

Oak Park Farmers' Market Commission
January 14, 2008 Minutes

Members Present: Melissa Wittenberg, Chair; Roberta Jannsen; Nancy Fjortoft; Betsy Fechalos; Frank Pond; Maggie Den Hartog; Barbara Dolan; Jim Vitalo; Meredith Conn; Kathy Lewis

Members Excused: Chris Mitchell; Ann Bill; Barb Pendleton

Guests: Mike Charley, Jon Hale

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Wittenberg.
2. The minutes were approved as amended.
3. Mike Charley reviewed the 2009 budget. He noted that the approved budget bottom line was identical to what was submitted, but various line items were different. He is in the process of having those corrected. Total OPFM budget for FY 09 is \$28,700.00.
4. The Chair reported the OP Board approved the OPFM to sell bread. The next step is that changes need to be made in the ordinances to reflect this. A meeting is scheduled with the village attorney to begin this process. The Chair has informed or attempted to inform all OP bakers that the OPFM will be accepting applications from bakers.
She also reported that the OP Board approved early openings, so the Market will open on May 23, 2009. The application will need to be revised to include these two changes.
5. PR Committee Report.
The draft mission statement was revised as follows:

The Oak Park Farmers' Market provides access to healthy, locally grown food and other products in a community setting, while celebrating social connections and building the cooperation between urban and rural.

This was approved unanimously.

This will be placed on our web site.

Budget decisions

The PR Committee will reduce advertising costs in half (approximately) by only placing ads in the WJ. Last year, we placed ads in both Wednesday Journal and Oak Leaves.

Division of Labor

- Betsy will take the lead in PR and will be the liaison with Dave Powers, Director of Communications at the Village, Mike Charley, and Tony Bell (WJ ad liaison).

- Betsy will determine the event dates (after 2009 events are chosen) and print Event Cards, which will have web site, opening date, closing date and times.

- The Vendor of the week initiative and Nancy will go to the Growers breakfast on opening day of the market to get them to sign up for this.

- PR will be responsible for the website. After January discussion, the website will be reevaluated and modified as needed. As this is a collaboration with Dave Powers, Betsy would be the point person.

Discussion items

Discuss mission is critical to determining the role and tasks of the PR Committee (and other committees and individuals responsible for key areas too, as (eg) merchandising and volunteers are only one commissioner. Among other things, depending on the conversation some tasks/events may be added or dropped.

Some of the outstanding current roles which may change based on the discussion include:

(a) is it PR's role to write articles? does the whole commission have to approve the idea for an article? *(we think this may belong to staff)*

Decision: OPFM Commission initiate request to Dave Powers. The Commissioner who is in charge of the event/item writes the draft press release and then it goes to PR Committee then to Dave Powers. The full commission does not need to approve topic or content.

(b) is signage part of PR's role? - *(Melissa, the consensus of the PR Committee is that signage should not belong to the PR Committee. This should be the role of each separate committee to get their signage needs met.)*

Decision: Village staff should be responsible for signage. Betsy will discuss with Dave Powers.

(c) bake sales are on the website - is this the role of PR?

Decision: This information, when possible should be on the Web. Betsy will inform Dave Powers.

(d) PR used to do an FYI ad to get volunteers for the reception in May. Last year a WJ/OL ad (a fortune) and didn't increase turnout. Should this be Barb Dolan's role? Does PR Committee do all PR for all functions of the Market?

Decision: Only do event ads, general ads are not worth it.

(e) what is the REAL purpose of the PR Committee and the FM

Commission? To bring in more Oak Parkers? Does DIOV get those new people? We don't get more (or less) budget regardless of how many people, how much we sell. Besides - doesn't everyone in OP who is interested know

we're there and if we continue to advertise, should it be in other papers to attract other surrounding communities? If so, should they be "event" ads or periodic "come to OP FM" ads?

Decision: No conclusion was reached regarding this issue.

- 6) Committees & Special Events – Discuss, reevaluate & select positions. We agreed that every event needs to be critically evaluated using the following questions: What is the purpose of the event, what are the expected outcomes, how is it related to the mission of the OPFM, and what is the historical significance? Further discussion on events for FY 09 was tabled until the next meeting.
- 7) Management Committee Report – Frank Pond & Melissa Wittenberg. No additional report.
- 8) Manager's Report – Meredith Conn
 - a) The grant was submitted for Illinois advertising dollars.
 - b) They made 11 farm visits in FY08. 14 was the goal. They now need to use their own car for these visits.
- 9) Merchandise & Sales Committee Report – Maggie Den Hartog reported that they have a good inventory, due to spending excess FY 08 budget dollars.
- 10) Church Liaison – Jeff Petertil was absent, so no report.
- 11) CIC Liaison – Karen Gegner – in her absence, update from Melissa. OPFM now has 2 vacancies on their Commission, with one more expected in May. All members are encouraged to recruit new members.
- 12) Growers' Liaison – Jim Vitalo suggested that we start a program where customers can bring containers to collect chaff from farmers. This makes great mulch. Seven Generations Ahead maybe a good source for this type of program.
- 13) New Business--Tabled until next meeting.
 - ⇒ Request feedback from current/past Market vendors & Friends for possible improvements at the Market – need someone to spearhead
 - ⇒ Increase recycling & “green” efforts at the Market – products, practices and education – any thoughts on how to do this?
- 14) Old Business

The Commission thanked Roberta Janssen for her service, hard work and dedication to the OPFM. This is her last meeting.
- 15) Confirm next meeting date – Wednesday, February 11, 2009
- 16) The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.