

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

Present

Chairperson Melissa Wittenberg, Peggy Wedoff (visitor), Jack Lanenga (visitor), Staff Liaison Mike Charley, Jim Vitalo (Growers' liaison), Bruce Cox (Church liaison)

Commissioners: Rebekah Braslow, Betsy Fechalos, Frank Pond, Chris Mitchell, Warren Bakker, Sam Dali (minute taker), Stacey Jutila, Grant Jones

Absent: Meredith Conn (Manager), Nancy Fjortoft (commissioner), Robert Melican (commissioner)

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:07 pm by Chair, Melissa Wittenberg.

2. Non agenda public comments: None

3. Approval of February 2010 Minutes: There was a motion to approve the February 10, 2010 meeting minutes, by Frank Pond and seconded by Chris Mitchell. Melissa to add the changes to the last month's minutes, if needed. The minutes were approved with these changes.

4. Budget Report: Mike Charley handed a budget copy to everyone. Out of \$53,401, so far we have spent around \$200 for new biodegradable mugs, etc.

-Market Manager Meredith Conn: Mike read out Meredith's letter to the commission in light of Meredith's absence from tonight's meeting.

-Asst. Manager position: The Village has received 19 applications for Asst. Manager position. HR has reviewed all applications and shortlisted 4-5 candidates. Asst. Manager will be finalized as soon as the HR makes a decision about the Market Manager position. Mike mentioned that there is a possibility of some restructuring around these positions. Melissa expressed a concern about both the positions being open and having no manager. Mike assured that the Village will fill these positions soon. Frank asked if the number of hours for the two positions is the same. Mike answered it's almost the same, with the Manager position doing some more time.

-Chris asked what the budget for the merchandise is – it falls under Operation Supplies. Melissa said to keep in mind that line items in the budget are a bit liquid and may be shifted to other needs.

-Mike invited new ideas to utilize future grant opportunities.

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

Melissa is chairing the green day event. Frank and Warren are working with Melissa. Mike suggested that K.C. Poulos, Sustainability Manager for the village, is working on a green day for the village and we can reach out to her for more information. Melissa added that Cheney mansion is also doing a green day and she'll contact them to find out more. Melissa also said that we need more people to work on the event.

-Ask your friends and neighbors to volunteer as friends of the market. The friend recruitment event is on May 4th, 2010 at 7pm at the Main Library.

-A meeting of chairpersons of the Village commissions is scheduled for March 31, 2010. We historically don't follow some of the generic rules for commissions. One such rule is that only the Village staff should handle cash during the various events. Mike said he will talk to the finance dept. about special circumstances like ours and ask for their recommendations.

-Food donation program – Melissa has reached out to seven organizations in the past to receive the donations. If you know of any organizations that can benefit from food donations, please let Melissa know so that she can add them to her list to reach out to. PADS, Oak Park Food Pantry & Hephzibah are already on the list. Fraternite Notre Dame is dropped as we cannot commit to delivering to them.

6. Church Liaison: Bruce Cox - Church wants to work with the market towards being more sustainable. He does not anticipate doing donut training. There are no new volunteer/partner groups.

7. Merchandise: Chris Mitchell- Rebekah found a biodegradable mug (BPA) which is reusable and dishwasher safe. It has a lid but no handle. We plan on selling them for \$5.

-Items to be sold in the commissioner's booth this year were discussed. Melissa said we need to reassess the inventory. We have plenty of shirts to start the

season. Long sleeved shirts, short sleeved shirts for children and the new item – mug are some of the items we need to purchase this year. Frank asked who's choosing the colors for the t-shirts. Chris is doing it.

-Rebekah asked who gets the money from the merchandise sales. Mike answered the Village does. We can get the account of revenues from Mike. This year, he'll ask the market manager to keep track of the revenue. Frank said he would like to see the revenue information.

-There was a discussion about where to sell the mugs. Warren said that they'll sell more if they are near the coffee. Bruce suggested that the church can buy some mugs from the market and sell them. Previously Jeff had indicated that the church committee is not interested in selling the mugs near the donut counter. Bruce clarified the committee is not interested in selling anything for the market, but can buy from the market and sell for the church. He will discuss it with the church committee. Betsy said the mugs can be sold at both the places – donut area and the commissioner's booth. Stacey asked if we can buy more mugs if we are sold out in the middle of the season. Rebekah said we can, as we are buying them from a local company.

-Melissa asked Chris to give the list of the merchandise & prices to Betsy so that she can forward it to the Village Communications Dept. so that they can get printed & laminated.

8. Growers' Liaison: Jim Vitalo asked about reusable mugs. Church is working on that. Growers are looking forward to the spring. Jim brought an article from NY times.

9. PR: Betsy Fechalos- Sam is working on installing the banners to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the market. She gave the details of the latest quote we received from Folger's Flags. They have quoted \$117 per banner with two wind pockets, \$72 hardware costs per banner and installation costs for 12 banners not to exceed \$412. Mike will do the research and get more quotes. He will also find out if the village can do the installation and if the hardware is available.

-There are 16 light poles on the north side of the street between Ridgeland and Oak Park Avenue. There was a discussion about which poles to choose for banners. Melissa said we'll get more exposure if we put the banners more towards the downtown. Frank said the purpose of putting the banners is more of

a celebration than advertisement. We would like the banners on both sides of the street near the market.

-There was a discussion on the format of the banner. There will be two text lines on the banner, one at the top and one at the bottom. The top one – “Celebrating 35 years”. Bottom one – “Still growing”.

-Mike informed that 2010 work plans should be submitted by July.

10. Manager's Report: Meredith Conn – Absent.

11. New business: Melissa reached out to 30+ area farmers’ markets. She is organizing a best practice gathering in Park Ridge for April/May.

12. Old Business: None

-Next meeting is scheduled for April 14, 2010.

-Rebekah asked about accepting credit cards in the market. Melissa said we’ll be able to discuss that later in the year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.