

Oak Park Farmers' Market, April 10, 2013 Minutes

Members Present: Commissioners Melissa Wittenberg, chair; Rebekah Braslow, Warren Bakker, Aly Schoenfeldt, Molly McDonough-Carson, Nancy Fjortoft, Barbara Colpoys; Jennifer Lowe, Bob Melican; Church liaison Jeff Petertil; and Vendor liaison Jim Vitalo. Village staff: Mike Charley & Jessica Rinks, market manager.

Visitors: Ashley Hopkins Yanda and Casey Schepp

Meeting called to order: 7:07 p.m.

Minutes: Bob Melican moved to approve minutes; seconded by Rebekah Braslow. Minutes approved on voice vote.

Staff report:

Jessica Rinks reported that the second of three assistant market managers will not be returning. Mike Charley is looking for replacements for the season. The latest assistant manager, Cheryl, isn't returning because of a change in jobs.

- The market is still receiving bake-sale applications, though slots are filling up.
- The market manager hopes to add two new vendors. One would replace a bread vendor which will not be returning. Another could be a maple syrup vendor, which will not need a space for the whole season.

Mike Charley reported that assistant manager positions are posted and would be open for about two weeks. The positions are part time, working 8-9 hours every other week/16 hours a month at \$15 per hour.

Melissa Wittenberg said she would spread the word about hiring among Farmers' Market Friends as well as Facebook market groups and she encouraged commissioners to also spread the word.

Chairperson's Report:

Melissa Wittenberg noted that she's distributed commission booth sign ups for May and June. Commissioners were urged to send preferences. Friends are signed up through June.

- Only two not-for-profits have signed up to receive donated produce through the Food Rescue Program: OPRF Food Pantry and Hephzibah House.
- Go Green Days are scheduled for opening day on May 18 then on May 25. Wittenberg reached out to possible participants and has heard from 8-9 to attend on May 18 and 7-9 to attend on May 25. She's contacted the church about borrowing chairs and tables for set up.

- Vendor breakfast/orientation is set for 5:30 a.m. on May 18. Wittenberg and Braslow will host.
- Schoenfeldt and Fjortoft will head up Friends Recruitment Night from 7-8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 7 at the Oak Park Public Library.
- Melican will follow up with the Lake Street Theater about announcing the market opening on the theater marquee.

Church Liaison Report:

Jeff Petertil reported that the church will be making donuts on May 11, the week before the market opens, during a Food Truck Rally. The event is 12-6 p.m. and will host 11 vendors. More info here: www.foodtrucks-op.info/index.html

Petertil ok'd sidewalk chalk/sandwich board to advertise the farmers market opening on May 18.

He also discussed records for donut sales, evaluating patterns through the summers. Sales do well in the May opening weeks, even though the market is not full yet. So far, all not-for-profit donut partners are returning and new groups are being recruited. Prices will rise on coffee and donuts by the dozen.

The availability of a portable toilet was discussed given Ridgeland common is closed and there will be no public restrooms this summer. Jessica said she would check where one would be. Petertil expressed preference that it not be placed on church property.

Vendors' Liaison Report:

Jim Vitalo noted he is doing farm inspections on behalf of the Hines VA market and noted that growers were ready for the season.

Wittenberg asked Vitalo to share inspection reports with the Oak Park market managers. Vitalo said he would and noted that Harden, Skibbe, Dennanne and Heartland Meats all passed his on-site inspections.

Merchandise & Sales Committee Report:

Rebekah Braslow suggested an inventory be taken of new merchandise and that new pricing sheets be created.

Rinks said she and an assistant manager would do the inventory, check the tent and whiteboard before the opening of the market.

Schoenfeldt requested a women's cut t-shirt be ordered. But commissioners noted that those have been substantially more expensive, though Rinks said she would explore doing an order.

New Business:

On the subject of an updated ordinance and operating rules, Fjortoft incorporated suggestions from Braslow, McDonough-Carson and Schoenfeldt.

Discussion continued on whether to change language to be able to add flexibility with adding meat vendors, especially a fish vendor and leaving such decisions to the discretion of the market manager and consensus of the commission.

Melican proposed switching the rules to let the commission have a say in who is selected to participate in the market each season and leave space rental decisions to the Village staff.

Charley suggested commissioners review Wisconsin's Dane County's system for progressive discipline when there have been violations of market rules. McDonough-Carson agreed to review those rules and offer suggestions to Fjortoft before the next meeting.

Old Business:

Jessica said she would touch base with the village about offering composting to growers on market Saturdays.

Next meeting date: To be determined

Adjourned at 9 p.m.