

FARMERS' MARKET COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2022, 7:00 pm
Conducted Remotely

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

Commissioners Excused: Kristina Becvar, Rachel Hahs, Liz Stolfa, Artie Walker (Trustee Liaison)

Staff Liaisons Present: Cindy Hansen, Sara Semelka

Pilgrim Church Liaison Present: Leslie Sutphen

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

Agenda approval. Commissioner Newman moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner DeVore seconded. All commissioners present voted in favor.

Minutes approval. Commissioner Ross moved to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2022 meeting as presented. Commissioner Newman seconded. All commissioners present voted in favor.

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

Chairperson's Report. Chair Knier attended the quarterly chair meeting on August 29. Village management will let commissions know when the Governor's mandate has been changed and in-person meetings can resume.

At the volunteer recruitment event in 2019, the Commission voted not to attend because it didn't have enough commissioners to attend and it didn't get enough market volunteers to be worthwhile. Recruitment and engagement was better at Earth Fest. Commissioner DeVore remembers the volunteer recruitment event was not well attended. It will be deleted from the 2023 work plan.

Regarding the customer survey, Chair Knier recalled customers were given a card with an email address and participation was low. Ms. Semelka suggested an iPad, QR code, and signage in multiple places. The QR code can be shared in the Facebook group and in Village and volunteer communications. Commission Stewart suggested an incentive like market dollars or a goodie basket. Chair Knier requested that Ms. Helms encourage vendors to mention the survey to their customers. Commissioners should email Chair Knier with their survey question ideas. Chair Knier, Ms. Semelka, and Ms. Helms will discuss how to roll out the survey in the remaining seven markets.

Village/Liaison Reports:

Market Manager. In Ms. Helms' absence, Ms. Semelka reported that fall merchandise is here and includes long-sleeved shirts and toddler tees. Ms. Semelka will look into reordering tote bags. Our net profit so far this year is \$1,064. Net profit for 2019 was \$573 when we were charging less.

Attendance has been steadily increasing, with 5,000+ visitors per market since the Corn Roast, though there is still a drastic reduction after 12:00 pm. The third market assistant has been hired so August 20 will be the first time this year the market is fully staffed.

Supplies are on order for the Pie Bake-Off this weekend and a run of show is being developed. Commissioner Ross selected and notified the bakers and judges. Ms. Semelka and Ms. Helms are meeting with the Environmental Health team regarding prepared foods. The Village attorney will review the ordinance and vendor application if updates are needed.

Pilgrim Church Liaison. Ms. Sutphen reported that donut sales are increasing and they have enough volunteers. Construction will start this fall for a commercial kitchen and basement upgrade. Pilgrim will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2024. Chocolate donuts will be done again at the final market.

Vendor Representative. Commissioner Newman reported that vendors have also noticed traffic increasing since the Corn Roast. The issue with the bins being moved early has been corrected.

Commissioner Stewart did an attendance survey in 2019 and remembers attendance dropping off after 12:00 pm. Ms. Semelka confirmed that attendance is taken every hour at the front and back entrances. Ms. Sutphen said donuts are shut down at 12:00 pm after attendance drops off.

Commissioner Newman works the weekday market in La Grange. They have prepared foods and better attendance at the end. Ms. Semelka said Ms. Helms plans to do site visits. Chair Knier said the prepared foods strategy will be important so it doesn't cannibalize donut and bake sales.

Committee/Project Reports:

Volunteer. Commissioner DeVore reported that volunteer turnout has been good since the Corn Roast and the Pie Bake-Off should be covered. Commissioner Ross said pies are coming by 9 am and judging should be done around 10:15 am. This year the judges will interact with the bakers. There are 10 pies out of 20 entries, which is more than ever before. There were 7 or 9 judge entries for two spots. Staff will arrive at 7:30-8 am to set up. Commissioner Cianciolo will sign up for the morning shift. First place is an engraved pie plate and there are trophies for second and third place.

Commissioner Green said people who attended the Corn Roast wanted to sign up to volunteer and there is a potential new commissioner. It would be helpful to have a QR code for people to sign up.

Communications. Ms. Stewart reported that social media is being used to plug attendance and events. Commissioner Newman has joined the Communications Committee. Chair Knier announced that Commissioner Hahs is resigning from the commission.

Commissioner Green will post about the Pie Bake-Off. Chair Knier requested three posts a week. Commissioner DeVore suggested creating a formal schedule in the off-season. Commissioners should send photos of the market to Commissioners Green and DeVore so they can post on social media. Commissioner Ross will invite Melissa Elsmo to the Pie Bake-Off.

Events. Commissioner Ross said the JUF is hosting a Rosh Hashanah children's event this weekend. Baked Cheese Haus is not at the market this weekend because they have a hometown festival. Commissioner Cianciolo will follow up with Carnivore to do their shop. Chair Knier said Corn Roast sales were 25% higher than the past five years. Commissioner Cianciolo suggested raising the price of corn from \$2 to \$3, which hasn't been done in at least seven years. Corn roast sales were nonstop, though there were more smaller sales. The last corn came out at 11:30 am. Commissioner Stewart suggested posting signage about when roasting starts and ends.

New Business:

Prepared Foods. Commissioner Newman shared a framework that he and Commissioner Ross are developing for a prepared foods pilot program next year. It will remain true to a producers' market, based on seasonal products, and limited in numbers so it doesn't change the market into a food festival. The goal is to drive traffic after 11 am and increase the customer base. Two existing vendors are interested and a third would be desirable.

"Made of the Market" is an idea for a name other than "meal kit." Commissioner Ross is developing recipes for two to three meals each week which can be ordered online and picked up at the market.

A general store would include items from vendors like Bushel and Peck who cannot participate due to staffing limitations but could sell products online that could be picked up at the info tent.

Also being considered is an improved offering of beverages besides hot and iced coffee. The current ordinance does not include beverages so doing it through Pilgrim Church would make it possible.

Ms. Helms is working with the Communications team to discuss the requirements for online ordering, e-commerce, and point of sale. The Environmental Health team is being consulted for sanitation requirements. Chair Knier suggested the ordinance be narrowly written to set clear limitations on how many vendors can offer prepared foods. Commissioner Ross said the ordinance does not prohibit prepared foods so it can all be done through market rules and an info packet of specifications without changing the ordinance which may be too limiting in the future.

Ms. Semelka noted that adding online sales would require more staffing and currently the Market Manager position is part-time.

Adjourn. With no old business, Commissioner Ross moved to adjourn. Commissioner Newman seconded. Chair Knier adjourned the meeting at 8:32 pm.