

Ferguson Farmers Market Commission Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2023

In attendance: Kathy Roth, Tim Larson, Joseph Seastrom, Mary Haux, Jill Holstrop, Kathy Noelker, Deborah Rice-Carter

Called to order at 6:34pm

Deborah Rice-Carter moved to accept minutes as written
Kathy Noelker seconded

Discussion of what went well in the 2023 season:

- Santa in July: good event but maybe needed better location and better marketing. Some thought there should have been more advance info that fire department would have gifts for kids. But it was a last minute thing and dependent on availability of fire department.

(Side note) Joseph is looking into having a P.A. system installed with permanent speakers.

- Kids Events: Kathy Roth mentioned they were good.
- Cherokee National Holiday event was great. Bigger and better than previous two years which had bad weather. Good weather this year helped as does repetition of event.

Discussion of ideas for improvement:

- Tents: 1. A schedule for replacing tents. 2. New tents have much nicer buttons.
- Umbrellas - needed for the square tables from the pool that are now at 501
- More volunteers in the morning for set up
- Using the PA again to announce what's going on at market that day, upcoming markets, other information of interest to customers
- Kathy Roth suggested having the last market on the third Saturday in October rather than the last Saturday because of weather. But weather can be warm or cold late October so decided to keep last market on last Saturday of the month.
- Jill Holtrop suggested attendants at Information Booth should have phones put away during market.
- Joseph said they are discussing changing up the Info Booth - maybe separate booth for SNAP/EBT. He agreed Info Booth should be more of a greeting/welcoming booth.
- Jill asked how SNAP/EBT did for 2023. Joseph responded that it did very well. Had to ask for more Double-Up tokens to make it through the season.

Miscellaneous discussion:

- Produce vendors did well in 2023, crafters did not do as well.
- Joseph said there are plans to put market information in vendor packets for next year. They will have a vendor meeting prior to 2024 season. They plan to encourage vendors to be creative with their booths and do marketing for their booths.
- Kathy R. asked if there are plans to contact vendors from past years to come back.
- Coffee vendor who partners with Great Harvest Bread came in Sept and Oct. They think Great Harvest may come in 2024.
- Kathy N. suggested asking vendors if they have suggestions for types of vendors we are missing from our market such as honey, bread, etc.
- Joseph said they plan to reach out to vendors in various ways.
- Kathy R. said it was a great first year - a learning year but it went well.

- Kathy N. echoed Kathy R.'s thoughts. Also mentioned family events were nice.
- Joseph expressed interest in events for older adults.
- Deborah mentioned she is on the Board for Aging and they are always looking for things to do. She suggested having the Jolly Trolley bring seniors to the market. Joseph said it is already on their idea list. They do similar things with Jolly Trolley and seniors during the week and can maybe extend that to Saturdays for the market. It can encourage them to enroll and use the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program to get produce. Deborah mentioned could maybe start up the service again where the Jolly Trolley could pick up people at the market and bring them to EarthDance for a tour. Mary reminded all that when this was done in the past, the trolley picked up customers at 10am which was often the same time a special event or demo was starting at the market, which was not great for the market.
- Deborah mentioned she may be a vendor at the market in 2024.
- Note on food vendors: good to have more food vendors but when there are more, all food vendors make less profit.
- Mary suggested having a tip jar for volunteers that customers can contribute to
- Needs and suggestions for market set-up:
 - Early morning volunteers
 - Can possibly bring in Public Works people to help
 - There has been trouble getting tents and tables set up in time for vendors
 - Suggestion to have vendors get their own tables to help with getting things set up on time
- Volunteer Appreciation Dinner: not planned yet but have talked to Vincenzo's about hosting
- Kathy R. talked about meetings for 2024. Start in April then have meetings every other month - June, August, October.
- Joseph has a goal to have a calendar done by January 2024. Vendor applications to be ready by late February/early March. Will have posters ready for next year. Board members volunteered to help put them out.

Meeting adjourned 7:30pm.