pollack: We'll need to think about the costs of new events, and if they will be free, or if we will need to
30 increase the market's budget, etc.
31

32 K. King: I think we need some really creative, attractive "advertising." Lots of stores are setting up so-
33 called "farmers markets," and they are our competition. We need some creative ideas, like a photo of a
34 busy market day that says "AAFM, Ann Arbor's worse kept secret," or a picture of very old vendor next to
35 a very young one, with the text "AAFM, 75 years young."
36

37 J Black: We start a new fiscal year July 1, so perhaps the sub-committee could meet soon, to create a plan,
38 and then meet again, closer to the end of May, to determine how to spend that fiscal year's advertisting
39 budget.
40

41 P. Pollack: I like King's ideas. I also think we could create an 8 1/2" by 11" flyer to distribute in the
42 neighborhoods surrounding the market: small and inexpensive...
43

44 D Black: What about advertising with a welcome wagon-type organization, or realtors?
45

46 M. Notarianni: We already do advertise with the welcome-wagon, they are called Newcomer's.
47

48 G. Service: Bumper stickers! How about Saturday the 29th for our first sub-committee meeting?
49

50 P. Pollack: When we decide to have our meeting, and when we will have attendance of 3 or more, than
51 we'll need to post it appropriately, in conjunction with the Public Meetings Act. That is another reason to
52 have a bulletin board at the market, and a place to post things online.
53

54 **8. Reports and Commissions**

55 **a. Market Manager.**

1 M. Notarianni: Farm inspections are starting for the first time in 8 or 9 years. We've hired Matt Demmon
2 as our inspector, and we've already done 2 days of inspections. They've gone quite well.

3
4 G. Service: So how does that work? Does he call ahead, and then go by himself?

5
6 M. Notarianni: Yes. I went with him for the first few, just to get a system down, but he will be doing the
7 inspections by himself. There is a form to follow, etc.

8
9 G. Service: Will that information be available on the website: which farms have and have not been
10 inspected?

11
12 M. Notarianni: I don't think so. I hope to have everyone inspected by year's end.

13
14 P. Pollack: Is there any public information value involved in this process?

15
16 G. Service: We'll brainstorm on that.

17
18 M. Notarianni: Because of the dynamic operation of many people's operations, they may need more than
19 one inspection throughout the season. Council approved the Phase 1 renovations!

20
21 J Black: The mayor would like us as staff to review and research whether we can use LED lights at market.
22 Staff are working with Gary Cooper and Beckett and Raeder to review different LED options, their light
23 levels, etc. We are still going to move ahead with Phase 1, and make a decision on the lighting as we
24 gather more information. We'd like to have a review committee made up of this entire body, instead of a
25 single person, like the old commission had decided. Many more design elements will come into play in
26 Phase 2 and Phase 3. This commission, city staff, and the DDA will serve as that review committee. We'll
27 present some more information regarding renovations at the next PMAC meeting, April 17th, and then there
28 will be another public meeting the week of April 21st. Jeff Dehring is going to look at another venue for
29 our public meeting, as the acoustics at Cobblestone aren't that great.

30
31 P. Pollack: I like the idea of including this body as a whole in the review committee. Thank you!

32
33 M. Notarianni: We now have a group email list; PMAC@a2gov.org. Annie and Paul of Community Farm
34 of AA want to bring their solar tractor to market to show off.

35
36 G. Service: It would be great to have a poster about the solar project that is happening!

37
38 M. Notarianni: I am in the process of completing the FNS authorization, so we'll be able to accept Food
39 Stamps at the farmers market. We have distributed surveys to all of the vendors, and are starting to receive
40 them back: lots of good feedback. I am also working on creating additional signage, merchandise, and
41 composting at market! Also, perhaps, an educational rainbarrel at market!

42 **b. Related Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces**

43 **c. Items from Commissioners**

44 K. King: Especially now that the market is being reconfigured, the issue of seniority is going to be bigger
45 and bigger. We need to be proactive, and face it head on. I think we should examine how stalls have been
46 obtained in the past, and what it means. What privileges accompany high seniority? I think we should
47 tackle this as delicately, yet firmly, as possible.

48
49 J Black: We don't have records of how things came to be, in regards to seniority. We can gather
50 information from talking to others, but there are no reference documents as far as how seniority was
51 established. Maybe we should put that on the agenda for next month??

52
53 G. Service: Could you compile the responses regarding seniority from the vendor surveys for the next
54 meeting?

55
56 M. Notarianni: Yes.

1
2 J Black: We only have information as far back as 2004.
3

4 P. Pollack: Is it true that there are very few markets that use seniority as a system?
5

6 M. Notarianni: I think so. Other markets may use seniority as a loose guiding principle, but not as a
7 quantifiable concept, like we do.
8

9 P. Pollack: It would be helpful to have examples from other markets. Let's put this on the agenda for our
10 next meeting. This is one of our work items for this year, which means the due date is September.
11

12 S. Brines: I think we should talk to vendors while we're at vendors and gather their feedback. One
13 feedback I've gotten from a fairly senior vendor was that didn't we just tweak the rules last year?
14

15 J. Black: We clarified them. We said the day you become an annual is when you accept an annual stall.
16

17 S. Brines: I won't be able to attend the next meeting, but I will forward on some comments and thoughts
18 from vendors and myself.
19

20 G. Service: Are there any more changes for any more artisans coming in?
21

22 M. Notarianni: Not yet, bc I haven't sent the new applications out yet.
23

24 P. Pollack: Could you email us a draft of the application?
25

26 M. Notarianni: Yes! I will tomorrow.
27

28 S. Brines: Don't forget the Homegrown Festival, on September 13th.
29

30 P. Pollack: The KDA met today. Trunk-a-palooza starts in May, African American Fest is the first
31 Saturday in June. The Nash Bash will happen again, maybe late August. The Kerrytown Book Festival is
32 the first Sunday in September.

33 **d. Transmittals/Communications Received**

34
35 M. Notarianni: We received an email from Peter Stark.
36

37 **10. Adjournment**

38
39 The regular meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.