

NFM Regular Board Meeting 7/20/2016 Minutes

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Nashville Farmers' Market Board was called to order by Board Chair Margot McCormack at 9:35 am July 20, 2016.

In attendance were Board members Margot McCormack, Tyler Brown, Brian Copeland, Frank Cardenas and Priscilla Norman. Staff members present were Tasha Kennard, Carolyn Sanders, Jackie Contreras, Charles Kizer, Rebecah Boynton and Kay West, and Metro Legal representative Susan Jones. A quorum was present.

Also in attendance were vendors Ed Smith (B&C) and Sam Davidson (Batch). Barry Stevenson from WTVF was there with camera filming the meeting.

Ms. McCormack read the following standard announcement.

As information for our audience, if you are not satisfied with a decision made by the Farmers' Market Board today, you may appeal the decision by petitioning for a writ of cert with the Davidson County Chancery or Circuit Court. Your appeal must be filed within 60 days of the date of entry of the Board's decision. To ensure that your appeal is filed in a timely manner, and that all procedural requirements have been met, please be advised that you should contact your own independent legal counsel.

Public comments were invited at the start of the meeting to ensure that anyone who wants to comment can do so prior to the Board discussing the business on the agenda. Ms. McCormack read the following standard announcement:

Individuals, requesting to address the Board; will be limited three (3) minutes unless granted more time by the Board Chair. Each person authorized to speak is expected to state her/his name and address and the organization represented if any, and if the speaker reads prepared text, to provide a copy to Board staff.

Ed Smith from B&C is granted permission to address the Board. He presents a parking petition from the merchants and their customers. He notes that over just 3 days, they have collected 1,241 signatures. He points out there are zip codes from all over Davidson County and outside of Davidson County. There are many Antioch zip codes. He presented the petition to the Board for use as the actions to obtain parking move forward. He also wants to present the findings to the Davidson County delegation.

Chair McCormack asks for approval of June 22 meeting minutes. Moved, seconded and approved.

Financial Overview

Tasha Kennard notes that the end of FY16 was June 30th, but notes that the books will not be closed on June 2016 or the balance of fiscal year until mid-August. This is typical for Metro. June financials and end of year re-cap will be distributed at August 2016 board meeting. Typically that report will be available August 15th.

Today Ms. Kennard distributed a revenue snapshot that shows the actuals from 2015, the forecast for 2016 because it hasn't closed and what is being forecast per month for current fiscal year (FY17) that started July 1, 2016.

In the past, financials at the Market have straight-lined revenue and expenses, which is difficult for an organizational/management standpoint to look at cash flow and work with finance department on how we are actually doing compared to budget. The FM does not collect revenues in a straight line manner. Instead, after talking to the Finance Department, FM will no longer be straight-lining revenue projections. She has provided a forecast for FY17 which will allow the Market and Board to see numbers going forward and compare it to monthly revenue goals. With less leasable space, it might show that with months that in the past have been strong with special events, there needs to be a pivot and build up another month of revenue. This will be a learning year, the first full FY with less leasable space.

The Market is being very conservative with revenue forecast for current fiscal year due to loss of leasable space and parking. The more significant changes in September and October will be a net loss of \$30,000 in those two months combined. That loss is attributed to less leasable space for special events. Those two months have historically had the most special events in the North Sheds of the Market. They were great revenue producers that the Market will no longer have and will create a negative impact on the budget.

The only other change is a projection of doing better next May and June. There is an opportunity to do better with farmer, crafter, artisan and flea participation going into next year's peak season.

Overall, the Market is relatively flat with projections of \$20,000 less in revenue this fiscal year than last. She asks for questions.

Tyler Brown asks for clarification of December, January and February having the same result.

Ms. Kennard reports that in each of those three months, projections were dialed back. That is an impact in craft and flea revenue due to less space. She points out that those months are light months for the Market. December is a bit of an anomaly due to the anchor tenant agreement with Smiley's Farm and their lump sum payment. In FY15 that came in January. In FY16 it came in December. In FY17 the plan is for it to come in December again which explains the big jump in December. January and February are projected to be less, along with March. Those months the sheds may be impacted by capital improvement construction, which will affect vendors participating in winter market.

When FY16 is finalized, the report is turned into them and that will help everyone understand the cash flow position and the way the Market operates the Market's cash flow. There comes a time, usually in November or December, where the Market begins operating with a negative cash flow position. Expenses remain pretty steady through the year, but revenues are seasonal. By not straight-lining, there will be a more accurate picture of cash flow representing a major improvement in financial management.

Merchant Report

Program Manager Jackie Contreras reports good news. The Market has achieved the 80-20 goal. 80% farm and food artisan, 20% craft and flea, with just a little more food product than craft and flea. Community Farm Day on July 16 was an amazing day. The Market estimates about 10,000 people which was about how many the Market thought visited Strawberry Jubilee with parking still available, so it was a great sign that there are good things to come. It was a busy day, with kid's activities, the Country Music Hall of Fame instrument petting zoo, corn shucking contest, a tomato tasting that helped drive business to Market farmers. Edible Kitchen had two demonstrations, and there was a live bluegrass band. There were several sponsorships that day. Ed sponsored a grilling station that was a fundraiser for Music at the Market. He used meats from our farmers. He raised \$879. The customers enjoyed it and farmers appreciated it. Every spot in the sheds was taken by a vendor or activity which is the first time that has happened this year.

Ms. Kennard thanks Ed and points out it was his idea and initiative. The Market helped recruit vendors to get all food product donated, Eric Woodard from Picnic Tap donated the bread, Ed purchased the condiments, chips and paper goods. His staff donated their time. He will work with Friends of Nashville Farmers' Market to set up an account to accept money. This will allow Jackie to have a budget to pay musicians.

White's Family Farm sponsored the bluegrass band and Fishers sponsored the Instrument Petting Zoo.

Parking Update

Ms. Kennard reports there was a parking meeting last week. Chair McCormack and Ed Smith were also in attendance, as was Demetria White. There were a few members of Davidson County State delegation, several members of Metro Council, the department of State General Services contract management team over the Museum project, representatives from the Mayor's office, public works, Metro division of public property and Metro Legal. At the meeting, the Market presented an overview of the challenges presented by loss of parking and discussed options; the elected officials asked for some consideration from the State for the Market. The meeting ended with everyone tasked with follow-ups. Those are occurring. Ms. Kennard has had multiple conversations with Metro and the State. Legal has received some information as well.

Currently, there is an on-going evaluation about allocating some 45' parking along 6th and 7th Avenues which would become one way, a proposal Brian Copeland brought up in numerous Board meetings. Councilman O'Connell and Councilmember at Large Eric Gilmore took those options and ran with it, presenting it to the State. The city has agreed to facilitate the work needed. Evaluations of the impact of that are ongoing and Ms. Kennard hopes to have an update after the next meeting.

There was a proposal after the meeting from the State to allow Metro to improve and grade a vacant State-owned lot that can be accessed off 5th Avenue, near the ballpark. There is an area designated for

future State development for library and archives. The TN State Museum construction team will be parking employee vehicles there but there is space that will not be used. Discussions are underway about clearing brush and grading the lot so the Market can use it as permitted parking for Market merchants, or as a valet service area for Market guests.

There is also discussion of on-street parking on Rosa Parks and how many spaces that would be, only on the Market side. The on-street parking could add north of 100 spaces for guests that could be accessed 7 days a week.

Conversations have continued with 15th Ave. Baptist Church.

The Market did ask for budgetary consideration for parking and parking improvements. If costs for the Market are involved with resolving the parking issue, that will come before the Board for action.

Chair McCormack reports that Councilmember Gilmore and State Rep. Brenda Gilmore were very involved and strong in this discussion and there was great support from State Reps. Kumar, Beck and John Ray Clemmons. Unfortunately, government takes time. Chair McCormack voiced that this is an urgent situation and needs to be expedited quickly.

Ms. Kennard reports that a merchant memo was sent following the parking meeting to update them, for them to also use in communicating with their customers. The petition was organized by the merchants and it is a great tool to illustrate the number of people impacted and concerned by the loss of parking.

Mr. Copeland asks what next action steps are. Ms. Kennard says if the Board wants Ed to do something with the petition, Legal would need to look it over as far as contact information for the signers and if they had expectation of privacy. Ms. Jones would like to look it over.

Mr. Brown asks how much the merchant community is aware of the Board and Market's work to find opportunities and options for parking. What is the spirit of the merchants? Hope or doom? Ms. Kennard asks Ed Smith to reply.

Mr. Smith says merchants are aware of the efforts, and the Merchant Meeting on Friday will be helpful. He says he has been having many conversations with the merchant community about the support of the state representatives and Metro and reminding them it will not happen overnight.

Mr. Brown says he has spent several days at the Market the last month, speaking with merchants and while there is frustration, ultimately there is hope.

Mr. Smith says the parking issue has brought together the Market House merchants and the farmers with the sense that they are all in the same battle. They worked together on the grilling event which helped drive traffic to those vendors.

Mr. Brown also points out the resiliency from the community in finding ways to overcome the parking challenge.

Ms. Kennard says the Market has noted a difference in visitor traffic during the week. More customers are coming on Mondays and Tuesdays than 6 months ago. Thurs-Sunday have always been the core bread & butter days at the Market but that is being spread around more as customers try to come on days that have historically been slower to get parking. The Market continues to encourage people to use public transit and ride share.

Ms. Kennard also thanks Sam Davidson and Batch Nashville for taking on the messaging of other parking options to customers. They have been working with Jackie and Rebecah on messaging of new options when available and also what is currently available.

Ms. Norman noted that she parked in the State Lot for Farm Day weekend and saw many others doing the same. She is encouraged that people are making the effort to park and visit.

Chair McCormack lauds Ed Smith for the partnership with the farmers. She says she had a great time in the Edible Kitchen for her demo and how helpful that is in driving customers to the farmers.

Frank Cardenas asks if after legal looks over the petition that it be used to drive home the point that a parking solution is for the merchants, for small business and for the city and that a solution is urgently needed.

Mr. Smith says that the diversity of zip codes shows that people are coming from all over the county and the region and that the Market is not just a tourist destination but serves the county. He also notes that 1241 signatures in just 2-3 days shows how many people are still visiting the Market.

Director's Report

Ms. Kennard reports that the capital improvement kick-off meeting is planned to be held by the end of July so a report can be made at the August board meeting with a projected time line for improvements.

She is working with HR to repost the Finance position. After the candidate chosen to fill the position went elsewhere, the remaining candidates on the first round were re-evaluated and for various reasons were not available or no longer suitable for the position. The job will be re-posted and up for 7 days. The candidates should have a financial analysis background, as the position is the chief accountant for the Nashville Farmers' Market. They oversee all financial controls, the filing of lease documents and HR functions of the Market. Some feedback from Metro is that if some of the HR components of the position can be removed it is likelier to get someone with a strong financial analysis and accounting background.

The date of the Farm Hand Dinner has been changed from Thursday September 29th to Wednesday September 28th to avoid conflicts with Greenways Dinner on the Bridge. The event raises funds for the Nashville Farmers' Market. Bacon & Barrel is still scheduled for September 30th.

Chair McCormack encourages everyone to come out for the event. She encourages inclusion of vendors and farmers. Tyler is on board to help and Ed Smith. This was Troy Smiley's idea and the point is for everyone to come together and mark the end of the season.

Kay West reports a new Master Calendar is in the Board packet and points out color coding for different uses and events of the Market House and Grow Local Kitchen. Crowds for the Edible Kitchen have been growing every Saturday it's been held. It is a great partnership with the farmers who come and speak to the class.

The Grow Local Kitchen remains extremely desirable and is almost fully booked but since it was not built to be a daily restaurant kitchen it needs a rest or it will break down.

She has been meeting with people regarding rentals for 2017 wedding receptions.

October 6 is booked for a partnership with the TDEC for a Food Waste Reduction event. Nashville Storytellers will be back for their last event of the year in November. People who have annual events are booking already for 2017.

Mr. Brown asks about what can be done to improve the GLK. Ms. West points out that the equipment is in need of an upgrade and more prep area is needed. Mr. Brown suggests getting a sponsor. Kitchen Aid did the kitchen, twice since they had to rebuild after the flood. Chair McCormack suggests surveying the people renting the Kitchen what they would like to see and what they need. Mr. Copeland would also like Chair McCormack and Mr. Brown to look at the Kitchen.

Mr. Copeland asks if there is an opportunity to get a monetary sponsorship. Ms. Jones says there are some parameters in place for sponsorships of Metro properties and protocol would have to be followed.

More classes/workshops could be held as well as partnerships with local chefs/writers who have cookbooks.

Rebecah Boynton talks about the increased level of support from the merchants and farmers. She and Jackie went on a farm visit to Thomas Brand's Plano Farm, which was a great opportunity to learn more about what they do and also an opportunity for her to interview Mr. Brand and use it on the website and social media. She has been building relationships with media and brought Demetria White to Channel 5. She notes the increase in followers on social media. Chair McCormack says that Troy Smiley called her to ask for advice on his Facebook. He was very complimentary of Rebecah and all the social media she is doing. Ms. McCormack also points out how helpful it is that staff is down on the floor and sheds so much. Ms. Kennard says merchants and farmers are being encouraged to get on the social media bandwagon.

Other Business

Tyler Brown asks for where the Market is on use of green product and recyclable goods by the merchants. Ed has done survey work on what merchants use and what is available. Ms. Kennard says that the Market staff needs to clear space to focus on it. It will come at a cost to merchants. Chair McCormack says there is an additional cost but it is worth doing. Mr. Brown points out the Market has a platform to make a statement to the community on the issue.

Ed Smith has talked to several companies and has landed on American Paper & Twine because they are reliable and can provide the quantity the Market needs if the goal is to buy in bulk. The number one complaint from the merchants is the price because they think it will be so much more. He has done what he can to debunk the idea. Number two complaint is it's not a good product. He brought samples of newer product. Ms. Kennard says the Market is in a good position to move forward. There is conversation about sponsoring a cup to mitigate some of the costs. It would be about a \$50,000 annual cost. The Market would find a sponsor and distribute the cups to everyone. There is some interest from large companies.

The Market will be having conversations with procurement about waste management and composting. In the budget a green market improvement was asked for and received. That will allow the Market to put infrastructure in place to handle the materials. While the merchants could be required to use recyclables and compostable materials, the Market does not have the resources now to intake and process those. Public Works has been very helpful.

Currently the recycling program at the Market is very limited. There is a recycling bin that is intended only for use for cardboard though Metro allows everything but glass. The Market and restaurants do not have the equipment to manage total use of recyclables. XCI does not have the capacity or equipment to do so. The Market will also evaluate compost and will examine what Music City Center is doing.

Mr. Brown says maybe it's as simple as starting with one thing but urges starting the ball rolling.

Chair McCormack has one other piece of business. She has just been vetted for a second five-year term on the Board and was approved by Council. She does not intend to seek another term as chair and wants the remainder of the Board to move ahead with an election. Ms. Jones points out that no Board member can serve more than 3 one-year terms in the same office. She also says it has to be put on the agenda for the next Board meeting.

Mr. Copeland moves that an election be held at the August Board meeting. He says he is off the table as chair. Mr. Brown and Ms. Norman say no, Mr. Cardenas says he is willing to run as Chair. Ms. Norman is willing to run as Vice Chair and Mr. Brown is willing to run as Secretary.

Mr. Copeland makes a motion that they compose the slate. Chair McCormack seconds, motion is passed.

Chair McCormack moves to adjourn. Seconded, passed and meeting is adjourned at 10:51 am.