

## Oak Park Farmers' Market Commission ~ June 9, 2010 Minutes

PRESENT: Chair Melissa Wittenberg, Commissioners Warren Bakker, Grant Jones, Nancy Fjortoft, Rebekah Braslow, Sam Dali, Grant Jones, Robert Melican; Manager Meredith Conn, Assistant Manager Leticia Olmsted; Vendor Liaison Jim Vitalo

ABESNT: Commissioners Frank Pond, Craig Charlton (resigning due to moving), Betsy Fechalos (resigning due to life changes), Staff Liaison Mike Charley, Church Liaison Jeff Petertil

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm.

### **Mid-Week Market Presentation:**

Ms. Loretta Daly is the Business Services Manager employed by the Village of Oak Park. Mr. Thomas Barwin approached her and Village Planner Craig Failor about creating this market to better serve the business community by increasing revenue for them.

It would span approximately three months from June 16th through September 15th. The weekly set up for the market, for items such as hospitality tents, bathrooms, electricity, music stage, will be contracted out to an independent company. They have also hired off duty police folk to address issues that may come up, especially in light of there being alcohol. The site would be in the newly constructed parking lot southeast of Pier One Imports. There would be no revenue from those parking spaces occupied by the market from about 12:00 noon until about 9:30 pm. In other ways they hope to be self-sufficient by next year, as a requirement for their continued existence. This year \$28K of Ms. Daly's \$55K budget from the Business Services Budget (for marketing for the community) will go towards promoting and establishing the market. Other sponsors have donated about \$40K of advertising and time (Shop Here Oak Park, Wednesday Journal, Chicago Progressive Talk Radio). There are three main regions of emphasis: 1) growers (at least 1/3) 2) restaurants 3) retailers. Fifteen of the 32 booths will have electrical access to aid food preparation. Alcohol will be poured by The Marion Street Cheese Market, at cost. Any alcohol profits go to the Village to help keep the market afloat. The new Village's license for alcohol is exclusively for poured alcohol, and just for those market evenings. There will be guest chefs and demo booths. Several commissioners expressed an interest in keeping the identities of the two markets distinct so patrons do not get confused as to what they provide. The vendor liaison, Jim Vitalo, recommended advertising for the mid-week market at the Farmers' Market the previous week and vice versa.

The Mid-week Market Manager is Susan Hynes, who is happy to field any questions in the future.

### **Minutes:**

The June 2010 minutes were approved, motioned (Rebekah Braslow) and seconded (Grant Jones). The vote was unanimous.

### **Manager's Report:**

The new Assistant Manager, Leticia Olmsted, was introduced.

The cash box was stolen out of the manager's car last week, containing about \$250. There was no sign of forced entry in to car. All shifts indicated that there were no credit card purchases

that day.

Health department employees are inspecting more frequently resulting in several citations. There was much discussion about the important role of education first to promote good communication and reduce any subsequent wastage if items need to be thrown out. We discussed the importance of having a manager available at the time of inspections in order to facilitate this communication.

Empty stalls will soon be filled. TastefulLife comes soon. Catalina's Garden will come in July. Johanson's Apple World experienced a death in the family and will return when their produce ripens.

We will later discuss vendor cooperation, such as a pastry chef using berries and making sellable pastries.

**Chairperson's Report:**

Brought up possibly using Mid-Market ideas to benefit the farmers' market too.

The commissioner number is down to nine out of the possible eleven. Betsy Fechalos had to step down due to family demands. Craig Charlton will be moving out of state. One of the Market Friends may become a commissioner. July sign-ups for shifts are available.

There are also sign ups for special events and committees, especially with the recent loss of commissioners.

The chair person will be leaving the country June 17- July 3 but updated all information in the White Binder located at our booth at the market.

2011 Work plan discussions will continue next month.

**Budget and Staff Report – via email from Mike Charley:**

Some of the vendors are interested in LINK/POS devices. They are being processed for use.

**Church Liaison:**

- Jeff Petertil absent. They have requested 60 mugs so far, 10 the first day (which they paid for) and 50 more recently last market day. Fortunately they had not paid for the cups before the cash box was stolen. They are working on figuring out how to distinguish new from used mugs at their cashier's stand.

**Vendor Liaison:**

Jim Vitalo. He will be absent from the next few monthly meetings due to his being at a Wednesday evening market in the city.

**Merchandise and Sales Committee Report:**

Rebekah Braslow notes brisk sales of mugs and bags. Several patrons voiced desire for v-neck T-shirts.

**PR Committee Report:**

Sam Dali reports that Lake Theater would allow free advertising for the Farmers' Market on their marquee. MW recommended, if we can, to have them advertise the week before the corn roast, August 21. David Powers would help redesign website once we analyze the present site and describe to him how it needs to be altered. Sam Dali noted that she could create a website herself with some graphics help. Nancy recommended that we consider subcontracting web creation.

**Friend's Committee:**

There will now only be one friend in the tent at a time. This will decrease the number of people in the tent with little to do. Each friend gets a free T shirt, to be marked on the product sheet and in the "White Bible". It was noted that commissioners ought to also get free T shirts yearly. This will be discussed later.

**Food Donation:**

The pick-up schedule has been completed for the entire season with rotations amongst Hephzibah House, Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry and the Way Back Inn/Grateful House.

**Day in Our Village Report:**

Frank Pond absent. Having at least 2 people there was important. Sam recommended that a prize be given out for correctly guessing the vegetable to make the game more engaging

**New Business:**

Governor Quinn may be at the market shortly to sign a House bill which will change our present consumption of local Illinois produced food (5%) to a greater amount (20%) by the year 2020.

Rhoda Bernstein of Oak Park Board of Health interested in highlighting health issues, such as skin cancer. This will be discussed at a later meeting.

**Old Business:**

Patrons expressed delight with the "Go Green" days. The first week had six participant organizations and the second week had eight participating organizations.

**Next Meeting Date:** July 14

There was a motion to adjourn by Rebekah Braslow, which was seconded by Nancy Fjortoft. This was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebekah Braslow, June 2010 minute taker