

FARMERS' MARKET COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2021
7:00 PM
Conducted Remotely

Commission Present: Jessica Green, Rachel Hahs, Dina Ross, Jill Stewart, Myndi DeVore,
Commissioners not Present: Julia Knier, Dominic Cianciolo, Katie Weaver, Liz Stolfa
Village Trustee Present: Arti Walker-Peddakotla
Staff Liaison Present: Cameron Davis.
Farmers' Market Manager Present: Kimball Ingram
Others Present: Jeff Petertil, Church Liaison, Frank Pond, CIC Liaison

- 1) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Staff Liaison Davis at 7:02 pm. There is not currently a Chairperson of the Farmers' Market Commission.
- 2) **Agenda Approval:** A motion to accept the agenda, as presented, was made, seconded and approved.
- 3) **Public Comment:** Staff Liaison Davis stated that no public comment had been submitted, per the directions provided on the agenda document.
- 4) **Approval of Minutes:** The May 12, 2021 minutes, a motion was made to accept, with changes, seconded and approved.
- 5) **Farmers' Market Staff Liaison Report (Kimball Ingram, Farmers' Market Manager)** – Manager Ingram reported the smooth administration of the Market's to-date. He expressed appreciation for the wonderful volunteers, but recommend that volunteers be encouraged to sign-up to help toward the close of the market as this is when more help is needed.

Market Manager Ingram reported that he is working on a database of other markets and vendors outside of Oak Park as this will assist in recruiting new vendors to future markets. The Manager reported about his preparations regarding beginning on-site visits to current vendors.

Davis shared that the Manager is working toward setting-up a streamlined vendor sign-up process for this fall, to secure attendance for the 2022 season. Both Davis and Ingram have been fielding a lot of requests from prospective vendors to join the market.

- 6) **Staff Liaison (Cameron Davis)** – Davis reported that there have been several applicants for the available Assistant Market Manager position. Davis reported that each of these additional candidates will only be able to work through early August, which means that they would not be able to assist with any future aggregation efforts. At this point, with very few applicants interested in these available positions, Davis does not foresee the ability to utilize any part-time Village staff to manage any aggregation efforts in 2021. All of the budgeted Assistant Market Managers will need to focus on operating the traditional market. He expressed hope that the third Assistant Market Manager would be on-staff within the next several weeks.

Davis praised Commissioner DeVore on doing a great job managing market volunteers. He shared a spreadsheet listing each of the 22 volunteers that have offered their assistance since the 2021 market season began. Village staff will work with Commissioner DeVore to keep this volunteer list updated.

Commissioner Hahs asked if Market Manager Ingram felt that he has the right number of volunteers. Ingram expressed appreciation for all volunteers. The volunteer need is greatest at the end of each market.

Davis shared that Herbally Yours will return to the Oak Park market this Saturday. This popular vendor is scheduled to attend markets on the second Saturday of each month. Davis mentioned that Green Fire will also be at this week's market.

Davis mentioned that he will give an update on the fiscal 2021 farmers' market budget at the Commission's next meeting. His report will provide updates on both revenues and expenditures, to date. One of the largest expenditure's every year is the rental of the church parking lot, which was just signed off on.

Davis stated that as the Commissioners are aware, the Health Department has a separate health order for the Farmers' Market. The Health director is attempting to prepare the new order. He will let the commission know as soon as the new order is issued.

Davis updated the Commission regarding the two most frequently expressed concerns at the market: 1.) The requirement to wear a mask; and 2.) The price of produce. Manager Ingram will look at price points of our vendors when he visits other farmers' markets.

Trustee Walker-Peddakotla asked Davis if the market managers position is part-time position. Davis stated that the Market Manager and the Assistant Market Managers are all part-time. The part-time positions do not include benefits like health insurance, pensions, etc.

Manager Ingram is continuing to work on the 2021 market calendar. Ingram is waiting on the new health order in order to move forward on scheduling bake sales and special events.

Davis is working with The Oak Park Township to advertise its senior bus; the bus will pick residents up and bring them back to their home. There will be a fixed location on Lake Street for pickup and drop-off. Additional signage will be placed on Lake Street and there will be flyers to hand out to make seniors aware of this option to get them to and from the market. There is no fee for the service just a suggested donation of \$1.00.

Commissioner Hahs asked about the change in timing on the application processes. Davis stated that some of the comments from the vendors where that most markets have the next year wrapped-up by the end of the previous year. Vendors have more time in November to process market applications as opposed to March. Commissioner Hahs asked if this would affect the timing of the Market Managers position. Davis responded that he did not think so, if it was managed appropriately. The goal is a seamless transition from one year to the next.

Trustee Walker-Peddakotla asked if it made sense to start considering if the market manager's position should become full-time instead of seasonal, as now would be the time to discuss, since this is when the Village's departments are looking at the 2022 budget. She expressed her feeling that the discussion should happen soon.

- 7) **Church Liaison Report (Jeff Petertil)** – Jeff Petertil reported that it is definitely good to have the market back in the parking lot. The Church is selling donuts in two different spots and Petertil reported that sales are good. In terms of donut sales, some of the churches non-profits partners have not come back, but Petertil reported that they still have a full roster regarding help.

Petertil expressed the church's thanks for all that has been done to facilitate the market season. The church has received several requests from groups to use of church lawn. The church has always responded "No" since the public parkway is available.

8) **Vendor Liaison Report (Frank Damiano)** – Not present.

9) **Committee/Project Reports**

- a) **Volunteers:** It was reported that a good number of volunteers have been assisting with market operations. Davis has created a spreadsheet to keep track of volunteer work. Volunteer criteria will need to be changed with the new health order.
- b) **Communications:** Commissioner Stewart stated that now that the market is up and running she would reach out to Manager Ingram. The manager will soon be starting site-visits and this may be an opportunity to promote vendors.
- c) **Aggregation:** Commissioner Hahs asked if the wording on the Village's website could be adjusted regarding aggregation. Davis stated that he is working with Communications to change the wording.
- d) **Sustainability:** Commissioner Knier was not present.

10) **Old Business:** None

11) **New Business:** None

12) **Adjourn:** A motion was made, seconded and approved, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: July 14, 2021