

March 9, 2021

Coventry Farmers' Market Operating Committee
Special Meeting Minutes
Via Zoom video conferencing

Call to order:

The meeting was called to order by Weaver at 8:06 am.

Roll Call:

Eric Trott, Erica Pagliuco, Katrina Weaver, Barbara Barry, Jean Nelson, Anne Marie Charland, Jamie-Lynn Connell, Alexa Gorlick, Susan Ruggiero, Janine Coughlin, Jean Nelson (arrived at 8:10am)

Adoption of Minutes:

A motion was made by Barry and seconded by Charland to adopt the minutes of February 23, 2021. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of 2021 Market Season Planning:

A revised map was prepared that reflects the relatively accurate dimensions of the Market field, food truck row, and flag field. The map was forwarded to EHHD for their input and guidance. The cueing of the customers at the vendor tents and the food trucks will need to be managed. Customers that purchase food with the food trucks will need to 'grab and go' and not walk around without a mask on. The overall feeling is the District is in support of the layout but there will need to take a 'wait and see' with how the season rolls out and how many customers visit. We cannot determine how many customers will be expected from a week to week perspective.

Erica mentioned some other considerations that could occur with the food trucks. There is a thought that food trucks may not have as many sales as per usual since customers cannot sit and eat on site. Also, since the Market will start earlier in the day, the question is will they have as much sales since they previously focused on lunch in the past. Quicker food service and less choices would be helpful in keeping the line moving. The Committee discussed whether a delay in the increase in fees should be reconsidered.

Barry moved that the fees for food truck not increase this season, Weaver seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The reasons stated above were stated as the reasons for the decision.

An update on the vendor application was provided. Due to an IT email issue that occurred over the weekend, the distribution was delayed. A first phase of applications were sent out recently and a second wave will occur this week. The deadline for submittal is April 20 with fee. Late payments can be arranged. There is a May 1 deadline with the Health District as needed.

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Three part time vendors from last year have been asked to be a full time vendor. The Fudge vendor wish to expand sales to soap, which was accepted. Four applications have been submitted so far.

A question was added to the application to seek input from the vendors on how they could add value to the Market this season, beyond paying the fee and coming to the field. The goal is to have better engagement with the vendors and enable them to support the Market in unique and helpful ways.

Erica suggested that she can do a Facebook tutorial video or Zoom call to assist the vendors with proper posting habits. This was suggested to be a good idea.

A discussion occurred about vendors who are not being invited back to the Market. Issues with a particular Coventry vendor continued through the season, where it is believed that they violated the vendor regulations in many cases. In particular, behavior not becoming for a vendor and projecting anger at Committee members, volunteers, and staff. A lengthy discussion occurred about this issue and each member shared their feelings about the situation. It was felt that there is a need to have an effective partnership between the vendors and Market operators, not having a force to negatively affect it.

Previously, in cases similar to this, a letter was sent to the vendor about the Committee's position with reasons stated. According to the regulations, the vendor would have an opportunity to appeal and be heard by the Committee.

A motion was made by Weaver and seconded by Coughlin to exclude Riverview Farm as a full time vendor for 2021 due to noncompliance with section 2.17 of the Market Regulations. Unprofessional and unbecoming behavior including profanity, shouting and anger at Committee, staff and volunteers. The motion passed unanimously. An email will be sent to them.

Barbara delivered letters to Key Bank and People's United to seek support for the 2021 season.

Next Meeting:

March 23 - 8am via Zoom.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am.

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Respectfully submitted,

Eric M. Trott
Director of Planning and Development