



Memo

DATE: March 7, 2016
TO: Licensing, Permitting, and Inspections Committee
FROM: Nic Sparacio, Community Development Director
RE: 2016 Farmers Market

Results of Ad-hoc Committee Process

As you know, the Mayor convened the Farmers Market Ad-hoc Committee in 2015, which met four times from October through January. This stakeholder committee was intended to bring together viewpoints from City officials, farmers market vendors, and downtown businesses to collaborate on identifying potential improvements to the farmers market and formulating improvement strategies to bring forward to the Common Council as recommendations. In January, the Friends of the Farmers Market submitted a written statement expressing dissatisfaction with the process, and the Ad-hoc Committee has not met since. While much progress had been made, the intended process was not yet complete. I am attaching the materials that we had produced together to that point including an identification of current issues and opportunities and a set of goals for the future.

I have since met with the Friends of the Farmers Market to try to better understand their concerns. What I discovered is that their concerns were not with the process of the Ad-hoc Committee meetings, but with issues of the past, primarily related to two major incidents that occurred several years ago: a one-time closure of Quay Street without communication to the market vendors, and the RFP process that resulted in Mainly Manitowoc being selected as the market manager. You have seen the Friends' related statement, which requested to take over the funds and management of the farmers market, and which the Council received and placed on file in January.

Plans Moving Forward

The Manitowoc Farmers Market is a wonderful resource for our community, and it is important to the City to sustain it and help it improve. The community, the vendors, and the downtown environment all experience added benefits based on the fact that it is a downtown farmers market. I am also attaching a document that I shared with the Ad-hoc Committee to illustrate this dynamic.

It is unfortunate that these issues of years past are still interfering with the ability of some to participate in creating a shared vision for the future direction of the farmers market. However, the City and any stakeholders that are willing to continue working toward a shared vision for the future of the market must continue to lead the way. I do hope that the Ad-hoc Committee will begin to meet again and continue the strategic visioning process, but in the meantime, we just need to get the market up and running for the 2016 season. Here are the main points of the strategy that I propose toward that end:

- Continue with Sherrie Richards as the Market Manager for 2016
- Seek Common Council approval of the Management Agreement and Vendor Packet this month
- Hold a vendor meeting on March 22nd
- Saturday market to start May 7, and Tuesday market to start June 7
- Work with the Market Manager to recruit new/first-time vendors to add to the market

- Work with all stakeholders to bring new features/highlights to the market like musicians, food/cooking demonstrations, new/varied food vendors, and the like
- Recruit new/additional vendor participation in our strategic visioning process
- Hold another Ad-Hoc Committee meeting after the market is up and running

Changes to Management Agreement and Vendor Packet

The action items currently brought forward to the LPI Committee include an updated "Agreement for Management Services 2016 Manitowoc Farmers Market" (for Sherrie Richards) and an updated "Downtown Manitowoc Farmers Market 2016 Participation and License Agreement" (for market vendors). The following points summarize the proposed changes from last year's agreements:

- Provides dates for the 2016 market season
- Provides a 3% increase in market manager compensation (there was no increase in 2015)
- Due to anticipated declining vendor enrollment, yearly fee is reduced by \$10 for returning vendors and by \$30 for first-time vendors
- Reduce 2-day flex space fee from \$50 to \$25 to try to increase utilization
- Includes Fire Code updates

There are challenges ahead of us, but I do believe there is sufficient common ground between all stakeholders to keep the downtown farmers market intact. I am requesting LPI Committee and Common Council approval of the 2016 agreements with the understanding that efforts to involve stakeholders will be renewed. I also welcome your feedback on all aspects of the proposed strategy and approach.

CC: Mayor Nickels



Farmers Market Ad-Hoc Committee Issues and Opportunities Report



On Thursday, November 5, 2015, the Manitowoc Farmers Market Ad-Hoc Committee met to discuss the future of the Saturday morning and Tuesday afternoon farmers markets. The Ad-Hoc Committee is made up of a cross-section of farmers market vendors, downtown business interests, City officials, and market organizers. The guided discussion identified issues and opportunities relative to the farmers market. Nominal group process was utilized to ensure that every participant had the opportunity to voice their concerns and ideas. Several guests (in addition to the Ad-Hoc Committee members) were also in attendance at this meeting and were invited to participate fully in the process.

With all issues and opportunities recorded, each participant was asked to identify their top three issues and top three opportunities by placing “sticky dots” on the written comments. Participants were allowed to “weight” their priorities by utilizing more than one dot for a given issue or opportunity statement. The ranking below reflects the priorities based on the number of votes received.

Issues

First participants were asked, from their perspectives, what are the issues facing the Farmers Market? Issues were defined as challenges, problems, or obstacles. The following issues were identified.

| <u>Rank</u> | <u>Issue Description</u> |
|-------------|---|
| 1 | Condition of the parking lot |
| 2 | Who is best fit to administer and make policy? |
| 3 | How should market funds be used? And who decides? |
| 4 | Lack of cohesion with downtown business owners, when are they open? Compared to market hours? |
| 4 | Rebuild trust |
| 4 | Composition of the ad-hoc committee (who is covered in representation) |
| 4 | Who is the target market for the farmers market? |
| 4 | Price increases could push vendors out |
| 5 | Communication (avoid surprises) on street closures, etc. |

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| 5 | Market hours are not enforced, can interfere with setup, doesn't appear orderly, safety issues |
| 5 | Need for discussion around integrity of farmers market (in terms of composition and potential changes) |
| 5 | Need more advertising |
| 5 | Access to the market, mobility within the market, parking around the market |
| 6 | Dangerous traffic flow on 8 th Street |
| 6 | Focusing too much on the past, want to move forward, willingness to discuss changes (Pertaining to the farmers market, downtown businesses, and city relationship) |
| 6 | Perception that non-vendors don't have a stake in the market |
| 6 | Older demographic of customer base – customer die-off |
| 6 | Potential for “Manager Fatigue” (Don't want to lose a good manager) |
| 6 | Integration with other downtown and city events |
| 6 | Unmet potential in downtown – opportunities for synergy |
| 6 | Customers still not aware of the time change for Tuesday |

Opportunities

Next participants were asked, from their perspectives, what are the opportunities to further improve the Farmers Market? Opportunities were defined as positives, already existing or future potential, that can be leveraged toward greater results. The following opportunities were identified.

| Rank | Opportunities Description |
|-------------|--|
| 1 | Market runs smoothly the way it is |
| 2 | Diversify: meats, bakery, indoor/outdoor and enlarge, commit to something grand |
| 3 | If parking lot can't be fixed, can market go to Washington Park or other location? Potentially move the farmers market to 8 th street, close it to vehicle traffic during market |
| 4 | Utilize digital sign on Washington Street |
| 4 | Look at what other cities are doing (There are some good ideas out there) |
| 5 | Some way to communicate what is available that day |

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|---|---|
| 5 | Consider making 8 th and 10 th two-way streets |
| 5 | Bring in additional partners like Healthiest Manitowoc, Clipper City Co-op, more vendors, be the best at what we do |
| 5 | A permanent enclosed facility, winter market (a true winter farmers market with root veggies, other seasonally available items) |
| 5 | Have a plan or policy in place for time of setup and loading routes |
| 5 | Current location is the City Center, add more positive features to make it a destination |
| 6 | Wine or beer tasting contest at appropriate times (local) |
| 6 | Current location is a community, serves vendors and customers well |
| 6 | Events could be tailored to the customer base, interest including horticulture, food, cooking (more than music and beer) |
| 6 | Are there other/different days or hours that work better? |
| 6 | Move farmers market to Quay Street (8 th to 10 th) |

The identification of issues and opportunities does not represent an end point in itself. Rather, this thought process helps form the foundation for moving forward with the clarification of goals, which in turn supports the formulation of sound recommendations and an action plan for implementation.



**Farmers Market Ad-Hoc Committee
January 7, 2016 Strategic Planning
REVISED DRAFT Goal Statements**



Goals are broad, value-based statements expressing stakeholder preferences for the long term. They specifically address key issues and opportunities facing the Farmers Market and provide a foundation for generating and evaluating potential recommendations and actions.

Draft Goals:

1. Foster ongoing communication that includes all of the key stakeholders (i.e., Farmers Market vendors, Farmers Market manager, downtown businesses, and the City of Manitowoc) and that helps all stakeholders to be prepared for any operational changes as well as maintain a shared, overall vision for the Market.
2. Pursue an improved governance structure for the Farmers Market that assigns the policy making, financial management, and operational management aspects to appropriate stakeholders that are best able to understand and meet those needs with effectiveness and accountability.
3. Continue existing advertising and explore alternatives for additional communication with the community both in terms of attracting additional customers and attracting additional partners that can also contribute to the strength and growth of the Market.
4. The purpose of the Manitowoc Farmers Market is to:
 - a. Offer safe, locally grown and crafted food products;
 - b. Offer a limited amount of complimentary, locally crafted non-food products;
 - c. Contribute to the vitality and sense of place in Manitowoc's downtown;
 - d. Possibly provide a venue for occasional compatible, appropriately scaled performances, events, and other amenities;
 - e. And do so in a way that is workable for vendors and complimentary and compatible with the downtown environment.
5. Seek to expand the positive impact of the Farmers Market by increasing its offerings and integration with other community events in a way that upholds its agreed upon purpose and builds upon the synergy of its downtown location.
6. Consider potential new locations for the Farmers Market with better pavement conditions, greater potential to contribute to downtown vitality and sense of place, and equal or improved operational safety.
7. Explore alternatives for a winter Farmers Market venue.
8. Where ever the Farmers Market site is located in the future, cooperatively develop an operational plan that addresses customer and vendor safety, parking and traffic flow, loading areas, and setup and take down times.

Beneficial Relationships of a Downtown Farmers Market

