

Portland Farmers' Market Association

Notes taken at PSHHS (Public Safety, Health & Human Services) Committee Meeting/City Council

3/15/2012 Council Chambers, City Hall 6:00pm

Attendees:

City Council Committee Members:

Edward Suslovic, *Chair*
John Coyne, *Vice Chair*
David Marshall
Jill Duson

Other:

Ann Freeman, *Associate Corporation Council*
Colleen Hanlon-Smith, *Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets*
Members of the Public

PFMA Members:

Daniel Price, *Freedom Farm*
Larry Bruns, *Hanson Field Flower Farm*
Hanne Tierney & Clayton Carter, *Cornerstone & Fail Better Farms*
Ramona Snell, *Snell Family Farms*
Mary Ellen Chadd, *Green Spark Farm*
Jodie Jordan, *Alewive's Brook Farm*
Jaime Berhanu, *Lalibela Farm*

Presentation of Item 4 on Agenda: *Farmers' Market Rule Amendments*

1. Ann Freeman reads through Memorandum provided to Council (See Memorandum)
 - Ann reports Daniel/PFMA's request for adoption of PFMA Rules
 - Ann tells Council that they have 3 options to consider: keep everything the same, consider a "hybrid" model of management, or hand over market authority to the PFMA.
 - Ann suggests the PSHHS Committee should consider the need to take the issue to the full City Council.
2. Daniel Price addresses the Council
 - Daniel speaks about each concern outlined in the Memorandum: membership structure, fees, violations, etc.
 - Councilor Marshall asks Daniel if the PFMA is interested in complete independence from the City. Daniel answers, " Yes, we would like to be autonomous"
 - Councilor Suslovic asks Daniel if there were massive complaints from vendors, would we want the City to step back in. Daniel answers that it is a very competitive market to gain membership into, and that it is very unlikely that that would occur.
 - Ann mentions that the City would have to have a relationship/lease/contract with the PFMA since it is City property.

3. Public Comment

- Larry Bruns speaks in support of the PFMA's independence. Notes that the waiting is no longer in place and that it does not work as a system for admission to the market.
- Hanne Tierney speaks in support of the PFMA's independence. Reports how other markets in the state are managed and their relationships with their towns/cities.
- 2 members of the Public speak
- Colleen Hanlon-Smith speaks in support of the PFMA's independence.
- Clayton Carter speaks in support of the PFMA's independence.

4. Council Members state their positions

Councilor Duson:

- intrigued by the idea of independence, concerned about the use of Deering Oaks Park.
- Recommends taking issue to full City Council
- Wants to know more about the Orono Farmers' Market, and their managing the market themselves
- Says that she thinks the City should be either "all the way in or all the way out" (not a hybrid approach)
- Doesn't want to see the City loose any money
- Would recommend an umbrella license to the PFMA to legitimately account for the maintenance of the Park
- Wants the Friends of Deering Oaks Park to be involved
- Regarding non-farm vendors ("the people who are sneaking into the market"), would like to see the issue resolved as part of this transition so that the market can move forward in a way that is fair to the farmers' market.
- Would like to see a formal agreement to structure the relationship between the City & the PFMA. Suggests a 3-5 year agreement that would include expectations for each other. Then in 3-5 years have a set date for a renewal of the agreement
- States that the City has a strong interest in the success of the market.

Councilor Marshall:

- Thinks we should start going down the road of a contractual relationship
- Reports that there is a Task Force started for the non-farm vendors
- Recognizes that the farmers are already managing the market on their own
- Notes that this change would free up the City Clerk's time
- Supports the change for independence of the PFMA

Councilor Coyne:

- Supports the change for independence of the PFMA
- Wonders why the City has been involved in the first place
- Still concerned about the process of selection
- States "Let's let the Farmers do it!"

Councilor Suslovic:

- States that he “trusts the farmers”
 - Would love to make the transition easy for everyone
 - Finds one check to the City Clerk very appealing
 - Agrees with Councilor Duson to get the rest of the City Council involved in the process
5. Councilor Suslovic states that he’d like to see the farmers get together and create a formal proposal to the City Council that includes the issues covered tonight including:
- A single check written to the City for an umbrella license, instead of individual farmers’ checks
 - Would like to know who exactly the agreement is made with (what is our legal business entity)
 - Specific dates for the agreement and when would it be renewed

Councilor Suslovic asks the Committee if the PFMA should come back to the PSHHC Committee or the Full Council. The Committee decides that the PFMA should first come back to the PSHHC Committee, they will then make a recommendation to the Full Council.

Councilor Suslovic would like to see the proposal come back by their April or May Committee Meeting.

Councilor Suslovic states “We love the market and want to make sure we nurture it’s growth”. Also states that he is excited to see the PFMA come back in a year with more ideas to grow the market.