

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**

**URBANA'S MARKET AT THE SQUARE ADVISORY BOARD**

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** January 28, 2016

**TIME:** 4:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** City Council Chambers, Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Shea Belahi, Paris Blalock, Robert Kleiss, Diane Marlin, Kent Miles, Stan Schutte

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Carrie Welter

**STAFF PRESENT:** Natalie Kenny Marquez, Marketing Coordinator/Director, Market at the Square; Sukiya J. Reid, Recording Secretary; Sterling Bollman, Marketing Intern/Market Staff

**OTHERS PRESENT:** None

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**1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

The Urbana Market at the Square Advisory Board was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Ms. Marlin. The roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

**2. CHANGES TO AGENDA**

There were none.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the November 19, 2015 meeting were reviewed by the Board. With no changes proposed, Ms. Belahi made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Schutte seconded the motion. All Board members present were in favor of approval and the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

**4. WELCOME**

Ms. Marlin welcomed everyone to the meeting, and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

**5. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was none.

## 6. STAFF REPORT

Ms. Kenny Marquez reported the following:

- **2015 Season Recap**
  - The 2015 Annual report was presented to the Urbana City Council on January 19, 2016. A copy of that report is attached.
- **SNAP/EBT and WIC Update**
  - The Market applied for a \$5,000 grant from LinkUP Illinois to provide administrative and promotional support for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at our farmers market. This is different from the LINK Up double value grant we received in 2015. This grant will specifically go toward helping to cover administrative costs associated with the program and to help pay for expenses related to promoting the program. The grant will be disbursed over a two year (season) timeframe.
  - Staff is exploring opportunities for new ways to expand our SNAP and WIC programs at the farmers markets.
- **Illinois Farmers Market Association**
  - The 2016 statewide conference will be held on February 16-17, 2016 at the Chicago Cultural Center in Chicago, IL. A fundraiser will be held during the conference on February 16<sup>th</sup> which includes a screening of *A Farmers Road*, a documentary about Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery (a Market at the Square vendor). At the actual conference, there will be a sampling workshop. It's one of two workshops that will be presented this fiscal year, and it's with the new sampling laws.
  - Natalie Kenny Marquez is currently participating in the Market Manager Certification which will take place over the next month. This is a program sponsored by the Michigan Farmers Market Association and in partnership with the Illinois Farmers Market Association and University of Illinois Extension.
- **2016 Update**
  - One goal as Market Director is to keep Urbana's Market at the Square as affordable as possible to all of the valuable vendors and community groups that participate each season. In addition, staff is tasked with ensuring that the Market is sustainable and a self-sufficient program of the City of Urbana.

While the cost of living and cost of doing business have increased over the years, the fees at Urbana's Market at the Square have remained at \$20 per space per weekend for the past five years. Staff has reviewed a few different scenarios including various fee structures and reviewed them in comparison to other farmers markets in area and region. As a result of this analysis, and in order to meet the increased costs of doing business, staff is proposing that there will be a \$5 per space increase beginning with the 2016 season. The total cost per space will amount to \$25. This increase in vendor fees is reflected in the 2016 Vendor Handbook which will be available online at [www.urbanaininois.us/application](http://www.urbanaininois.us/application) beginning February 1, 2016. There will also be hard copies of the Vendor

Handbook available in the Community Development Office. A copy of the 2016 Vendor Handbook is attached.

- **Programming**

- Read at the Market, Bike to the Market, Art and Performance at the Market, and Sprouts at the Market will continue in 2016. In addition, chef demonstrations will be added to the free all-ages, programming available at the farmers markets. These demonstrations will feature local chefs preparing dishes sourcing ingredients found at the farmers market. More details will come as the program is developed over the next few months. A brief discussion regarding demonstrations and sampling ensued.

## 7. **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Market at the Square Strategic Plan- Survey Update**

Ms. Marlin introduced this agenda item. Ms. Kenny Marquez gave a brief background on the Market at the Square Strategic Plan, and the plan to review the goals and implementation strategies as outlined in the 2011 Strategic Plan. To start off the research for that, she stated that Mr. Bollman implemented a survey the first week of January 2016 to gain feedback on the Market's current strategic goals. The survey was also used to determine if the goals are still relevant, and whether there are new goals that should be pursued. Mr. Bollman addressed the Board and provided information on the three surveys that were administered to patrons, vendors, and community groups. Mr. Bollman and Ms. Kenny Marquez answered questions from the Commission regarding the surveys. Ms. Kenny Marquez stated that she would be sending out an email the following day to all of the 2015 Vendors & Community Groups, reminding them that applications would be available starting February 1, 2016. She stated that she would also include a link to the survey as there were still 3 more days remaining for completion of the surveys. Ms. Kenny Marquez then stated that since the next scheduled meeting would not take place until April, she wondered if the Board would be open to meeting before then to review/discuss the survey results. After a brief consensus, the Board voted to hold the special meeting on Thursday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm.

Mr. Schutte revisited the topic of expanding the Board to include food truck vendors, and whoever else is not involved. Ms. Kenny Marquez stated that there was still an opening for a community group representative, and an art & craft vendor representative. She stated that staff was working towards adding a food truck vendor to the Board. Mr. Schutte then asked about the trash problem. Ms. Kenny Marquez stated that some information pertaining to garbage and refuse waste disposal was added to the Market Handbook. Mr. Schutte also asked about the possibility of requiring vendors to commit to longer periods of time, maybe at least a month. Ms. Kenny Marquez stated that the Manage My Market online system that is used is really helpful in keeping track of who's going to be at the market on what weekend. There is priority given to vendors who register for a full season.

## **8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Kenny Marquez announced the following:

- Applications and handbooks for the 2016 Market season would be available February 1, 2016 using the same online management system at [www.urbanainninois.us/application](http://www.urbanainninois.us/application).
- The Illinois Farmers Market Association would be holding its annual statewide conference, February 16-17, 2016 at the Chicago Cultural Center in downtown Chicago, IL.
- The first day of the 2016 market season would be May 7, 2016.
- The last day of the 2016 market season would be November 5, 2016.
- The next regularly scheduled meeting would take place on April 22, 2016 at 4:00 pm in the City of Urbana Council Chambers.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Schutte made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Ms. Belahi seconded the motion. With no further business, Ms. Marlin declared the meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

Submitted,

Natalie Kenny Marquez, Marketing Coordinator/Director Market at the Square