

## Farmers Market Subcommittee Meeting February 18, 2009

**In attendance:** Debbie Nelson, Victory Neighborhood; Lara Tiede, MDHFS; Becky Burand, Brian Coyle Community Center; Hilary Gebauer, U of M; Heather Schoonover, IATP; Larry Cermak, Mpls. Farmers Market; Scott Bard\_\_\_, Farmers Market Annex; Kristen Klingler, MDHFS; Marjorie Hegstrom, Mill City Farmers Market; Dan(?) Nicholson, Kingfield/Midtown Farmers Markets; Rachel Slocum, Institute for Advanced Study (U of M); Sandy Hill, Central MN Vegetable Growers Assoc.; Bonnie Dehn, CMVGA-Mpls. Farmers Market; Amy Arcand, Midtown Farmers Market; Brian Jorgensen, Mpls. Farmers Market; Pat Nelson, CMVGA; Brian Fredericksen, Ames Farm CMVGA; Julie Ristau.

- I. Julie Ristau, one of the Home Grown's tri-chairs presented "buckets" of overall themes that are emerging from all of the Homegrown Subcommittees. They include: **Regulation** (zoning, licensing, health), **Infrastructure** (land, systems, institutional support), **Funding, Messaging** (how the local foods movement is communicated), **Policy** (how state, county and local policy can set the stage for local foods production) and a **Parking Lot** (for issues that are outside the scope of the subcommittees but still need to be researched and addressed). She encouraged our subcommittee to broaden the focus of our discussion to address farmers market issues related to these buckets.
- II. Meeting attendees broke into groups to answer the question: "How would you describe the current farmers market system in Minneapolis...as it relates to these buckets?" Groups reported back and started to define a vision, recommendation for how it could be improved (see below).
- III. Decided not to dedicate 2-26 meeting to meeting the needs of low income populations, as originally planned. Decided instead to begin crafting a vision and recommendations based on the notes below. Lara will make an attempt to group notes below into themes of recommendations to give us a starting point. The last meeting of the subcommittee will be 3-11-09 from 9:30-11:00 to finalize our recommendations.

### Responses to "How would you describe the current farmers market system as it is/isn't?"

- Lack of a "system" between markets:
  - Need to coordinate common processes like inspections, certifying growers, admin. \$s, pipeline for new growers, micro financing, vendor ed., what to do with surplus, connecting farmers with restaurants, schools, institutions, etc?
- FMs could be a launching pad to other entities – mobile markets, delivery programs, institutions
- Need for better promotion, merchandising, pricing, wayfinding
- Lack of access – are markets distributed equally in terms of geography? Possible solutions: EBT, FMNP, transportation
- Stability of location – geographic distribution (some; organized by individual orgs.)
- Enough/too many
- ? viability as business
- Profitability for all
- Outlet for vendors (business) vs. community asset (need a paradigm shift to view FMs as a community asset)

- \*Farmers' viability vs. community desire
- Lack (Vision/def.) of farmers market at the City level (What is the City's goal for farmers markets?)
- Overlap of times/days, products
- Need analysis of who markets are serving/not serving, as well as transportation access to existing markets.
- Need Metropolitan regional analysis
- Need vendor support/enterprise development
- Perception among store owners that farmers markets hurt their business
- Elevate vision/role of FMs in Mpls. – legitimize “brand”
- GIS mapping of markets
- Need more coordination between growers, growers associations, and markets
- Need research into issues such as “are smaller FMs taking away business or adding to?”

#### Strategy for moving

- Recap “perfect world” vision
- Create system to continue discussion, strategy
- Vision
- Major components of it
- System to accomplish it.

**Farmers Market Subcommittee Meeting  
January 28, 2009**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Sandy Hill, Robert Skafte, David Nichol森, Marjorie Hegstrom, Rachel Slocum, Hilary Gebauer, Becky Brandt, Brian Jorgensen, Larry Cermak, Vicki Schmidt, Pat Nelson, Linda ? and Leanne Selander (Business Licensing) Heather Schoonover, Fred Engelson, Debbie Nelson, Lara Tiede, Amy Arcand, Robin Russell, Terry?, Dwayne, Brian from Stevens Square Market (*I apologize if you were there and you're not on this list—I'll bring a sign-in sheet to the next meeting*).

We reviewed the Themes and Questions document to ensure that it accurately represented issues identified in the 1-7 meeting and to see if some were missing. The following items were discussed:

- **Signage:** Leanne Selander from Licensing shared some information about signage. All markets want permanent or at least season-long signage; none have funds to pay for way-finding signs. What kind of money is available from Public Works for signage—for Minneapolis market and others? Markets would like a one-stop page on city's website where forms, sign requirements, etc. could be found. What kinds of "day of" signs are allowed?
- **Collaboration opportunities:** would like to put these issues in the "parking lot" as they are less of a priority than the others and an informal collaboration network already exists.
- **Promotion:** Group likes that city website provides information about farmers markets; would like to see other promotional strategies employed such as email newsletters, etc. Can Minneapolis markets get added to the Twin Cities Visitors Guides and Explore MN. Markets would like blurbs in local newspapers (e.g., Camden News) but cannot usually afford ads. Would like to know if City Council members updates are electronic, mail or both. Could information about markets be added on City Cable. Overall, people were curious what role the city could play in promoting markets.
- **Licensing:** Some desire to change the licensing of minis so it resides within Licensing Department again. Our recommendations would need to be made quickly to accomplish this before the upcoming market season. Feb. 18<sup>th</sup> meeting will be dedicated to this.
- **If it doesn't work for farmers, it doesn't work for any of us:** Would like to table this as a dedicated discussion topic for now with the hope that their interests will be covered in the 2-18 meeting re: licensing.

- Process: We also discussed our process for addressing these topics; decided to dedicate add a meeting and dedicate all future meetings to specific topics. Upcoming meeting schedule is:
  - Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>: Licensing, Zoning and Land Use. Decided that it should be the job of market managers to seek feedback from farmers on the proposed topics and to bring that to the meeting instead of asking farmers to come.
  - Early March: Serving low income communities and other models. Lara will send Meeting Wizard to set date for that one.
  - March 11<sup>th</sup>: Promotions and funding
  
- Our meeting location has changed to: the Warren and Artist Habitat, 4400 Osseo Rd in north Mpls (44th and Penn).

# **Farmers Market Subcommittee Meeting**

## **January 7, 2009**

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** Sandy Hill, Robert Skafte, David Nichol森, Bruce Smith, Marjorie Hegstrom, Rachel Slocum, Hilary Gebauer, Brian Jorgensen, Larry Cermak, Glen Luedtke, Vicki Schmidt, Pat Nelson, June Ristau, Heather Schoonover, Fred Engelson, Debbie Nelson, Lara Tiede, Amy Arcand

#### **I. What's working well with farmers markets?**

- Variety of products – value to customer
- Relationship w/City of Minneapolis
- Destination – something to do. People come for the experience
- Difference between markets across the board
- Minis – great opportunity to provide local produce
- Demand for locally grown produce is growing
- Opportunity to educate consumers about produce; locally grown
- Atmosphere is positive re farmers market
- Great community-builder between residents and farmers
- Meets the needs of the community
- FMNP – conceptually program is good one – 10% of sales for CMVGA
- EBT – offering at Midtown – has been worthwhile. Need more education related to it. Up to 33% of sales from EBT for some of the growers.
- Farmers markets linking to food shelves to donate surplus produce at the end of the day
- MFM – going well; periodic meetings with City. Good tracking system.
- 311 helped Mill City through the licensing process – couldn't have done it without them
- Partnerships with IATP, neighborhood assns & MFF and other organizations
- Nicollet Mall working well – recruiting new vendors.

#### **II. What needs to be improved?**

- Zoning rules don't allow for year-round signage
- Need more signage. Main gets lots of calls for directions to their market & others.
- Farmers market signs on interstates such as Hiawatha, other (?)
- No reasonable communication/sharing network for markets to learn from each other. A group like this (i.e., the subcommittee) provides a slightly more formal way. A way for all markets to get together and come up w/ideas. MN Farmers Market Assoc. works well for markets but not necessarily the most helpful for local issues. There is a listserv- no one sure who operates it.
- Land use issues – Midtown on MPS site; sites at the whim of land owners

- Potentially detrimental of the new Twins stadium on parking for downtown market
- Licensing for minis was a nightmare – process is onerous; site plan, timeline. Bad customer service. One central website where you could get all of the forms needed. Not all forms; licensing understaffed. Main deals w/it via market food distributors. Renewal licenses came out late. City gave temporary authorization for markets; some still don't have their permit.
- Wants process to go back to licensing (licensing of minis was taken out of licensing's responsibility)
- Enforcement problems – professionalism & consistency w/city health inspectors: disconnect between what they're enforcing and what's written on paper. At the same time, market managers have been generally pleased with the city's responsiveness to their complaints
- Would be helpful to have a training between/with market managers & health enforcement
- Funding – Midtown not self-sustaining w/vendor fees & sponsorships; need money for administrative support & infrastructure
- Need better data collection since many impressions are based on anecdotes and “senses.” City or university assistance with data collection would be helpful.
- Free access to City's Wi-Fi service for EBT would be helpful.
- Number of community markets, especially in western suburbs dilutes business from main market and forces growers to attend small markets
- Main – open 7 days/week. Growers have to travel farther to more markets. “If the Mayor is worried about carbon footprint – isn't it worse w/farmers going to many markets than having everyone go to the main market?” Need to structure things so it works well for the growers. “If doesn't work for growers, doesn't work for anyone.”
- M-Thursday business at the main market is slim except for immigrants.
- Markets are everywhere – proliferation in the suburbs. People looking for close markets. Road construction takes them away from main market; outlying markets are a problem for the main market because they take customers away; hard for the vendors because they have to divide their labor between many markets.
- Impression by some that MFF vendors want to stay at one main market
- Problem is **not** the number of growers—there are plenty of growers out there.
- I have to go to 5 markets to make the same amt. of money as I used to make at one market because of diluted customer base. Fewer markets & fewer vendors don't work in this country.
- Open up market anywhere & those that make it, will make it; those don't, won't.
- Not level playing field – harder for small farmers to make it. Is there a produce union/association that represents them? How can producers make a living selling their items? City needs to support its markets.
- Can Metro Mobility bring people to the market? Are bus lines close to and how can we get?
- Minis are not economically viable – supplemental opportunity.
- Growers could be community garden scale. Need more smaller growers out there.