FARMERS' MARKET COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2022, 7:00 pm

Conducted Remotely

Commissioners Present: Myndi DeVore, Jessica Green, Julia Knier (Chair), Tom Newman, Dina Ross,

Liz Stolfa

Commissioners Excused: Kristina Becvar, Jill Stewart

Church Liaison Present: Leslie Sutphen

Staff Liaisons Present: Cindy Hansen, Erica Helms, Sara Semelka

**Call to order.** Chair Knier called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

**Agenda approval.** Chair Knier requested to postpone the Climate Ready Oak Park Plan Update to the January meeting. Commissioner Ross moved to approve the agenda as amended; seconded by DeVore. Commissioners present voted in favor.

**Minutes approval**. Commissioner Newman moved to approve the October 12, 2022 meeting minutes as presented; seconded by Ross. Commissioners present voted in favor.

**Public comment.** No public comments were submitted for this meeting.

**Chairperson’s Report.** Chair Knier met with Ms. Semelka, Ms. Helms, and Village Communications team. The Farmers’ Market will retain its social media accounts with support from the Comms team. The commission will add additional commissioners to the social media team. Chair Knier will schedule a follow-up meeting with Commissioners DeVore and Green.

Chair Knier believes Trustee Wesley will be the new Trustee liaison to the commission. Ms. Semelka heard it was going to be Trustee Enya. Chair Knier will confirm with Clerk Waters and report back.

**Village/Liaison Reports:**

**Market Manager.** Ms. Helms thanked the commission for a successful Market season. Ms. Helms and Ms. Semelka worked with Commissioners Newman and Ross to propose changes to the ordinance regarding prepared foods. Market vendor fees are in the ordinance but may be able to be moved to Market Rules so Village approval would not be needed to raise fees. Ms. Semelka will follow up with the Village attorney. Moving vendor fees may be a larger discussion with the Village Manager and Board of Trustees. Chair Knier proposed seeking Board approval in December so the commission can approve in the January meeting and vendor applications can go out in January.

Ms Helms said the vendor survey will go out next week. She did not receive any responses to the LINK survey, though it was launched at the last Market and there was one less assistant. The QR code did not work well for LINK customers. Ms. Helms will rethink the survey to get LINK data for next year. Chair Knier suggested doing the survey halfway into the Market.

Ms. Helms and Ms. Semelka are doing a planning retreat and debrief and will present a 2022 Market report, customer survey results, and attendance at the January meeting. Ms. Helms and Commissioner Newman discussed having a session to review the 2022 vendor map layout.

Ms. Helms needs to organize and inventory the church basement and shed to assess the budget and place orders before year end. Commissioner DeVore may help with that. Ms. Sutphen suggested that Ms. Helms schedule a meeting with Pilgrim’s construction coordinators.

**Pilgrim Church Liaison.** Ms. Sutphen reported the last donut day was very challenging but was the biggest day ever in terms of revenue. She feels strongly that traffic can be increased to the Market. The kitchen is being gutted to create a full commercial kitchen and storage for donut equipment, which may help for prepared foods. Ms. Helms will add a donut question to the customer survey and a kitchen use question to the vendor survey. Ms. Helms will send a draft vendor survey to commissioners for feedback. Pilgrim’s lease with the Village for the Farmers’ Market is up next year.

Ms. Sutphen said table set-up needs to happen between 6:00-7:00 am and can’t be done when it’s raining. Ms. Helms keeps extra chairs at the info tent and suggested creating an additional seating area for prepared foods. Chair Knier suggested meeting with Pilgrim about additional seating and learning from their food truck rally experience.

**Vendor Representative.** Commissioner Newman will review this year's vendors with Ms. Helms and Chair Knier on who might be added next year. He welcomes vendor feedback from commissioners.

**Committee/Project Reports:**

**Volunteer.** Commissioner DeVore said volunteer turnout for the last Market was amazing. She is noting what worked well and what can be improved to plan for the months ahead. The volunteer appreciation event was fun with good turnout and doing more next year will grow the community feel.

**Communications.** Chair Knier said Commissioner Stewart will present a plan at the January meeting.

**Children’s Events.** Commissioner Ross said emails can be sent once the 2023 calendar is set. 2023 will be her last season. She does not want to be the children’s events lead or Pie Bake-Off lead, though she can assist. Chair Knier said the Pie Bake-Off can be moved to the Events committee.

**Events.** Chair Knier said there will be a new Events committee lead in 2023.

**Old Business:**

**2023 Work Plan Approval.** Ms. Semelka led the commission through the draft 2023 work plan. New additions include prepared foods and an apple fest in early October, with planning to start in June. Commissioner Newman said Chad Nichols can inform about the apple varieties. Rosh Hashanah is September 16 so the Pie-Bake Off can take place on September 9.

Food demonstrations can start the first day of the Market. The soft launch of prepared foods can start in May, though not all vendors will be there. Vendors can easily apply for temporary food permits through the health department. Food demos should be bite-sized so they don’t cannibalize prepared foods sales. Memorial Day has the lowest traffic. Commissioner Newman suggested encouraging food demo vendors to use produce from the Market. Commissioner Ross suggested including food demos in the application rather than the Market Rules.

Chair Knier said the Village does not have the staffing to do e-commerce or meal kits in 2023. Commissioner Ross suggested the commission run the software What’s Good that was used at the start of the pandemic. Ms. Sutphen said providing the donuts for What’s Good was a nightmare. Commissioner Green remembers the process was very intensive for commissioners, vendors, and volunteers to run it on the day of and the week leading up to it.

Commissioner Ross said she and one volunteer could assemble the meal kits in an hour if they were limited to 10 identical bags for three different kits (30 bags total). Commissioner Green inquired how money would get back to the vendors. Commissioner Ross responded that vendors could be paid onsite. She said she can pull together 15 recipes this week. Chair Knier said we already did not have enough volunteers for this week. Commissioner Ross withdrew the meal kits and ecommerce and general store suggestions for 2023.

Commissioner Newman moved to approve the 2023 Work Plan as presented; seconded by Ross. Commissioners present voted in favor. Commissioner Stolfa was absent at the time of the vote. Chair Knier will submit the work plan to Clerk Waters and cc: Ms. Semelka.

**Prepared Foods.** Commissioner Newman is in discussions with vendors to identify three prepared foods vendors who do not all have to start at once. He is focused on getting the language into the ordinance to allow for it. Chair Knier requested to have more details mapped out in January.

Ms. Semelka shared the revised ordinance. Commissioner Ross noted the changes, including expanding the definition of food service vendor and grower/producer; increasing the application fee and refunding fees for applications that are not accepted; expanding the exception for food demos.

The ordinance does not say who has the authority to make or amend the Market Rules. Commissioner Ross did not see it in the Village Code so she added flexibility for the commission to review and revise the Market Rules and recruit producers, publicize the Market, and determine other revenue-generating opportunities. Commissioner Ross would like to remove the $3 administrative fee that covered What’s Good.

The ordinance would allow vendors to sell apple cider and other beverages, but not coffee, which Pilgrim Church has the exclusive right to sell per their lease with the Village.

Commissioner Ross moved to approve the revised ordinance; seconded by Newman. Commissioners present voted in favor. Commissioner Stolfa was absent at the time of the vote.

Ms. Semelka will submit the revised ordinance showing the proposed changes as is to be included on the December 5 Board of Trustees meeting agenda.

**December meeting.** Commissioner Ross moved to cancel the December meeting; seconded by DeVore. Commissioners present voted in favor. Commissioner Stolfa was absent at the time of the vote.

**Adjourn.** Chair Knier adjourned the meeting at 8:46 pm.