

Oak Park Farmers Market Commission Minutes August 12, 2009

Members Present: Ann Bill, Frank Pond, Nancy Fjortoft, Chris Mitchell, Sam Dali, Betsy Fechalos, Warren Bakker, Rebekah Braslow, Melissa Wittenberg (chair), Meredith Conn (staff), Kathy Lewis (staff), Mike Charley (staff).

Member Excused: Barb Dolan, Gail Grabowski

1. The meeting was called to order by Chair Wittenberg at 7:00 p.m. New members were welcomed and introductions were made.
2. Non-agenda public comment--no comments
3. The minutes were approved as previously distributed.
4. Mike Charley presented the current financial report. There were no questions or comments. It was noted that Market Manager Meredith Conn was awarded a \$2000.00 grant from the state of Illinois for advertising. The funds have been received and supported a special advertising campaign on the CTA Green Line. Congratulations to Meredith for this award. A suggestion was made that a press release should go out announcing this award.
5. Chair Wittenberg had the following report.
 - a. Commission information has been distributed to new commissioners Bakker, Braslow & Dali. A third commissioner has been appointed and will be joining later (Grabowski).
 - b. The Corn Roast is Saturday, August 15. Volunteers are still needed. This is a major fundraising event for the OPFM. All corn is donated.
6. Chair Wittenberg presented the Management Committee report, which met earlier this month.
 - a. The OPFM received an application from Marion Street Cheese Market in late July. The application was well past the March 15 deadline. In addition, there is no available space at the Market. A letter was sent to the applicant informing him of this decision. The Management Committee was commended for their efficient, fair, and equitable manner in which they processed this application.
 - b. There was some discussion on expansion of the market, as the market cannot accommodate all of its applications for space. After careful deliberation, the Commission is not supportive of expanding the market at this time for the following reasons. 1) Currently growers are not selling at the same pace as previous years, indicating that the OPFM may have saturated its market. 2) The current location cannot accommodate any more vendors, and as the church and the donut sales are an integral part of the OPFM, a new location is not desirable. 3) Given the nature of the growing season, some vendors do not attend the market until mid-season, and an expanded space could mean more vacant space early in the season. This is not desirable. 4) Finally, the OPFM mission statement focuses on locally grown produce and other products and the connection between urban and rural. An expanded market may dilute the mission of OPFM.

c. The Management committee presented the following revisions to the ordinances for action.

- i. Local Retailer of Farm Products: Any person licensed as a local retailer and as an itinerant vendor by the Village, and having a permanent place of business as a local retailer in Oak Park, and were sales of farm products that come directly from farms in the 4-state region of Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan constitutes fifty percent (50%) or more of said business.

This motion was approved unanimously.

- ii. 18-2-7: Assignment of Spaces
...After such assignments have been made, priority will be given to applicants who are growers and/or producers. ~~in our local, 4-state region of IL, WI, IN, MI.~~

A friendly amendment was made and approved to strike the clause as noted above. The amended motion was approved unanimously.

- iii. Remove from the ordinances the following two clauses.

Local florist: any person licensed as a florist and as an itinerant vendor by the Village and having a permanent place of business as a florist in Oak Park.

Local Service Vendor: Any person licensed to do business at a permanent location in Oak Park or licensed as a peddler in Oak Park and licensed as an itinerant vendor by the Village, offering a service which relates to the Farmers Market.

This was approved unanimously.

- iv. A motion was made to edit the Grower or Producer definition clause in the ordinance to add "must be from the 4-state region of IL, WI, IN, MI"

This was approved unanimously.

It was noted that all ordinances governing the OPFM may have to be reviewed to make sure they are consistent with the new definition clause.

- d. The last business item from the Management Committee was a recommendation to change the early opening from 8:00 a.m. to Noon to 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. to be consistent with the rest of the year. The primary driver behind this recommendation is safety. Many customers

were at the market at 7:00 and were in harms way with the truck traffic.
This motion was approved unanimously.

Chair Wittenberg will work with the Village attorney to draft these changes, which will then go before the Village Board. Rules will also have to be changed. It was noted that we should inform Lisa Shelley that the ordinance changes will be sent to the Board so that a review can be scheduled. It was also noted that the neighbors need to be informed of the recommended change in hours for the first two weeks of the market.

7. Special Events.

The Corn Roast is well organized, thanks to Meredith and Kathy. Local dignitaries have been invited to participate. Revenue from the corn roast goes into the Village general fund.

8. Manager Conn reported that the Village attorney, Mr. Heise has been very helpful. There has been some discussion of a mid-week market, and an informal survey of vendors indicates some interest. This is beyond the scope of the OPFM. Assistant Manager Lewis shared some suggestions from the San Francisco Ferry Market which were well received. They are: prepare a glossary of terms, 10 reasons to shop at OPFM, produce storage tips, cost analysis, campaign against plastic bags, and a movable feast involving local restaurants and OPFM vendors.

9. The Church Liaison Report was sent via email by Jeff Petertil. He reminded commissioners that the church bathroom is for vendors, commissioners, and donut sales people only. Donut revenue has been down, but they have been selling out. We continued to discuss ways to phase out Styrofoam cups, but reached no conclusion.

10. There was no CIC report.

11. There was no growers' liaison report.

12. Chris Mitchell reported on merchandise and sales. He will explore mugs for next year and will not be placing any more orders for items this year.

13. Ann Bill reported for Caring Carrots. She has replaced the Sisters of Notre Dame with PADS, as the Sisters did not consistently participate. This has been a very successful endeavor.

14. Betsy Fechalos reported that she will contact the Village regarding the incorrect market closing date in the recent ad in the Journal.

15. New Business

Saturday September 19 is a holiday, and therefore neither the manager nor assistant manager can work. Mike Charley will cover for staff. Ann and Chris will assist in the 6:00 a.m. set up and Frank will assist in the close.

16. Old Business

This is Commissioner Ann Bill's last meeting. We thanked her for her service and she will be missed. She will continue on as a friend.

17. The next meeting is Wednesday September 9, 2009

18. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.