

## **NFM Regular Board Meeting 7/25/2018**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Nashville Farmers' Market Board was called to order by Board Chair Frank Cardenas at 9:34 am on July 25, 2018.

In attendance were Board members Priscilla Norman, Brian Copeland and Tandy Wilson. A quorum was present. NFM Staff members present were Tasha Kennard, Mary Self, Allison Koon, Charles Kizer and Kay West.

Also in attendance were Susan Jones from Metro Legal and vendors Beth Piper, Siva Pavuluri, Amber DiNardi, Dindar Agid, Tim McKinney, Sam Boshva, Jane No, Oscar Fleures and Tammy Whitehouse.

Chair Cardenas 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. Vice-Chair Norman 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.*

Chair Cardenas calls for approval of June 27, 2018 minutes. Motion made, seconded and approved.

### **Financial Overview & Fee Waivers**

Executive Director Tasha Kennard reports that every year Metro goes through year-end closing process, which is currently taking place, so the NFM will not have final year end close financial report until late August/early September. As soon as the books are officially closed, the final June report will be available and will be sent to Board electronically, and then discussed at subsequent Board meeting.

The August Board meeting will have the July financials to report upon with the start of a new fiscal year.

Based on current status of year-end close, the NFM had a strong year and out-performed revenue goals and underspent budget. Staff did an excellent job managing expenses and bringing in revenue. NFM will close the gap between revenue and expenses with lease amendment funds from the State of Tennessee. She especially points out the excellent job done by Charles Kizer on holding expenses, though there were large expenses related to the HVAC. That bill has continued to climb through end of previous fiscal year and into new fiscal year. Management is doing everything possible financially and within the

equipment capacity to maintain HVAC but the expense continues to grow. It is costing \$100,000-\$150,000 per year to maintain current equipment, which in the past was about a \$50,000 expense.

There are no fee waivers to report at this time. No questions from Board on financials.

### **Special Event Staff Recommends Approvals**

When new evening operating hours went into effect an agreement was made that the Market House would no longer close early on Friday and Saturday nights for special events without prior approval from the Board and ample notice from management. Several major events took place before the new evening operating hours went into effect. There are three events management would like to receive approval to close early for that event.

- Market Wide closure Monday December 31-Tuesday January 1, 2019 for CVC/NYE events.
- Market House 4 pm closure Friday, February 22, 2019 for Triple Sip benefitting Ronald McDonald House, 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year
- Market House 4 pm closure Friday, March 8, 2019 for Food for Thought benefitting Benton Hall Academy, sixth consecutive year.

The two Friday night events were notified after their 2018 events of the new policy. They met with Kay West regarding new policy and were asked to consider moving their events to Thursday nights. Both organizations came back and said Thursday night would not work for their events and event partners and if they cannot reserve their traditional annual dates they would need to move elsewhere.

Staff recommends the Board approve early closure for Triple Sip and Food for Thought due to their value to the community, value to the Market and relationship with the Market, merchants and Board. Kay West also adds they generate needed revenue, and that because they both take place in winter when customer traffic is slow even on Friday nights. They have been spaced so it is not consecutive Friday nights. She reminds that special event revenue was considerably decreased when the North Sheds were lost.

Chair Cardenas reminds that the Board must be financially prudent when it comes to revenue and the overall impact of events and finances, and that the end result of the early closures will be to generate revenue for the overall good of the Market.

Tandy Wilson asks how the merchants have or will respond. ED Kennard says merchants have not been polled. Ms. West reminds that when operating hours changes were still in discussion phase, the possibility of early closures was always on the table, under the policies now being discussed, as well as with the assurance that no more than four weekend early closures per year would take place, they would be Board approved, and that 30 day notice would be given.

ED Kennard says she does not anticipate any other early closures will be requested as the Market is not actively pursuing those events, and that anything that takes place on Friday and Saturday nights be held while Market is open and enhance the experience and increase visitor traffic.

Chair Cardenas proposes a vote on the slate of three together. Motion made to approve all three early closures, seconded and passed by Board.

## **Executive Director's Report**

ED Kennard asks that staff report on their areas

- **Charles Kizer** reports that a waste audit has been completed with regard to composting progress and he is waiting the results of that. He has been working with HVAC company to maintain and improve the functions of current equipment in lieu of a new system.
- **ED Kennard** adds that the Market is working to achieve the zero waste goal via composting for the Market House and Gardens of Babylon. Market Manager Mary Self is eager to roll the program out to include Farm Shed merchants and vendors as applicable. Rather than roll out at the same time, it was decided to do in stages. The third part of the plan is to roll out recycling and composting to consumers. For now, it is back of the house operations. She congratulates and thanks Market House merchants for the great work they have done with the initiative and in showing their commitment to it.
- **Mary Self** reports that new merchant applications for the Sheds are still coming in about 5 a week, a little bit of a slowdown. The sheds have been completely full on Saturdays in July. The July Night Market was fully booked, which was a first, but unfortunately was called for weather. Merchants that have been in the sheds have been very supportive of helping new merchants, and encouraging them to try Sundays as well. Winter Market planning has begun and merchants are encouraged to start thinking about their schedules and reservations for those months. Placement shuffling will likely take place to improve the vendor and visitor experience. Watermelon Throwdown Night Market on August 17<sup>th</sup> is the next big event on the calendar. Sampling, cooking demo, eating contest, crafts, food trucks and music will be happening. Disha Patel, the summer intern did a special project on how the staff could better appeal to teens and young adults. The presentation was well done and had great ideas and she has expressed interest in volunteering in the future and recruiting other teens. She suggested the NFM host a movie night for teens that would incorporate merchants. Social media was another suggestion she made, to engage teens more in social media at the Market and with the Market. She said not to plan anything on Saturdays but focus on Fridays and Sundays. She also mentioned a teen advisory group. Disha was the point person on Saturdays for Fresh Savings and Ms. Self is struggling to find volunteers to take that on. Brian Copeland asks what the prospects are for a holiday themed winter market similar to the annual one that takes place in the Chicago loop, the Christkindle. ED Kennard replies that NFM has done Winter Market for two years, this will be the third. It is on Wednesdays inside the Market House during lunch, as well as a fairly strong Saturday Winter Market. Last year Saturday ranged from 30-50 merchants in the Sheds. December and January were strong, February and March the lightest. As long as the sheds are open air and subject to weather and temperature, it will always be a challenge. ED Kennard says management has looked into Mr. Copeland's recommendation, but the team is not big enough or have the capacity to do something as ambitious as that. Chair Cardenas encourages the development of a teen audience and teen panel. Ms. Self adds that the Market is still

recruiting for Vanderbilt Market as they are losing Peach Truck sometime in August. The Casa Azafran Market will begin August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

- **Kay West** reports that Grow Local Kitchen continues to be very busy, with a new lunch renter, Gumbo Goddess, doing very well. There are new cooking classes in the evening including Eastleigh Desserts and Dinner Belle. There is also increased interest in production shifts in the evening, as well as pop-up dinners. The challenge is in finding time to schedule everyone and schedule time to clean and maintain the Kitchen. The Property Brothers taped a segment in the Market House July 23<sup>rd</sup> which gave Batch, Chicago Gyro and Farm City Coffee great exposure. They were very complimentary of the Market. Craig Fitzhugh held a GOTV rally in the Market House July 25<sup>th</sup>. Schools and groups are very interested in touring the Market. Upcoming events include Downtown Employee Appreciation and Junior Chef Competition. That is in partnership with the TN Department of Agriculture Education division. It is a culinary competition of high school 'chefs' that takes place in other states and this will be the first year for Tennessee. Other states hold regional competitions and then a final competition. For the first one in Tennessee it will just be one-weekend event planned for October 12-14<sup>th</sup> in the GLK with 8 teams overall. The Plant the Seed Breakfast will be October 25<sup>th</sup>.
- **Allison Koon** reports that the transition between Carolyn and Jackie and then Allison resulted in some areas that needed clearing up and she is doing an audit. ED Kennard says the purpose of the audit is to make sure invoices have been sent and payments received.
- **ED Kennard** reports on parking and the Museum. The TN State Museum is tentatively scheduled to open in October. She has been working with the State on the transition when the new lot opens. She will be meeting with Ashley Howell, the Museum Executive Director and Bicentennial Mall's Jerry Wooten to talk about the car and busses plan. There will be many school busses and it is crucial to have an operational plan for the three entities to coordinate and find a place to put the busses. It will be a year-round increase. There also needs to be a good relationship sharing the parking lot. Sixth Avenue has been Merchant Parking as well as the charging station and for now that remains in place. Many pre-programming conversations are taking place to determine how NFM and the Museum can work together. She intends to bring Dowdle Construction to the August Board meeting to present on the timeline for construction of capital projects for the Market, start dates, completion goals and how it will happen. It will start somewhere in late fall and conclude somewhere in late spring. Great efforts are being made to mitigate impact on businesses.
- **Staffing issues** ED Kennard is close to naming a new marketing person. She is working with Kay West to determine her transition plan and receive permission to bring someone in as quickly as possible to get position approved and possibly bring someone in before she departs.

With no other business, Chair Cardenas adjourns the meeting at 10:20 am.

The next Board meeting is Wednesday, August 22, 2018 at 9:30 am in the Nashville Farmers' Market conference room.