

Oak Park Farmers' Market Commission Meeting Minutes  
February 10, 2010, 7:00 pm, Rm. 101

Present

Chairperson Melissa Wittenberg, Market Manager Meredith Conn,  
Jeff Petertil (church liaison), Peggy Wedoff (visitor)

Commissioners: Rebekah Braslow, Betsy Fechalos, Frank Pond, Chris Mitchell,  
Warren Bakker (minute taker), Nancy Fjortoft, Stacey Jutila, Robert Melican

Absent: Grant Jones (commissioner), Staff Liaison Mike Charley, Vendors'  
Liaison Jim Vitalo, Sam Dali (commissioner)

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:06 by Chair, Melissa Wittenberg.

2. Minutes: There was a motion to approve the January 13, 2010 meeting minutes, by Frank Pond and seconded by Chris Mitchell. All present commissioners unanimously approved.

5. Budget Report: Mike Charley was not present. Melissa indicated that no money has been spent yet. There have been 20 applications for the assistant market manager position. HR is reviewing the applications and will interview in the next 1-3 weeks.

6. Chairperson's/ Management Committee Report - Melissa Wittenberg

Robert Melican is a new commissioner. He came from New York City and has lived in Oak Park for about 1 year. He has been a frequent visitor of the market. Grant Jones and Stacey Jutila are now commissioners.

The 2010 Vendor Applications will be ready at the end of the week.

The changes to the Ordinance and Rules of Operations discussed last meeting were passed by the Village Board. Melissa will email the updated documents to the commissioners once they have been edited/finalized by the Village.

Melissa and Meredith attended the Chicago Farmer Forum last Saturday at Kendall College. This event was presented by the Mayor's Office of Special Events (City of Chicago) and Green City Market. This event promotes local food and farms by helping farmers and market managers connect. About 150 people attended and there were about 30 markets represented. Melissa and

Meredith received vendor inquiries and distributed information about our Farmers' Market. Notes from the forum:

- They were asked about how much traffic there was at the market and they did not have an accurate count. The idea of using clickers a couple times a year was presented.
- Melissa will look into possibly purchasing a hand held wireless credit card device that will accept Link cards/cash assistance/SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). The Logan Square Farmers' Market uses one and it has been a huge success.
  
- Melissa will also organize another benchmarking/best practices gathering with other area farmers' markets later this year.
  
- Forest Park will soon be holding a farmers' market at the Forest Park Community Center every other Friday from 3:30pm - 7:30pm.
  
- Rebecca asked how much was earned per spot at the Farmers' Market – this question should be referred to Jim Vitalo.
  
- The Village of Oak Park website has been updated with new vendor application, bake sale application and food demonstration application. As soon as other applicable items have been updated (ordinance; rules of operation) those will be added as well.

#### Committees and Special Events:

- Chris asked why there are only 2 spots for commissioners on the management committee & Melissa said that commissioners are needed for other committees.
- The Corn Roast and Green Days need more helpers.
- Friends Recruitment Night will be May 4<sup>th</sup> from 7-8pm at the library and Melissa will be there. The event will also be included in the March/April FYI.
- Melissa mentioned that there are 72 booth shifts this season, not counting extra assistance needed for special events, so please do keep that in mind as we'll need all commissioners to volunteer for 7 booth shifts on average + special events.

7. Church Liaison: Jeff Petertil. Jeff indicated that there is no date yet for the doughnut training and there has been talk about having chocolate doughnuts. Regarding the topic of discontinuing the use of Styrofoam cups at the donut area in 2010, for the time being, they will still be in use, though, the church did have 7 Generations Ahead participate in donuts as a working partner in 2009 and they

tried out some environmentally-friendly goods. The church will be exchanging views with them to see what they can incorporate for 2010.

8. Growers' Liaison: Jim Vitalo. Absent.

9. Merchandise: Chris Mitchell

Rebecca investigated the idea of good non-disposable, non-breakable mugs. She recommended mugs which are sustainable, non-toxic, biodegradable, and stackable and have visual appeal. She recommended 15 oz cups without lids. She checked with 4 or 5 vendors. The cost, including setup and shipping, would be \$4.50 per cup and we could sell the cups for \$5 to \$6 each. There was discussion regarding why we are selling cups, would people buy the cups as some people do bring their own and how many should we buy, if we decided to do this. Jeff indicated that it would be more efficient for the cups to be sold at the commissioners' booth as opposed to the donut area. He said that they may give a discount on the coffee to people who brought their own cup. It was decided that lids would work better than no lids and that 12oz cups would work better than 15 oz cups. Rebekah will research the price.

10. PR: Betsy Fechalos

The Wednesday Journal ads are set for the year for the farmers market. The ads will appear in the paper before the following Farmers' Markets: May 22<sup>nd</sup>, May 29<sup>th</sup>, August 21<sup>st</sup> and October 30<sup>th</sup>. In addition to the Oak Park Wednesday Journal, the ad will also appear in the Austin, Forest Park and Riverside newspapers. The cost of the ads is \$325 per ad.

Sam is doing the light post banner investigation. The banners will probably be located between Ridgeland and Oak Park Avenue, on Lake Street. The plan is to have 12 flags at \$125/flag. The design is free and the banner company can do the install (extra cost).

There is \$5700 in the budget for PR and about \$3000 will go toward the newspaper ads and the banners.

11. Manager's Report - Meredith Conn

Frank asked that the minutes of the last meeting be modified as follows - In 2009, \$80 was turned into the commissioner's booth, belonging to an anonymous patron.

Vendor applications will be available later this month.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has asked Meredith to talk about the market at their facility downtown next month.

We may not need to pay for the time lapse photography of the market since it is an intra-village expense.

#### 12. New business

- Howie Visteen is stepping down from the Citizen Involvement Commission so he will no longer be our liaison.
- The volunteer of the year award application is out. Volunteer appreciation night is April 29<sup>th</sup> from 7-9pm at the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Club in Oak Park. All are welcomed to attend.
- September 18<sup>th</sup> is the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur and Chris has volunteered to help at the market in anticipation of both Meredith & Melissa's absences.

#### 13. Old Business

None

Next meeting second Wednesday of the month, March 10, 2010, room 101.  
Please alert the chairperson in the event of an anticipated absence.