

Public Market Advisory Commission

Thursday April 17, 2008
5:00pm Council Chambers
City Hall, 100 N. Fifth Avenue

Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Special Presentations
4. Public Commentary – Agenda items only (3 minutes per speaker)
5. Approval of Agenda
6. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Meeting of March 20, 2008
7. Commission Business
 - a. Old Business
 - (1) Promotional and Educational Events at Market
 - (2) Market Renovations Update-Jeff Dehring
 - b. New Business
 - (1) Discussion of Seniority
 - (2) Vendor Public Meeting, 22 April 2008
8. Reports and Communications
 - a. Market Manager
 - b. Related Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces
 - c. Items from Commissioners
 - d. Transmittals/communications received
 - a. email received from Denise Brock
 - b. email received from Luis Vazquez
 - c. email received from Peter Stark
 - d. email received from Donald Gibbs
 - e. email received from Carol Vena
9. Public Commentary – General (3 minutes per speaker)
10. Adjourn



DRAFT

**CITY OF ANN ARBOR – PUBLIC MARKET ADVISORY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
March 20, 2008**

The regular meeting of the Public Market Advisory Commission was held on Thursday, March 20, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers located in City Hall, 100 N. Fifth Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by P. Pollack.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: (5) G. Service, S. Brines, K. King, P. Pollack, D. Black
Members Absent: (0)
Staff Present: (2) J. Black, M. Notarianni
Guests: (0)

3. Special Presentations

4. Public Commentary-Agenda Items only (3 minutes per speaker)

G. Thompson: What I want to speak to today is the marketing of the market. Before you rush off and redo the experiences of other markets, I urge you to research their experiences. 2 good sources are Nina Plank, currently recognized as the guru of markets, and Stephensen and Gary Lev. I like them because they tend to actually look for data, instead of relying on opinions!

Ms. Plank states, "Focus on the sales, and everything else will take care of itself." There are lots of things that can be done at the market to directly encourage sales. One thing that we have been talking about for a long time is vendor signs. Market regulations require a vendor to post a sign stating his name and location, but in many cases, this is not done. This kind of personal interaction is one reason customers prefer markets over supermarkets. Vendor nametags would increase this personal awareness and contact. Another point would be to insist that vendors be there when the market opens. This is more of a problem in the winter, when vendors arrive as late as 10 am. It would also be very helpful if vendors had visible pricing on products. Encourage attractive presentation and packaging. Remember that you are selling produce, not entertainment. The summer Art Fair recently moved the performance stage away from the artists, because they said the music was hurting their sales. Stephensen & Lev say the traditional forms of advertising aren't very successful at bringing customers to a market. I suspect there are 2 reasons why this happens: the primary customer is a repeat customer, and the market has a relatively small amount of dollars that can be spent on advertising. I encourage you to try some unconventional, inexpensive forms of advertising. Several restaurant chefs shop at the market. Try to get them to put on their menu that the market is their source of fresh produce, and return the favour by putting on your webpage that these are chefs that shop at the market. There are many similar low-cost things you can do, with a little imagination. You can hit all the schedule and announcement pages in the Observer and in the AA News. Come up with reasons to send out press releases, such a new vendor joining the market.

5. Approval of Agenda

6. Approval of Minutes

P. Pollack: Moved to approve minutes from meeting on 21 February. 4 ½ pages, 261 lines referenced.

M. Notarianni: Would the commission prefer future minutes verbatim, or just a summary?

1 P. Pollack: That is almost a question of city policy. I think, for the most part, its not verbatim, but a
2 summary.

3
4 J. Black: There's city policy, and then there's how each board operates. I have been doing these minutes
5 how PAC asks for their minutes to be done, which is pretty much verbatim. But I don't know what you
6 want...if you want a summary, that might be easier? We can try and find a nice mix, and focus more if
7 there is a topic you discuss in detail...verbatim with a group this small isn't that hard.

8
9 G. Service: I think they've been great. I guess you can consolidate a little bit more?

10
11 D. Black: They've been helpful...I've found a few typos, but that's just something I notice. Line 190 is
12 "too," not "to." Line 266, says "only think," should be "only **thing**." That's it

13
14 P. Pollack: With those two revisions, minutes are unanimously approved.

15
16 **7. Commission Business**

17 **a. Old Business**

18 **(1) Market Mission Statement**

19 P. Pollack: Here is our draft mission statement. We've aired it a few times, it was actually handed out at
20 the vendor meeting the other day, and we haven't received any comments back on it, so if we are content
21 with it among ourselves, we could deal with this today, and remove the "draft" from the title.

22
23 G. Service: We can always revise it, if needed, at the next meeting. I move to approve the mission
24 statement.

25
26 Seconded by S. Brines. Unanimously approved.

27
28 P. Pollack: We should probably date the market mission statement.

29
30 **(2) Commission Mission Statement**

31 P. Pollack: Any additional thoughts about a market commission mission statement? It currently contains 3
32 items related to what we think we do. This includes market commission as an advisory body to the public
33 market, which includes, but isn't limited to, the famers market.

34
35 D Black: Does that include the Sunday market as well?

36
37 P. Pollack: Well yes; not as an advisor to the artisans, but as an overviewer of the market space + the
38 activities that take place there. I think one of the characteristics, as we talk about "local and national
39 governmental agencies," is that is a subtle reference to the DDA and PAC, because those are 2 agencies we
40 especially want to collaborate with.

41
42 D. Black: When you read "**businesses**," I thought that was more correct. It says "business" here. I also
43 think it should say "**governmental**," instead of "government."

44
45 P. Pollack: Again, as we said before, we can add and adjust as time goes by.

46
47 G. Service moved to pass PMAC mission statement. D Black seconds. Unanimously approved.

48
49 P. Pollack: We should also date this as of today.

50 **(3) Vendor Public Meeting, 11 March 2008**

51
52 P. Pollack: Christy Summers, of Beckett and Raeder, provided a very thorough summary of the meeting.
53 Any thoughts about what took place at that meeting?? It was mostly about the physical plan, and changes
54 that are going to occur; how to keep the market whole during the renovations, and at the end, Molly led us
55 through some ideas for the market.

56

1 S. Brines: I had to leave early, but I thought it was a good meeting. I thought it was good that we had the
2 meeting, and think we should have more, and have had positive feedback from vendors.

3
4 M. Notarianni: I agree, it is important to continue to have public meetings as we move through the
5 renovation process, to keep people involved.

6
7 D Black: I thought it was a positive meeting.

8
9 J Black: I was really happy to see that so many vendors attended. I think it will be helpful to continue to
10 have these meetings, two or three times a year, not in response to a crisis, but to reflect on the year past,
11 and talk about the year ahead.

12
13 S. Brines: I think it is important to continue to have more meetings, because of the renovations.

14
15 P. Pollack: We should think about having more public meetings, as we move into Phase 2. Hopefully the
16 design team, and Jeff Dehring, will be able to issue minutes to the vendors and the public, so everyone will
17 understand where things are at, and what to expect ahead. A weekly, or biweekly memo, about what is to
18 come, could answer a lot of questions even before they are asked.

19
20 D Black: It would be helpful to have a couple of copies of this report in the market office.

21
22 M. Notarianni: I mailed out copies to all of the vendors, and the report it is posted on the website, but I
23 agree it would be helpful to have copies in the office for vendors who don't have internet access.

24
25 P. Pollack: I'm glad. One of our goals, when we first formed, was to make sure our communications were
26 open to everybody.

27 **b. New Business**

28 **(1) A program of Promotional and Educational Events**

29 M. Notarianni: I've given you a handout with two sides. One is the suggestions that the vendors gave at
30 the public meeting, the other is the suggestions commission came up with at our working session. (reads
31 through idas).

32
33 P. Pollack: What do we think our next steps could be?

34
35 S. Brines: One idea might be to set up a sub-committee. Can we include the general public on sub-
36 committees?

37
38 P. Pollack: I don't see why not.

39
40 S. Brines: I think we could engage other groups, like Slow Food. I don't feel like, at our working sessions,
41 we really have enough time to delve into these issues. I would suggest it meeting on Saturdays, as markets
42 are winding down...

43
44 P. Pollack: The important thing is understanding what the charge for the sub-committee is.

45
46 S. Brines: One goal of the committee could be to rank these idas as far as importance and also feasibility.

47
48 D Black: Does the market itself provide signage?

49
50 M. Notarianni: Yes, several types. We have small blue "postcards" with information about the market,
51 larger green wooden A-boards that can display news within the market, and I recently applied for a grant to
52 create individual placards for each vendor that will contain their name, and hang in their stall.

53
54 P. Pollack: We have 2 volunteers for the "promotional and educational events sub-committee", Molly and
55 Shannon.

56

1 S. Brines: We could meet at 2 pm on Saturdays. The group's purpose is to focus more energy on exploring
2 ideas that are difficult to find time to during PMAC meetings or working sessions. I think there are 2 kinds
3 of signage we should focus on: the signage that says the market's hours, which I think should say "year
4 round," and the signage of the actual stalls.
5

6 M. Notarianni: I've been trying to update the website more frequently, to help the public become more
7 aware of the market's year-round offerings. I would also like to create a newsletter to email to the public.
8

9 G. Service: That's great! We should make people aware that the website is being frequently updated, and
10 to check it out. Could you email us when its been updated?
11

12 M. Notarianni: Sure! www.a2gov.org/market
13

14 Service, D Black: We'll tentatively join the committee as well.
15

16 K. King: Would this committee handle the advertising budget itself, and the routine advertisting?
17

18 S. Brines: I don't think so. I think it should only serve to brainstorm events.
19

20 G. Service: As the sub-committee is brainstorming, we can think of other people who can help.
21

22 J Black: Gina and I formed a similar sub-committee last year with a member of the old commission, and
23 we found that it is really important to make sure that the group will not only brainstorm ideas, but actually
24 act on those ideas.
25

26 M. Notarianni: I am hoping to build a volunteer base this year, through both ongoing (writing articles for a
27 newsletter) and one-time tasks.
28

29 P. Pollack: We'll need to think about the costs of new events, and if they will be free, or if we will need to
30 increase the market's budget, etc.
31

32 K. King: I think we need some really creative, attractive "advertising." Lots of stores are setting up so-
33 called "farmers markets," and they are our competition. We need some creative ideas, like a photo of a
34 busy market day that says "AAFM, Ann Arbor's worse kept secret," or a picture of very old vendor next to
35 a very young one, with the text "AAFM, 75 years young."
36

37 J Black: We start a new fiscal year July 1, so perhaps the sub-committee could meet soon, to create a plan,
38 and then meet again, closer to the end of May, to determine how to spend that fiscal year's advertisting
39 budget.
40

41 P. Pollack: I like King's ideas. I also think we could create an 8 1/2" by 11" flyer to distribute in the
42 neighborhoods surrounding the market: small and inexpensive...
43

44 D Black: What about advertising with a welcome wagon-type organization, or realtors?
45

46 M. Notarianni: We already do advertise with the welcome-wagon, they are called Newcomer's.
47

48 G. Service: Bumper stickers! How about Saturday the 29th for our first sub-committee meeting?
49

50 P. Pollack: When we decide to have our meeting, and when we will have attendance of 3 or more, than
51 we'll need to post it appropriately, in conjunction with the Public Meetings Act. That is another reason to
52 have a bulletin board at the market, and a place to post things online.
53

54 **8. Reports and Commissions**

55 **a. Market Manager.**

1 M. Notarianni: Farm inspections are starting for the first time in 8 or 9 years. We've hired Matt Demmon
2 as our inspector, and we've already done 2 days of inspections. They've gone quite well.

3
4 G. Service: So how does that work? Does he call ahead, and then go by himself?

5
6 M. Notarianni: Yes. I went with him for the first few, just to get a system down, but he will be doing the
7 inspections by himself. There is a form to follow, etc.

8
9 G. Service: Will that information be available on the website: which farms have and have not been
10 inspected?

11
12 M. Notarianni: I don't think so. I hope to have everyone inspected by year's end.

13
14 P. Pollack: Is there any public information value involved in this process?

15
16 G. Service: We'll brainstorm on that.

17
18 M. Notarianni: Because of the dynamic operation of many people's operations, they may need more than
19 one inspection throughout the season. Council approved the Phase 1 renovations!

20
21 J Black: The mayor would like us as staff to review and research whether we can use LED lights at market.
22 Staff are working with Gary Cooper and Beckett and Raeder to review different LED options, their light
23 levels, etc. We are still going to move ahead with Phase 1, and make a decision on the lighting as we
24 gather more information. We'd like to have a review committee made up of this entire body, instead of a
25 single person, like the old commission had decided. Many more design elements will come into play in
26 Phase 2 and Phase 3. This commission, city staff, and the DDA will serve as that review committee. We'll
27 present some more information regarding renovations at the next PMAC meeting, April 17th, and then there
28 will be another public meeting the week of April 21st. Jeff Dehring is going to look at another venue for
29 our public meeting, as the acoustics at Cobblestone aren't that great.

30
31 P. Pollack: I like the idea of including this body as a whole in the review committee. Thank you!

32
33 M. Notarianni: We now have a group email list; PMAC@a2gov.org. Annie and Paul of Community Farm
34 of AA want to bring their solar tractor to market to show off.

35
36 G. Service: It would be great to have a poster about the solar project that is happening!

37
38 M. Notarianni: I am in the process of completing the FNS authorization, so we'll be able to accept Food
39 Stamps at the farmers market. We have distributed surveys to all of the vendors, and are starting to receive
40 them back: lots of good feedback. I am also working on creating additional signage, merchandise, and
41 composting at market! Also, perhaps, an educational rainbarrel at market!

42 **b. Related Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces**

43 **c. Items from Commissioners**

44 K. King: Especially now that the market is being reconfigured, the issue of seniority is going to be bigger
45 and bigger. We need to be proactive, and face it head on. I think we should examine how stalls have been
46 obtained in the past, and what it means. What privileges accompany high seniority? I think we should
47 tackle this as delicately, yet firmly, as possible.

48
49 J Black: We don't have records of how things came to be, in regards to seniority. We can gather
50 information from talking to others, but there are no reference documents as far as how seniority was
51 established. Maybe we should put that on the agenda for next month??

52
53 G. Service: Could you compile the responses regarding seniority from the vendor surveys for the next
54 meeting?

55
56 M. Notarianni: Yes.

1
2 J Black: We only have information as far back as 2004.
3

4 P. Pollack: Is it true that there are very few markets that use seniority as a system?
5

6 M. Notarianni: I think so. Other markets may use seniority as a loose guiding principle, but not as a
7 quantifiable concept, like we do.
8

9 P. Pollack: It would be helpful to have examples from other markets. Let's put this on the agenda for our
10 next meeting. This is one of our work items for this year, which means the due date is September.
11

12 S. Brines: I think we should talk to vendors while we're at vendors and gather their feedback. One
13 feedback I've gotten from a fairly senior vendor was that didn't we just tweak the rules last year?
14

15 J. Black: We clarified them. We said the day you become an annual is when you accept an annual stall.
16

17 S. Brines: I won't be able to attend the next meeting, but I will forward on some comments and thoughts
18 from vendors and myself.
19

20 G. Service: Are there any more changes for any more artisans coming in?
21

22 M. Notarianni: Not yet, bc I haven't sent the new applications out yet.
23

24 P. Pollack: Could you email us a draft of the application?
25

26 M. Notarianni: Yes! I will tomorrow.
27

28 S. Brines: Don't forget the Homegrown Festival, on September 13th.
29

30 P. Pollack: The KDA met today. Trunk-a-palooza starts in May, African American Fest is the first
31 Saturday in June. The Nash Bash will happen again, maybe late August. The Kerrytown Book Festival is
32 the first Sunday in September.

33 **d. Transmittals/Communications Received**

34
35 M. Notarianni: We received an email from Peter Stark.
36

37 **10. Adjournment**

38
39 The regular meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Market Manager Report

Presented Thursday, April 17th, 2008

Market Inspections

Our inspector, Matt Demmon, is continuing vendor inspections. They are going well, and it has been a great opportunity for vendors to share thoughts about the market!

Market Renovations

A public meeting will be held to discuss Phases 2 & 3 on Tuesday, April 22nd, at Cobblestone. The format will be similar to the first public meeting.

Compost at the Market

As part of a pilot program with the City of Ann Arbor, the Farmers Market will be one of 14 sites receiving compost pickup. The container will be similar to the large trash bins on wheels, and will be picked up by the normal trash hauler. They will accept “yard-waste” type debris, vegetable matter, and also food scraps. Wow! We are so fortunate to be selected to participate in this exciting new program.

Vendor Applications

Vendor applications were updated, and distributed to returning, and potential vendors within the past month.

Wednesday Market

Wednesday market is starting soon! I am in the process of planning some fantastic events for the first day (most likely Martin Bandyke from 107.1 will be broadcasting live from the market, as in years past), and have also created some small and delightful flyers highlighting the Wednesday market which will soon be distributed throughout town!

Market Volunteers...and More!

I am starting to really recruit volunteers for the market, and concurrently creating some ongoing tasks for volunteers to do. I have already received considerable interest from a group of UM students who want to promote the market among their peers, and a local parent who wants to help make the market more kid- and family-friendly. I always welcome any ideas you may have! Tell your friends and neighbors as well!

Other Good News

Several weeks ago, I received a Customer Service Grant to create new signs similar to the old signs that hung at each vendor's stall. These are currently being printed, and should be completed tomorrow, and available to begin to distribute at market on Saturday.

I have completed my FNS authorization, and if all goes well, the market should be able to accept EBT cards in 1-2 months.

I am currently in the process of producing buttons to sell at the market. Shirts, bumper stickers, tote bags, and other merchandise are being designed, and will be created once I see how the buttons sell.

We have also been selected by the City of Ann Arbor to receive an educational rainbarrel, in conjunction their new stormwater plan.

Responses to survey pertaining to Seniority, April 2008

“Give sand lot people temporary permanent stalls. Since no regulars would want to go in there, we could set up earlier and avoid a lot of traffic frustrations. When we don’t have to go to the sandlot, we would be treated like any regular daily.”

“Some vendors come just enough times to hold their permanent spot. Where we go twice a week maybe, regardless of weather, etc, and we don’t move up. Some people come with very little stuff, don’t sell anything, yet keep their spot. Why have them there?”

“Seniority is an important stabilizer for market to thrive; need review of daily vendors rules as many have expressed features that appear unfair.”

“Considering people on the daily list. On Wednesday & Saturday, farmers should be first in seniority manner. Then the art & craft people next. So the farmers have at least a half way decent chance to get a good spot. If arts & crafts are in there with us farmers the farmers with lower seniority don’t get a fair chance because all those other art & craft people are towards the top. And get all the good spots first. Wednesday & Saturday are Farmers’ Days not art & craft days. But again stall assignments & seniority is the only fair way with us farmers only!”

“Limit stalls to 3 to keep it a more family type of vendors. Improve farm inspections to eliminate vendors not bringing their own raised products.”

“I like the current systems. Loss of seniority would be like making a car without a steering wheel-that’s all.”

“Seniority is predictable and objective. These are important to both the vendor and the customer. Would a grower invest in building a greenhouse or buying production equipment if the vendor could not predict the ability to sell the future production? Would a vendor plant vines or orchard trees that would not yield produce for several years without predictability? If the market is not predictable it will tend to lose the larger anchor vendors. If a customer cannot find a favorite “senior” vendor that customer may stop coming to the Market. Seniority is not just years of attendance, it is a learning period for the vendor. It is also the demonstration that the vendor brings a product that is in demand at the Market for multiple years. Finally seniority is objective. There have been claims of past impartial treatment of some vendors. It is time to say that if any impartially happened, that was in the past and the future will be objective. Seniority obviously favors long term vendor. But recent newer vendors at the market have demonstrated that it is possible to bring a new different product to the Market and succeed.”

“Calling in and showing up late should only be allowed for extenuating circumstances.”

“Rewarding producers that stay all day with full stalls for customers to choose from is important for the vibrancy of the market. Possible rewards may include more space.”

“Keep seniority as is. They have been changed enough. Leave them alone.”

“Seniority applies to those of us who took extra stalls during time when younger people were not using market for an additional income. If we hadn’t done this there would be no market today. This is hard to bring this to the attention of newer vendors, who want to change rules, which we worked & tested for years to benefit all growers.”

“One touchy subject has always been seniority & stall assignment. Many farmers have children with separate businesses at the market giving them a monopoly. Again records are sketchy & some seniority cannot be proved. However to make matters fair to everyone...when a farmer who has 3-4 spaces retires, even if their next of kin or child takes over the business, I think they should only be allotted 2 spaces. It would be more equal if all were allowed 2 spaces, it would let new people on the market showcase their goods, and not be stuck out in no man’s land. Another thought that has been kicked around was a lotto system. At the end of June vendors would draw their yearly space assignment, which would move vendors to new spaces, allow them to maintain their number of booths, but give other vendors a shot at a prime location, instead of letting others have their same prime spot all the time. On the subject of artists, there has been a moratorium on artists for many years now (we could use some new blood). Since there are currently 8 (?) spaces allowed for permanent artists, we should allow the artisans with the most seniority to fill these slots on days when a permanent artist doesn’t show/attend. It would help keep the slots open

for artists & be fair to those with the most seniority, rather than give it to another grower. I have never encountered the disparity between producers & crafters, except at this market. I wish we could peacefully co-exist, & recognize that the variety of goods is a draw, and benefits all of us.”

“We see no system that would work better to make stall assignment than the present system. No matter what is said, there are areas of the market that have higher traffic than others. A yearly lottery would be highly disruptive to both vendors and customers. What would happen to multi stallholders at the end of the lottery who got stalls in several locations. Allowing the manager to assign stalls is too subjective and would always be questioned. Seniority is objective with predictable results. It allows for those that want to stay in the same location to stay as well as allowing movement for those wanting a different location. Vendors should be required to stay all day to have their days count towards the required fifteen times for seniority.”

“I have been coming to the market for 48 years. As the family grew and decided to stay in farming, we were allowed more stalls, as the market was quite empty of farmers who went on to other things in the 70’s & early 80’s. We take July off from the market to transfer from Greenhouse to vegetables. We come every Wed. & Sat. that is possible for our crops. We never have to count to see if we have our 15 days in, and to try to eliminate the seniority or take away our stalls I think it would be wrong, as we are not part time farmers.”

“Seniority is part of the American workers life regardless of their occupation. To take away a vendors seniority and stall assignment could cause a great hardship on the very people who have built the market up over the years. Loyal customers are accustomed to finding vendors in certain spots. Our operation is based on what we can sell on our stall assignment. Reassigning stalls would have a devastating effect on the very people who have kept the market alive, the ‘old timers’ who attend the market rain or shine. In short, our livelihood depends on the Ann Arbor Market and we are extremely disappointed the market would even consider these changes.”

“I believe the present system is fair.”

“There should be one seniority system for all vendors regardless of product. Seniority is the only fair way as far as I can tell.”

“Seniority standards should remain in effect. These are the ‘backbones’ of market and the vendors that continue to be loyal.”

“I feel that the blended list is a big step in the right direction and has improved the market so much! I do feel that it would be right to award all the craft vendors with their true seniority of course. The market was failing, and crafts helped revive it. We bring customers to the market, pay our bills to the market, are full active members, and we pay our bills with the income we make at the market. There is no valid reason to treat us as a second class citizens and we all need to work towards friendship so we can all promote the market & our businesses together! We would all benefit from being on the same side, as most of us already are-there is much friendship already, the last remaining strife is frustrating! Whole Foods is opening a new store closer to the market-crafts is something they do not have. ‘It’s the mix that makes it.’ “