

April 4, 2017

## **Coventry Farmers' Market Operating Committee Special Meeting Minutes**

Conference Room B – Town Hall

Meeting was called to order at 8:08am by Chairperson Nelson.

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

### **Review and consideration of appeal of Operating Committee decision on vendor selection by Mike Rittlinger – Faddy's Donuts**

Mike Rittlinger was present.

Jean briefly reviewed the situation involving the Committee's reluctance and concern with inviting back Faddy's for the 2017 Market season – the vendor has not adequately demonstrated that he would comply with the 'producer only' requirement and did not during the 2016 Market season; the vendor has not demonstrated that he would comply with the requirement for including CT Made products in one item per week; the vendor has demonstrated a clear history of noncompliance with health code requirements involving food handling safety over multiple Market seasons.

Mike responded to the concerns of the Committee. He indicated that it is not possible to make the raised donuts dough ahead of time and instead uses a dough that is not made in CT. The cider donuts that are made contain CT Made cider. He stated that he can bring the ice cream product to the Market. The pop up tent would be used this season instead of the trailer since it is easier to use and keep clean. He mentioned that the health code issues were relative to oil spill that were unavoidable.

Mike further indicated that he has seen a loss of revenue with the Coventry Farmers' Market, but wishes to maintain his presence because he enjoys the Market and it is very popular. He stated that he spoke with many other vendors and they felt the same way. He indicated that he will comply with the vendor requirements and will look to find ways to be a producer and use CT Made products.

Mike raised concerns about the Market creating stringent regulations that will cause for vendors to not want to be involved and that it is very difficult to have every ingredient and product be made in CT.

Eric indicated that the Committee is under a great deal of scrutiny and pressure to insure that the regulations are applied fairly and reasonably. A certain segment of the vendors want flexibility with the enforcement and interpretation, while another segment

want the enforcement and even treatment. In regard to the ingredients being CT Made with vendor products, the Committee and Staff uses a 'to the greatest extent possible' measure when selecting vendors.

Erica responded that the core issue to be addressed at this time is whether Faddy's complies with the vendor regulations. The vendor has routinely disregarded health district requirements, has not been transparent with the Market Staff and has not offered a CT Made product. Mike's comments about vendors profits have decreased over the past season is in direct contradiction to what the vendors directly told Market Staff and Committee members.

Mike Rittlinger thanked the Committee for their time and left the meeting.

A motion was made by Weaver and seconded by Barry, to not invite Faddy's Donuts to the 2017 Market season. The following reasons for the decision were stated: the vendor has not complied and does not comply with the producer only requirement; ongoing concerns with the health district food handling requirements have occurred over numerous Market seasons – to the extent that the health district staff recommended that the health permit be revoked in 2016; pursuant to the Vendor Regulations, the vendor has not acted with integrity, transparency and in good faith with his operation. The motion passed unanimously.

**Adoption of minutes:** A motion was made by Weaver and seconded by Barry to adopt the minutes of March 21, 2017 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Planning for 2017:**

#### **Vendor Applications –**

The vast majority of the full time vendor applications have been received and guest vendor applications are now being submitted. The guest vendors are being carefully reviewed to insure that duplication is avoided and to provide the greatest variety and quality of products.

Due to the situation that has now transpired with Faddy's Donuts, the Committee has decided that it will accept the application of Sweet Madeline's Donuts. She has demonstrated that she produces her own batter/dough, she includes as many local products as possible, the donuts will be prepared at the Market and the customers will receive warm donuts, and she is open to new ideas for products. The response from customers who have had her donuts at the Winter Market has been very positive.

Some full time vendors from last season have decided to not return due to extenuating circumstances. The Community for Creative Living cannot staff the market table, The Fish Market have determined that it is too great of a pressure to attend each week.

### **Sponsors –**

Barbara reported that 'The Cook Store' in West Hartford is interested in donating a portion of a days sales to the Market, similar to what Whole Food did in the past. They wish to sponsor the Market and also participate in Market demonstrations.

Highland Park Market is interested in continuing as a sponsor and appears most interested in donating money as opposed to being involved in other ways. Erica will reach to Matt to discuss in more detail.

Mountain Dairy will also be communicated with to discuss their sponsorship and involvement.

Whole Foods will be contacted to determine what involvement can occur this season.

Cropley's needs to be followed up with, since they were not heard back from.

Barbara will contact the Lion's Club to discuss their involvement.

Michelle will contact the Willimantic Food Co-op to discuss their involvement.

The Last Green Valley and the Market have agreed to reciprocal sponsorships.

The Adventure Park in Storrs has agreed to a sponsorship.

Rapid Service has agreed to a sponsorship.

### **Correspondence/Questions –**

None at this time.

### **Farm Viability Grant –**

An email was sent to Jaime at DoAg about reimbursements and calculating staff time with the new Farm Viability Grant. A response has not been received yet.

### **Event Calendar –**

The draft calendar was reviewed and discussed. Some expanded explanatory text will be inserted and some fine tuning of the names will be considered. Overall, the Committee is satisfied with the draft calendar. The calendar will be released at the vendor forum in May.

Barbara suggested that Caprilands be asked if they would like to be involved with the herbs/spices events. Perhaps, Dr. Cook could do a lecture or sponsor an event. Barbara will contact him.

Jean reported that she spoke with Darby from the Ag Committee about doing a cooperative event for Farm Day, but Jean has not heard back from Darby. This event may need to be moved to the fall.

Bill and Barbara indicated that the Winter Market can back the State Liquor Permits for the events where liquor tastings will be offered.

Eric mentioned interest that a local Boy Scout troupe is interested in assisting with the Market. The Scout leader is going to follow up with details and interest.

### **Site Work in the Market Field –**

Eric will work with DPW to fix the holes in the Market field that create issues with vendors. The locations will be flagged to allow easier identification.

Bill mentioned that he visited both fields and noted that the parking field is rutted and will need to be repaired, from the vehicles doing the Hale Barn construction. Eric will work with DPW to address this.

### **To-Do List –**

The draft to-do list of items that need to be completed prior to opening day was reviewed.

Erica and Jean mentioned that a new Market logo is being considered. Quotes from designers are being reviewed. The turn-around on a draft design for the Committee to consider will need to be quick so that print materials can include the new design.

Next meeting of the Committee will be Tuesday, April 4 at 8:00am.

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The meeting was adjourned at 10:20am.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric M. Trott  
Director of Planning and Development