

## **Public Market Advisory Commission**

Thursday, November 3, 5:30 pm  
Fourth Floor Board Room  
Ann Arbor District Library  
343 S. Fifth Ave

### **Meeting Agenda**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Special Presentations
5. Public Commentary – Agenda items only (3 minutes per speaker)
6. Approval of Minutes
  - a. Meeting of October 6, 2011
7. Commission Business
  - a. Old Business
    - (1) Vendor / Customer Survey
  - b. New Business
    - (1) New Vendor Discussion
8. Reports and Communications
  - a. Market Manager
  - b. Related Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces
- c. Items from Commissioners
- d. Transmittals/communications received
9. Public Commentary – General (3 minutes per speaker)
10. Adjournment

***Note: In response to pending City Hall/Courts and Police construction, Market Commission meetings have been relocated to the 4th floor Board Room of the Ann Arbor District Library, and will occur on the first Thursday of each month, at 5:30 pm.***

## Public Market Advisory Commission Minutes

Thursday, October 6, 5:30 pm

### Meeting Agenda

#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

#### 2. Roll Call

Members Present: (4) D. Barkman, S. Brines, A. Germain, D. Santacroce

Members Absent: (1) L-J. Hard

Staff Present: (1) M. Notarianni

#### 3. Approval of Agenda

#### 4. Special Presentations

- a. Dave Borneman, NAP Manager

D. Borneman – I am the NAP Manager and have been around and NAP has been around for about 18 years. Our mission is to protect and restore Ann Arbor's natural areas and foster an environmental ethic among its citizens. I grew up among farmers in Illinois and even collected Oriental Bittersweet with my family and made beautiful decorations in the fall and my family still does that. Bittersweet is a beautiful plant, but we know now that it is an invasive plant. Bulldozers are not the only threats to our natural areas, a lot of non-native species, many brought in for ornamental purposes around 100 years ago and many with no natural predators here. So native species competing to survive diseases and pests etc can't out compete these non-natives that by definition have no natural predators over here. Things like garlic mustard, etc out compete others, and Oriental Bittersweet, or Asian Bittersweet is like a kudzu of the north. It encircles trees and spreads throughout the landscape and can really take over. There is a native bittersweet and the two look very similar. You can go to the store and think you're buying native only to find once it gets growing it's invasive. You can't always see the warning signs when the plant is small. We advise people not to buy them unless they know for sure they are buying the native. So, I gave to Molly some notices that can be put up so people don't dispose of their wreaths in the woods where it can spread and take over. It spreads when birds eat the berries so it doesn't stay where it's planted. We're simply asking people to dispose of them in their fireplace, or the city compost. To make this as simple as possible, we've made cards so that vendors can tag these to the wreaths and inform customers how to dispose of them when they buy them.

#### 5. Public Commentary – Agenda items only (3 minutes per speaker)

#### 6. Approval of Minutes

- a. Meeting of September 13, 2011

#### 7. Commission Business

- a. Old Business

- (1) Vendor / Customer Survey

M. Notarianni – I was out of town and sick in this short time, but I did draft up questions for customers, and would love input on questions for vendors and how the format is feeling. We suggested for vendors, physical changes to the market and potential changes to the market hours.

D. Santacroce – It might be nice to allow people to choose more than one answer on the questions where it is relevant. Are you going to do another dot survey?

M. Notarianni – I was going to send it out electronically and have paper copies to fill out, not dots on a board at market.

D. Santacroce – It would be helpful to see the old questions.

M. Notarianni – Most of these are taken from old surveys.

S. Brines – Would we have volunteers asking people to take the survey? I was recently surveyed on the bus on AATA.

M. Notarianni – I have a glut of U of M volunteers so that would be great. Would it skew the results to have it taken on multiple days?

D. Santacroce – As long as you don't have repeat takers, it would be fine

S. Brines – Dot surveys are easy but perhaps less informative since everyone can see how others have answered before them.

M. Notarianni- Any other ideas for vendor questions?

A. Germain – We discussed the breaking of the rule of leaving early. People might be more willing to answer an open-ended question about why they're leaving early if it was anonymous. Maybe questions about what they bring to find out if there's some type of missing vegetable.

M. Notarianni- Or just a general question on the vendors' take on the product mix. I will finish that up in the next week and have my student volunteers help with it.

S. Brines – I think we have another few weeks that we can do it in if the weather stays like this.

#### b. New Business

##### (1) New Vendor Discussion

M. Notarianni – Seasonal fruit tarts and pies, chocolate bars, mungbean bars, savory tarts, fruit jam, homemade nutella. A large variety of pies in panetone. Granola, seasoning, and hibiscus elixir. Quiche. More baked goods – cinnamon rolls, sticky buns, cake. Variety of body care items. Handmade original design bead-woven jewelry. Different kinds of chocolates and chocolate covered oreos. Butterfly and dragonfly light covers, hairpins, garden wares made out of recycled pop bottles. Roasted chickpeas.

D. Barkman – Sound like some good people to come in the winter.

D. Santacroce – I'm still a little fuzzy on how this works... So these people would be replacing people who don't have anything left to sell this year?

M. Notarianni – It's tricky because once someone is accepted to become a vendor they are essentially a vendor until they quit or drop out or get kicked out. They can keep moving up the list if they come often and other people leave. Historically, there is more room for new vendors in the winter, but what I sometimes have a hard time with is the fact that there is less customer traffic, so I'm hesitant to fill the market with seasonless products like baked goods when it's just a slower market, there's a smaller pool of money.

D. Santacroce – So say this Saturday, it's going to be a full market, right? So how is it decided who if there?

M. Notarianni – Whoever shows up that morning! Then there's a stall assignment based on seniority.

D. Santacroce – Do you ever get more people coming than there are spots for?

M. Notarianni- That's what I try to avoid.

D. Santacroce – How do you do that? Do you tell them?

M. Notarianni – It's more of an educated guess. People will apply, and they want to come on Saturday but I tell them market is full until approximately the first frost. But essentially it's a guessing game and people are willing to take that risk.

S. Brines – People sort of self-sort. We've been pretty packed before though, we've been as far down as moving down the sidewalk toward Catherine and the ivy area next to the office. And those never used to be market spaces.

D. Santacroce- I guess it's more of an art than I science.

S. Brines – I tend to agree that we can't pack the market but maybe for the long haul it would bring more people? If you build it they will come?

D. Santacroce- It sounds like you're afraid of diluting the money. Or having too many cookies.

M. Notarianni- Well, afraid of having too many things that are too similar.

S. Brines – Another question is that you have people who've been coming forever and if we don't grow the customer base the same amount of people end up spending over a wider base of vendors.

D. Barkman – People get loyal customers, so you have some who only shop with a few vendors they are loyal to. And then other shoppers will purchase a little bit here, a little bit there, because they feel like they're helping out

S. Brines – To put it another way, are we doing a disservice to the businesses that are already there by slicing the pie too thinly? By having more vendors with a small customer base. . .

D. Santacroce – How do other markets do this?

M. Notarianni- Most markets do have anonymous gross sales data from vendors on a daily basis. But I've never seen any other farmers markets that do stall assignments this way. I never know who or how many people are going to be there on any given day or how much space is going to be available because some people who normally take 1 stall may take 3 stalls in August, so if you got a whole market of people doing that, it makes it really unpredictable and hard to plan ahead.

D. Barkman – There are times when the annuals don't come if they know there's a football game, or they need to work on other things, and so that variation can be unpredictable for the tail-end folks, but the Wednesday Evening Market is a place for these folks to try it out. Or there's lots of little markets around the area that would love to have them. But you have to build up customers, you have to have places for them to park. .

S. Brines – We certainly have a space allocation issue, and I was sort of bringing up the economics of flooding the market with vendors and the effects that might have.

D. Barkman – That's part of the risk of the farm market. Growing a crop, baking 50 dozen cookies or whatever, do I pick the day in the middle of May where I'm low on the list or do I pick a nice day in November?

S. Brines - But at the same time Molly has been adding vendors.

D. Barkman – Of the tail-enders have many of them tried it and pulled out?

M. Notarianni- I'd say probably about 70 percent come. There's a bigger percent than I'd expect that continue coming.

D. Santacroce- In the winter, are there more people that want to come than you let in?

M. Notarianni- Not really.

D. Santacroce – So if you want in the winter, you're basically in?

M. Notarianni- That's the tricky part because there's no seasonal component to the application, so once they're in they can come whenever they want. It's different if they have something really unique that we don't have at any point in the year, but if they have something that's

somewhat redundant to what we have on Wednesdays and Saturdays during the year, once I let them in they could overlap with the others not there in the winter.

D. Santacroce- So you're worried about them coming in May and not having space for everyone?

M. Notarianni- yes, but I'm less worried about space and more so with the product mix that we'd have on a less-busy Wednesday in May with all those vendors coming.

D. Barkman- Yeah, those cookies are a small investment for people to start doing especially with people being able to bake in their home kitchen now.

D. Santacroce – But wouldn't the market regulate itself? If it's a bad cup of coffee, you're not going to be Starbucks. The one group you didn't mention is comparison shopping. There's a fair amount of that that goes on and I think it's healthy. In the 13 years that I've been going to the market there's a lot that's gotten more expensive. A little competition allows the bad cookie person to go away in favor of the good cookies.

S. Brines – And we've run into this before so the question is do we let them all in and let the customers decide or not and have a hybrid. The concern is that they wouldn't regulate and then we'd be flooded and would that be shooting some of the existing vendors in the foot?

D. Santacroce – And some of them wouldn't come back?

S. Brines – Well maybe for some of the longtime vendors it's just in their blood it would take a lot not to come back.

D. Santacroce – Seeing the demographics of this town, we're probably one of the more desirable markets around, right?

S. Brines – Well and do you think the customer base is growing? I think it definitely has in the winter which could be clouding my judgment of the rest of the year.

D. Barkman – When the market's at its best in the middle of May people come to enjoy the gardens that people bring in the traffic on Detroit street you have to weave through people, but it seems on other corners, it seems there are more times is not so congested. Is that the economy? Could be, or that people have so many choices with more hours than us. But all of these people are independent businessmen and they need to figure it out for themselves.

D. Santacroce– To the extent you're trying to increase volume in the winter it seems it might be worth trying for a year. Maybe having to turn people away would help people drop off if that's what needs to happen. It's definitely busier than since I started coming to market.

A. Germain – So if people come in the winter and then don't come for 6 months they're not off the list?

S. Brines – They have to come 15 times per year.

M. Notarianni – Yeah July-June they have to come 15 times on Wednesday or Saturday.

A. Germain – So if you had a rush of people to come in October they could still get their 15 that year?

M. Notarianni – Yes. People don't get kicked out if they don't come 15 times they just move down in seniority. And if you come 15 times you can move up.

D. Barkman- But you haven't turned people away recently?

M. Notarianni- There are people with delicate products who've left after they didn't want to set up where there was space for them, but I haven't had to say there is not one single other spot for you.

S. Brines – I might research the economics of an expanding market. I'm curious if there are other studies of other markets.

D. Santacroce: When I'm there at 10 it's busy but I look across the street and there's room there.

D. Barkman – In terms of expanding the market, I think you're better off looking at alternate days, alternate sites, you have the Cobblestone Farm, those would be opportunities.

D. Santacroce – You'd want to be careful because you wouldn't want to dilute a customer base from the Kerrytown Market.

D. Barkman- It's the numbers from a customer point of view, a lot of these farmers either go to multiple markets so the farmers become a limiting factor too so the product has to be grown.

S. Brines – The other thing, Peter Pollack formerly on the commission would remind us of customers complaints of the lack of space as well. The lack of room to eat the tamale or something like that. So that fits into the design we have to consider. By the way I noticed for seats along the Kerrytown building. We didn't give direct comments, but maybe some overall considerations.

## (2) Sale of Invasive Species at the Market

M. Notarianni- This was related to what Dave talked about a minute ago. We've done this for 2 or 3 years now.

S. Brines – We've done these in the past and how has it worked? The vendors got a half sheet to put on to product?

M. Notarianni – Initially it was having the information on the vendors' table, then it was half sheets with the product, and this year we'll hand out these. I think the information is good, we can't prevent people from selling bittersweet.

D. Barkman – Just a suggestion as you drop it off that they can work up their own description.

S. Brines – Barring a new ordinance that will mandate something, just getting the information out there is good.

## 8. Reports and Communications

### a. Market Manager

M. Notarianni – Our new inspector is doing a bang-up job and has inspected a lot of people in the last month: Shetler, Bremmer, Carpenter, Schwartz, Hochstetler, Much, Meissner, Coblenz, Marks, Melmoth, St Clair, and Wilson. I will try to get her to come to the meeting next month. We have had conversations about how to make the inspections effective, so that might be interesting.

S. Brines – So that would be a special presentation and Q and A. Since she's already done so many we can get some feedback from her on the documents she's filling out.

M. Notarianni – Well they get a copy of their inspection report back. We talked in the past about putting a check on there that says you passed you didn't pass but the idea is we'd take action if we needed to.

D. Santacroce – Why don't we approve them?

M. Notarianni – I guess one thought is that it's a fluid thing, say they get inspected and seem fine and the next week they bring pumpkins but I didn't see any pumpkins at their farm, that's a problem.

This month the market was part of the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Solar Energy Tour, and hosted the Ozone House's Annual Fundraiser, and a Wedding. And this month we're hosting our annual Halloween event with many U of M student volunteers, and the amazing Apple History Museum is coming back.

S. Brines – Oh great, that was really well-received!

M. Notarianni- Yeah, I think it might only be for one day, but it's exciting. I've had representatives from Food Gatherers continuing to be at the market helping sign people up for bridge cards, and representatives from the county health department are educating folks about SNAP and how to cook the food they're getting. This is the last month of the Double Up Food Bucks program and at the end of that next month I should have some numbers for you about how all of that went. I'll have more on how that affected sales and stuff.

D. Santacroce- Why is that ending?

M. Notarianni- It's just a finite sum of money and the program runs through June – October, that's just the program's dates. I think a lot of other participating farmers markets end at the beginning of October. So for them it was just the end of their season.

S. Brines – So EBT is the only thing that goes through the end of the year.

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

c. Items from Commissioners

A. Germain – I have a question – So I noticed the lights completely off in the market at like 9:30 and it was completely dark. And I've noticed when they're on and that makes some sense, but I was curious for the sake of public safety.

M. Notarianni- That's good to know. It's a somewhat complicated system which we haven't fully mastered yet, but yes the lights are supposed to be half on during non-market hours and kick back on with the timer for market. Sometimes when people have events there they'll mess with the settings and I won't notice since they're on during market hours. But that's good to know and I'll look into it.

d. Transmittals/communications received

9. Public Commentary – General (3 minutes per speaker)

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.