

The Public Market Advisory Commission, in conjunction with market vendors, City of Ann Arbor staff, and members of the public are working on reviewing market policy, including the current Seniority Policy.

Included below is a collection of the pertinent comments, concerns, and suggestions the PMAC has received to date regarding their review of market policies.

**Received 4/17/08**

I am replying to your call for feedback on seniority issues at the Market.

As former Market Commission Chair, I want to register my opposition to having any seniority system at all in place at the market. Ultimately, vendor seniority cannot be proven, as thorough records no longer exist as to which vendors filed applications to sell and when they did so. Written records establishing vendor seniority only go back so far in the history of the market. This fact can be verified by City staff. The system used now is outmoded, and has been abused by some self-serving vendors. Some vendors acquired their seniority under false pretenses.

I think the PMAC should ask itself the following questions:

Why have a seniority system in the first place?

What purpose does the seniority system serve at the present time?

Does the seniority system lend towards conflicts between vendors at the market? Has it led to conflicts in the past?

What other markets have seniority systems in place, and what purpose do they serve?

If seniority is used primarily as a way for vendors to select stall spaces at the market, then I would propose a different and fairer way of allocating stall spaces to vendors: an annual lottery.

**Received 4/16/08**

A method for seniority should be based on the needs of the environment and the community.

My northern Washtenaw county farm has an underground spring, which begins one of the tributaries of Arms Creek that flows into the Huron River, the source of drinking water.

For the last 28 years I have created jobs for many Ann Arbor residents who still live there. They are teachers and nurses and other professionals. Now I am hiring the second generation of families that live in Ann Arbor.

Over the years many people from Washtenaw County have worked at my farm. A good part of the money I make from the market goes back into the community.

San Francisco has banned certain types of plastic containers so as to legislate a cleaner environment

Seniority should be based on several factors.

One—Co2 output - the closer to the market one drives the less CO2 is emitted.

Two--- Farmers who live on water ways that feed Ann Arbors drinking water and use only natural methods of growing to maintain clean sources of water

Three---Those farms who employ Ann Arbor and Washtenaw county residents

Four—Length of time at market

**Received 4/15/08**

The present rules make the market run well. A market managers constant monitoring of the rules keeps the market running well.

Improved/enhanced: Advertising has to be increased for Wednesday market. Customer attendance for wednesdays has dropped tremendously through the years. The cause is probably due to low VENDOR attendance on Wednesdays.

No rule changes need to be done for different seasons. Changing the rules will only complicate things more. The opening hours change was good due to winter months but nothing else should be different.

Other vendors added to the market: For years we had a house plant vendor who retired. He did a wonderful business and the customers do miss him. If you could find a house plant vendor who will attend wednesdays and saturdays from May till October the customers will be pleased.

Seniority and stall assignments: The stall assignments has been changed through the years which has affected our seniority. There is NO other market that alternates available annual stalls between daily and annual vendors.

Those of us who have so called "prime stalls" have put in our time to obtain them. It took me 20 years to get where i am today.

If you change seniority in any way it will ruin the market. There are many vendors, including myself, attending other markets in fear of what Ann Arbor Farmers Market is becoming. If you turn away the long time vendors with new rules.... Where will the market be? Seniority is the base of our market and it's operating rules.

If you check the attendance records you will see that those of us who have been coming to the market for many years attend market 35 times or more during every market year. We are there to support the market, community and our businesses. Most of the people

who want seniority to change to obtain better stalls without putting their time in, only attend market 15 or 20 times a year which is barely enough time to maintain seniority. Is this what you want for the market, vendors only coming 15 Saturdays a year?

The rules are more than fair as they are written. Daily vendors can get permanent stalls before an annual vendor, daily vendors can pay yearly for their daily stalls, annual vendors are limited to how many stalls they can have, annual vendors are not permitted to obtain "extra stalls" until all daily vendors have been assigned a stall and the start time for market was changed to accommodate the daily vendors.

### **Received 4/9/08**

What changes are being discussed about seniority? What are the complaints about the present seniority rules?

### **Received 3/27/08**

This email is in regards to the seniority issue on the agenda of April's meeting. Why is this topic being discussed again? If you look into the history of the market commission you will see how many times this issue has been discussed. Every time the market gets new management/commissioners we go through the same procedures about the same topics or the same complaints about the same vendors.

The annual vendors and market staff/commissioners have done things in the past to make the market more accessible and equitable for all such as:

1. Limited number of annual stalls for ALL annual vendors.
2. No extra/daily stalls permitted to annuals until all daily vendors have a stall.
3. Assignment of available annual stalls alternated between eligible annual and daily vendors.
4. Seniority lists for daily vendors
5. Daily vendors are permitted to pay annually for their stalls.

NO other market has done any of these things for daily vendors, not to mention no daily vendor has ever been turned away because of lack of space.

As far as certain vendors having more desirable stalls, most of those vendors didn't always have those stalls, they earned them through hard work and many years of dedication to the market. Many years ago the market wasn't successful and the "long time vendors" of the market were encouraged to take as many stalls as they wanted to make the market look full so the market would become successful. I encourage market staff and the market commission to preserve seniority at the market, without seniority I'm afraid the market will suffer due to devastating turmoil with all parties concerned.