

Jefferson County Farmers Market Association
Board Meeting Minutes, October 8, 2007

Members Present: Karen Lee, Bob Alei, Katherine Baril, John Estes, Anne Pougiales

Members Absent: Klaus Hintermayr, Tinker Cavallaro, Ariane Bertucci, Natalie Robinson, Karyn Williams, Lori Bernstein

Staff Present:, Nick Hill, Ruth Ballard

Staff Absent: Matt Sircely

Guests Present:

Karen called the meeting to order at 4:15 pm at the Quimper Grange. With Tinker's departure and Karyn not having yet been appointed, we decided that we did have a quorum. John moved, Ann seconded approval of the minutes from September. Motion passed unanimously.

John moved that **Karyn Williams be appointed to replace Tinker as an interim board member to be up for a full term election in December 2007.** Motion passed unanimously.

Officer Reports

- **President (Karen):** First Harvest Dinner was a success. Bob and Natalie will take care of thank yous for donors.
- **Vice President (Lori):** None
- **Secretary (Bob):** None
- **Treasurer (John):** John noted that we will struggle to meet our direct market income as weather gets worse. Merchandise and other items are large enough so that overall income looks good. Current net is roughly \$14,000. John predicts we will net enough to spend our capital budget and still have a net income.

Staff Reports

Manager (Nick was absent): [See full report](#)

- **Waive 4% fee for November** – A farmer requested that we do this to encourage November participation. We decided not to take this action. We discussed other incentives to get more vendors to the market. Extra promotions, hot cider for customers & vendors, Brendon's roasted chestnuts, try to get the Coop to bring a booth. Nick will check with vendors to see about their supply.
- **501 c(x) status** – Nick feels like he's spent a lot of time on it and that it's not worth pursuing. We tried to relieve Nick of much of his work on this. Ann expects to be able to do more research on this by the next meeting.
- **Education vs. Merchandise Focus** – Nick is concerned about his increased sense that the market is focusing on merchandise rather than on education. We proposed discussing the issue more fully at a retreat.

Communications & Marketing Director (Matt was absent): [See full report.](#)

Friends of the Market Coordinator (Ruth): [See full report](#)

- **Volunteer Issues** – concern about volunteers who are leaving the booth. Ruth wants support from the board.

Committee Reports

Strategic Planning (Bob):

- No activity. Uptown parking committee meets on October 24. Bob will attend.

Marketing, Outreach & Education (Karen):

- See Matt's report.

Personnel (Bob):

- Personnel committee did not meet, nor did staff have a chance to meet. Bob will call meetings soon for staff reviews and to discuss any current issues.

Finance: (John).

- See Treasurer's Report

Crafts: (Lori)

Old Business:

New Business:

Board retreat: The board agreed to try to schedule a half day, board only, retreat on Sunday November 11, 2007 to discuss organizational issues, strategic direction, and planning for the annual meeting. We may include Nick in part of the meeting and will let him know as the agenda comes together. Bob can host the gathering at JCS.

Annual Meeting Date – Bylaws amendment: The board proposed amending the bylaws to give more flexibility in setting the date and time of the Annual Meeting. This was done to enable us to work around Eliot Coleman's visit on December 5 and 6, 2007. Coleman will discuss extending the growing season. The board will make a motion and vote on the matter at the next meeting as required by the protocol for amending the bylaws.

Karen adjourned the meeting at 6:25 pm. Next meeting November 12, 2007 at 4:00 pm at the Grange.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Alei

Summary of Pending Action Items:

Item	Who	Added	Due	Status
Thank you cards to Harvest Dinner donors	Bob & Natalie	10/8/07	10/12/07	Done 10/14
Notify vendors about publicity push for November	Nick	10/8/07	10/12/07	
Update web site – note proposed by-laws change	Bob	10/8/07	10/12/07	
Education focus discussion	MOE & board at retreat	10/8/07		
Revise draft of Permanent Site Specifications to include vendor survey results. Approve with board.	Bob & board	9/17/07	10/17/07	
Create policy on generators	??	9/17/07		??
Harvest Dinners – Matt to work with board members.	Matt & Board	9/17/07		In progress
Get our 501c(x) designation	Ann	2/12/07		Working on it
Action items from previous meetings	Who	Added	Due	Status
Send contacts to Ruth for FOM direct mailing	All Board Members	7/16/07	8/3/07	

Document Strawberry Festival procedures and store with permanent records	Karen, Bob	7/16/07		
Check on DSHS advertising of EBT	Nick	7/16/07		
File IRS tax return	John	7/16/07		
Generate information that gives a better idea of how we are doing with our budget.	Bob	6/11/07		Continuing
Nick will email the template requesting questions that we'd like to see on the RMA	Nick	6/11/07		
Compile a list of the various licenses and permits that various vendors are missing.	Nick	5/14/07		
Find someone for Kids activities	Nick	5/14/07		
Web site...	Matt	5/14/07		Launched. Improve content
Look into USDA grant	Katherine send to Nick who will explore	3/12/07	April meeting	
Prepare music banner for stage with publicity for sponsors.	Matt	1/8/07	Pre-Opening	
Offer non-violent communication training to staff	Lori	12/11/06		
Look into getting an affinity credit card	Nick	2/12/07	?	Low Prio

JCFMA Board Meeting Highlights

October 8, 2007 Meeting

Weather impacting end of summer Market: With the poor weather recently, sales have slumped since mid-September. The board is considering ways to increase customer purchases during November markets. Crafts vendors generally stop coming and growers may not have enough supply to warrant keeping the market open in November. Nick will be checking to see what we can expect. We did rent the Community Center space for craft vendors for the last market – November 17. We will host a pot luck reception after the market for vendors to celebrate the end of the season.

Harvest Dinners Continue: The market held the first of four Harvest Dinners on Monday, October 1st at Dundee Hill Center, featuring Beth Johnson of In-Season Catering, Frog Hill Farm, Cape Cleare Fisheries, Mt. Townsend Creamery, Finn River Farm, Corona Farm and more. The evening was a wonderful celebration of exceptional local food filled with the warmth of community. Be sure to attend one of the upcoming dinners:

- Saturday, October 20th at Sweet Laurette's featuring Laurette McRae, Dharma Ridge Farm, Ananda Hills Farm, Finn River Farm, Mt. Townsend Creamery and more at 6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, November 6th at the Fountain Café
- Sunday, December 9th at the Wild Coho

Space is limited for some of the events so get your tickets soon from the Food Coop or at the Market. For more up to date information, see the Events tab at www.ptfarmersmarket.org or call the office at 379-9098.

Annual Meeting Change! The JCFM by-laws call for the Annual Meeting to be held on the first Wednesday of December at 7:00 pm at a public place. It so happens that this year, Eliot Coleman will be in town that night to discuss extending the growing season. Since many of our vendors will want to attend, we want to change the date of the Annual Meeting. But first, we must change the by-laws. A proposal has been made to amend the by-laws to allow more flexibility into the scheduling of the Annual Meeting. But we cannot make a motion and vote on it until we have publicized to all our membership that the proposal is pending. This is that publicity so if you have comments, please contact Nick or a board member before Sunday, November 11. And stay tuned for the new date for the Annual Meeting.

Looking long term: The board has scheduled a half day retreat for November 11 to discuss various organizational issues and to prepare for the Annual Meeting in December.

The complete minutes of the meeting can be found on the web site on the Board Activity page under the About the Market link.

As the season progresses, we are always looking people interested in helping the market with their time, money, or talent. If you or someone you know wants to help make the market soar, please [contact us](#). Our next meeting will be Monday, November 12 at 4:00 pm at the Quimper Grange, Sheridan & Corona Sts, Port Townsend. All members and the public are welcome to attend. See you at the market!

Current State of the Market

Wednesday market highlights:

- began with the **possibility of 19 vendors**, tapered down very quickly in the season to 14-15, and ended with 11-12.
- **4th of July** market at the Food Co-op. Loyal customers, but a low revenue day due to the scarcity of vendors. **Scheduling issues with holidays.**
- **revenues** matched 2006 quite closely, with evidence of the potential for steep increases that in the act were turned back, mostly by the weather, not on the market itself so much as on farming. Several high profile growers struggled most of the season and a small number elected not to sell at Wednesday because of other demands, CSAs and direct delivery.
- **Chef's Demo with Sweet Chef Laurette on August 22, with Cape Cleare Salmon cart drew an attentive audience of about 50 or more all told.**
- **several new vendors**, three new growers, 2 in town and a commercial shell fishing operation: Farmgirl Garden, who had to drop out before the mid-point, and Morganics, who made the transition to value added marmalades and chutneys. The last market Bambu-u set up and then began going to Saturday. And G & R Quality Seafood, who also struggled with scheduling problems and the closure of non-commercial shell fish harvest in the entire Hood Canal.
- introduced the **Backyard Gardener** space: only one such grower came, to sell potatoes, but the principle has now been tested. One market space that rotates between vendors—first come first served. Visitor fee paid by different vendors until the yearly membership is reached.
- **electrical power:** Chica's Kitchen moved to California late in the season, to the disappointment of many. However, her rig, together with Smooth Mamas' power blenders maxed out the electrical power available at the site, and alerted us to the limitations on Polk St. My attempt to have the dentist on the West side of Polk allow us to pay them for power came to naught.

Saturday Market

- **Thanks** to all who braved the weather October 6th, which seemed more like November than early October. Things are winding down though: Rosa, who unexpectedly showed up, has now declared that she's done for the season. **Several craft vendors have already bowed out for the season, though some actually stayed on last Saturday. In spite of that, Karyn Williams came as prelude to her new farm, as yet unnamed, Andrea's Gardens I expect will return, Tunadan will probably be back, and, with some misgivings, I may be able to fit the Sandwich King in Rosa's old spot.**
- **Craft Fair** option for vendors at the Senior Center for the last market, November 17th.
- **Electrical power arrangement with the County on Tyler St. hasn't moved forward and would seem to be a matter for next year at this point.**
- **Banners:** Ruth tracked down the missing banner. The Film Festival never had theirs put up, so ours are still displayed. I'll ask Power Trip Energy to take them down toward the end of the season. The lower standard bar for the Polk St. location is bent and needs to be repaired.
- I introduced the **\$5 gift token** at the September 29th market, without prior announcement, and linked it to Harvest Dinner I sales. See Complexities below.
- **D & O insurance:** I assume that now we're insured, but defer to John on this point.

- **Needs improvement:** Staff has had a couple of regular meetings. But communication is difficult at times, and lacking specific direction from the Board, there's more independent action than team work. See Complexities below.

Needs Action

- A grower vendor made a request to **excuse the 4%** for the market days in November, "to get us to come out." I would urge the Board to grant this request, which would be the only such benefit in sight to improve matters for vendors, despite the fact that fees haven't been raised in at least 3 years. That said, I believe this request does relate to the fee cap issue, which is more psychological than financial.
- **Staff problems**, the result of many factors, some of them due to the tardy establishment of regular staff meetings, and the difficulty of maintaining them in Matt's absences. The Personnel Committee needs to convene and deal with the lack of quarterly reviews during this market season. Examples: the Harvest Dinner series was to be 3 dinners; ticket sales for the Harvest Dinners weren't well planned out, and accounting for them has been a hassle for me and for the Food Co-op.
- **Letters to the Editor** and relations with the media: I was pleased that Robert Greenway was able to capitalize on my letter to the editor and put the larger matter of the struggle of farmers to make a living wage out before the public. However, these incidents suggest to me that **the Board should institute a Media Relations Committee, that would also help to plot out how to present the market to the public as time goes on.**
- **501(c) X** status: Paul has passed on to me the response from Poulsbo about their 501 (c) 6 status, along with a notion about all the time involved, and a doubt as to its utility. My own position at this point is to seriously question the need for any IRS tax exemption. A fuller study has not been done, but to my knowledge, it would appear that only the "big" guys, essentially metropolitan markets, have been able to secure tax exempt status for donations. Furthermore, there are donors who don't need tax exemption. My personal doubts also include what the fundraising efforts would be for. See Complexities next.

Complexities: Several of the items below are intertwined and there's naturally some overlap. Some of these are also end-of-year matters, but will need deliberations and decisions to be able to act by then:

- The market booth is now quite busy, with a variety of merchandise items, Harvest Dinner sales, gift tokens, and EBT, and some educational materials, mostly from other organizations. If you haven't spent some time there, it might be hard to know all that's involved. My own sense initially was that it was worth it to add some merchandise to the market's offering, at least in part because we languished in sales last year, but didn't wise up to the need for more educational materials. I now think that merchandise has expanded too much, especially in relation to educational materials. For instance, a market cookbook would serve both merchandising and educational purposes and link customers again to market farms in a way that a tote bag can't.

On a related point, as Bob has noted using his very helpful graphs, compared to 2006, farm sales are down whereas craft sales are up. That trend is not where we want to go, as he put it, though maybe there are others who aren't concerned. However, part of the increase in craft sales is the market's own merchandise, which is notably why market revenues overall are higher than last year's.

The contradiction is troubling.

The question I urge the Board to ponder is: **If we are not in favor of the increase of craft sales as opposed to farm sales at the market, what is to be done about the large increase in merchandise sales—craft items by any other name? Furthermore, how can we increase the presence of educational materials? Who's going to make them or get them, keep track of them, etc?**

- Manager communications with the vendors. My principal means to convey topical information to vendors has been through email-website publishing of the weekly site map and notes. More than 90% of our vendors have access to email, but of course that doesn't mean that they actually read my messages. I have sporadically printed out those emails and circulated them, but that's no guarantee either.

As one example of the complexity, when we got a couple of EBT tokens from another market, I felt the need to take the message direct and on Sept. 29 I spoke to each vendor on site about those tokens AND the \$5 gift tokens we were introducing. Nevertheless, last Saturday we got 7 Seattle market EBT tokens and a Wooden Boat Festival token, which weren't discovered until after the accounting. Barbara and I, who do that accounting, were also negligent to not identify which vendors accepted them. **I will once again alert vendors and caution them that we can't give them credit for invalid tokens. Any other suggestions are welcome.**

- Volunteers at the market booth, basically under Ruth's supervision, are all the more important to handle everything that goes on there. Two stalwarts, Ted and Jan Rose, have departed, and one other in particular hasn't always been very reliable. It isn't simply a matter of getting volunteers, but of the complexity of what to keep track of at the booth. I think this leads to a principle: **if you rely on volunteers for efficiency and accuracy, then you need to bolster the status and pay of the FOM Coordinator—Ruth—so she is able to spend the time to recruit and coordinate the volunteer corps**
- **The Harvest Dinner pitch. Bob did a fine job at the first dinner and it was clear that a straightforward approach connected with our supporters.**
- My suggestion is that we need to be specific about why we're asking for donations. If we need funds they should go toward a study to help the Board understand what the PTFM might look like in 5 or 10 years. Last Saturday, Lucy LaRosa, the market manager in 1997, handed out copies of the newsletter from that year, when gross sales were \$27K. As she explained, they had no idea then that the market could look like it does now, or do what it does. The idea of a permanent site is only one part of what to do about the fact that only a handful of farmers in East Jefferson County can approximate a decent living. We're doing a lot, **but what else could the PTFM do about its stated mission to promote sustainable farming? Maybe initiate a feasibility study?**
- Additional funds should be put toward increasing pay for the staff, which would ideally include an Executive Director, a site manager, and two coordinators. At present, if my figures are correct, 7% of market revenues (about 5-6% for staff) sustain the market function. **I'd suggest that the total for market operations should be somewhere around 10% of market revenues. The remainder of what can't be supplied by fees might be made up by donations.**
- The Board could benefit from another **retreat** or something similar to formulate a plan for why fundraising is needed. If it isn't for the preceding two items, then I get fuzzy about what it is for.
- **The Board and its committees need to make very clear what their directives are, after the fact.** Frequently the staff comes away with a general sense of what to do, but those actions need to be more carefully spelled out. Bob has instituted an action list appended to the minutes, but as with so many other details, in the press of the immediate, those points get lost, or are vague, or misunderstood. I'm not certain how to fine-tune this point, but its importance for the smooth and efficient operation of the enterprise is indisputable.

Merchandise:

Bags:

Badd Habit is printing bags again - they had a problem with their printer and seem to always have to order more transfer paper. I have asked them to print everything we have in stock. The classic Flora tote is back, approved by Karen of course. Looks great. Gaia totes have been selling well and are in the hands of movie stars now thanks to our PTFE ad trade.

The black bag is very close to production. Cory and Catska are at Badd Habit today seeing the proofs through to the final product. The design is a posterized Gaia, printing white on black with silkscreen as per the original concept. CC Ench did the design and put much love into it. I can't wait to buy one.

Shirts:

I have ordered 20 more XL and XXL shirts for the Gaia design. They will print later this week. We also have about 80 shirts that we ordered but haven't paid for yet. So we could either (a) print them or (b) buy them and store them for next year. I recommend doing the third flora design (small on the pocket spot) with the Jim Hightower quote on the back. I'd like to hear how the board feels about this. There have been some complaints that the diversity of merchandise is difficult to handle at market, but I believe it's important to remember that every shirt sold offers the market budget a profit equivalent to the vendor fees produced by \$250 in market sales. Since shirt sales have been less than stellar, I propose a third design.

Web Sales:

Adam's working on the Paypal page for the website. He'll be done this week. It turned out to be more work than he was contracted for (not a surprise), but he's a good sport about it. This will continue to develop in a positive direction.

Farmer's Markets Today is a national publication out of Iowa. They have chosen our posters for their covers - Gaia, Flora, Women Harvesting. I sent them the files for Gaia, and it should appear soon. This will boost national poster sales.

Harvest Dinner Series

As of Oct 1, we had 4490 in gross ticket income (incl. reservations) for the series. Actual ticket \$ taken in amounted to \$3440.

Our first dinner brought in \$1115 in tickets and \$680 in donations with \$982.41 in expenses. Profit of \$132.59 plus \$680 donations equals \$812.59 in net income. To put this in perspective, a vendor would have to sell more than \$20 thousand to add the same amount of vendor fees to the budget. Bob's appeal was very compelling and truly pushed the event to a point of stellar success. Young attendees felt energized, and many new local business relationships seemed to be forged. Growers had a good feeling afterwards, which is a great improvement over the initial responses. I would like to see many more events like this over the long term - diversity is important, from high-end to nearly free. This really creates a buzz about the market and helps establish community understanding of what the market needs. It also builds local relationships that otherwise might not network to the same degree.

Press has been very good. The Coho has sold out, Laurette's is doing well, and the Fountain will need a push. Emily Truitt will be featured at the Fountain. Owner Nick Yates wants to do family-style table settings, feature salads, pasta dishes, and seasonal produce like squash. He wants to remain flexible to stay close to availability of produce.

Let me know if we should feature our oyster producer at the Fountain, because they do many oyster dishes and are open to it. First priority right now is finding ways to distinguish the fountain so we can get handbills out asap, and do the Fountain/Coho press release later this month.

Also, Faith Petric (I'm staying at her house right now in the Haight) will be in town for Chautauqua benefits during the fountain fundraiser, so let me know if a 92-year old famous folk heroine would fit the bill.

Capacity will be small at the fountain and coho, so volunteers will be hard to seat. I'll be happy cruising around and doing dishes.

Press Releases

In order to remind folks that market is still going on in the fall, I envision the following press releases for the last months of market:

- 1) One on local food and carbon footprint, talking with local producers to assemble interesting and compelling information.
- 2) A feature on Finn River planting 1,000 apple trees, incorporating volunteers into a long-term return on their efforts.

3) Harvest Dinner III and IV

any more ideas?

Ads

In order to remind folks that market is still swinging, I'd like to run an ad this month - 10% off \$100 in tokens. If anyone would like to discuss this further, please let me know. Otherwise, i'll submit it this week. If anyone would like to proof it, also let me know. I enjoy collaborative work. I'd like to list some of the available produce and include a nice image or two.

Banner

When I get back in a week, I'd like to ask for donations to the stage banner in order to support the music budget for next year. I'm thinking about 250 now and a pledge for 250 next year. Clubs might not be able to do that, so I would expand our request to other potential donors.

Website

It's up and running. Any comments? I've been soliciting weblog contributions and aim to keep developing the site over time. Bob will assemble a board page. I love how easy and quick it is to update.

FOMs -

Pretty quiet on the FOM front!

Volunteers -

Same as last month. We're in good shape. Nick let vendors know of a potentially reduced booth fee if one of their interns or employees helped with market breakdown. That's happened once this month.

Market Merchandise -

Merchandise sales are dropping off considerably. After checking with Karen about prior practice, I placed ten tote bags at Uptown Nutrition for sale. Staff can brainstorm other spots for totes and T's to build off-season sales.

Harvest Dinner -

Seems like Matt covered that well in his report. I would add that the food was fabulous, the set-up and decorations likewise. And we had a great time.