

March 7, 2017

Coventry Farmers' Market Operating Committee Special Meeting Minutes

Conference Room B – Town Hall

Meeting was called to order at 8:06am by Chairperson Nelson.

Attendance: Bill Hoffman, Jean Nelson, Erica Pagliuco via FaceTime, Michelle Pesce, Beth Bauer, Eric Trott, Katrina Weaver, Barbara Barry, Jamie Lynn Fontaine Connell

Beth distributed a revised version of the Financial Report that reflects the current status of available funds as well as a fiscal year reflection and briefly reviewed the details.

Adoption of minutes: A motion was made by Weaver and seconded by Nelson to adopt the minutes of February 21, 2017. The motion passed unanimously.

Planning for 2017:

Vendor Applications – The application forms were sent out to the prospective full time vendors. Completed forms and accessory paperwork are coming in to the land use office on a daily basis and are being entered into the vendor matrix.

Some vendors have notified the Market that they are either not returning or are looking to go be a part time vendor. Pure Love Granola is looking for a part time slot since their bakery is doing very well. Green Valley Farm, the pork vendor, will not be returning. Muddy Feet Flowers is looking to be involved as a guest vendor.

An email from Keifer's Kettle Corn regarding their request to maintain their sales of Italian ice at the market was distributed and read by those in attendance.

A lengthy discussion occurred regarding the need to insure that the Market regulations are complied with by the vendors. In particular, the need for the vendors to be 'producer only' and provide 'Connecticut (CT) made products'. This is viewed as an important element of the Market. It was agreed that a vendor who is a 'producer only' and offers 'CT made' products will be the priority vendor over a vendor who is only able to comply with one element of the requirement. This decision shall apply to other vendors where question has been raised about their compliance.

An email from Chet's Italian Ice regarding the creation of their products was distributed and read by those in attendance. The Committee was satisfied that Chet's has demonstrated that they are offering a product that they are directly involved in the production with and that is made in the State of CT.

A motion was made by Jean and seconded by Barbara - The Committee requests that the Market Master enforce the 'producer only – CT made' regulations when considering a vendor's application. This shall be the priority when evaluating a vendor's application.

The motion passed unanimously.

Sponsors –

Sponsors who supported the Market last season will be contacted by Erica in the very near future to determine their involvement. The Hartford Courant has confirmed their full season sponsorship.

Correspondence/Questions –

This was addressed under 'vendor applications'.

Farm Viability Grant –

A formal approval letter has been received regarding the funding of the Farm Viability Grant. The contract is pending with the Attorney General's Office. But, our contract is being prioritized by the Dept. of Ag Office due to the time sensitivity of the proposal.

Jean and Erica will begin discussions with the growers to discuss the timing of their crop plan so that the recipes, demos, activities and events can be keyed into it.

The event listing will be firmed up and be ready for release by the end of March. The listing will be available for finalization at the next Committee meeting.

Jean spoke with Darby Pollansky who is involved with the Ag Committee about possibly collaborating on a Farm Day activity. Jean will follow up with Darby to discuss this further and possibly look at a date/event with the Market.

While Jean was at Senator Chris Murphy's agriculture roundtable discussion on Friday, she asked if there would be interest with him attending the opening day of the Market. CT Landmarks is hoping to have him and the Governor at the barn opening event on the second week of the season.

Eric mentioned that he spoke with Bonnie Jean Gordon who owns Tara Farm Rescue. She had been involved with the Market in the past. She is interested in bringing livestock to the Market and being involved with her 4H volunteers, Boy and Girl Scouts. Eric will forward her contact info to Erica and Jean to discuss further.

Page 3
Coventry Farmers' Market Operating Committee
Special Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2017

Eric mentioned that he spoke with John Elsesser, who had some suggestions about obtaining a large interchangeable message 'Welcome' sign that could be at the Market entrance and list the current and next week's themes/activities. This would assist in creating more interest with the customers who do not visit the website or get the newsletter, but instead, just show up at the Market. Another idea involves obtaining a 'Thank you!' sign that is placed at the parking exit and lists the next week's theme as well. The Committee agreed that a large dry erase board that is properly weighted down would be appropriate.

Katrina mentioned that she spoke with someone who is interested in doing fitness exercise classes in the mornings of Market day – similar to the yoga classes that had occurred in the past. The Committee agreed that this was a good idea to consider.

Next meeting of the Committee will be Tuesday, March 21 at 8:00am.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40am.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric M. Trott
Director of Planning and Development