

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**

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

**APPROVED**

**DATE:** November 19, 2015

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

**PLACE:** CD Conference Room, Urbana City Building, 400 South Vine Street, Urbana, Illinois

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Robert Kleiss, Diane Marlin, Kent Miles, Stan Schutte, Carrie Welter

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Shea Belahi

**STAFF PRESENT:** Elizabeth Tyler, Community Development Director; Natalie Kenny Marquez, Marketing Coordinator/Director, Market at the Square; Sukiya J. Reid, Recording Secretary

**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 4:08 p.m. by Ms. Marlin. The roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared present.

**2. CHANGES TO AGENDA**

Ms. Kenny Marquez stated that she would be adding a few more items to the Staff Report later in the agenda

**3. WELCOME**

Ms. Marlin welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked that everyone re-introduce themselves since it had been awhile since the last meeting.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the April 15, 2015 meeting were reviewed by the Board. With no changes proposed, Mr. Schutte made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Miles seconded the motion. All Board members present were in favor of approval and the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

**5. PUBLIC INPUT**

There was none.

**6. STAFF REPORT**

Ms. Kenny Marquez reported the following:

- **2015 Season Recap**
  - The 2015 season has been a success so far, with patron and vendor numbers consistent with those reported in 2013 and 2014. (*Please see Log of Estimated Weekly Patron Counts*)
  - Customer feedback was overwhelmingly positive. A brief survey was sent to vendors and community to solicit their feedback on the 2015 season. Results from this survey will be taken into consideration when making any updates to the 2016 vendor and community group handbooks and market layout for the 2016 season.
  - Feedback was received about adding a food truck vendor to the Market at the Square Advisory Board, which is a category currently not represented on the board. The ordinance would need to be changed to allow for that change. Ms. Tyler stated that a food vendor could be allowed to participate as an ex officio member until the ordinance is changed.
  - Questions were received regarding the Market’s policy on “carrying” where a vendor decides to bring items to the Market that they did not make, create, or grow themselves. She stated that there are about 3 instances at the Market where this is allowed to happen.
  - Market breakdown by type of participant:
    - Grower Vendors: 49
    - Processed and Prepared Food Vendors: 49
    - Arts and Crafts Vendors: 74
    - Community Groups: 63

Ms. Kenny Marquez stated that for 2016 she plans to pull Food Truck Vendors out of the Processed and Prepared Food Vendors category, and place them in their own category labelled, Concessions.

Mr. Schutte asked if there was a plan in place to limit the number of a certain type of vendor allowed in the Market. A brief discussion ensued. It was stated that this would be a great topic to be brought up during the planning process of the Market at the Square Strategic Plan.

- A complete report of the 2015 season will be presented to Urbana City Council on January 11, 2016 at 7 p.m. in the City of Urbana Council Chambers.
- **SNAP/EBT and WIC Update**
  - The Market received \$1,000 from the Illinois Farmers Market Association to provide incentives for Women, Infant and Children (WIC) recipients in an effort to increase the redemption rates of Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

Vouchers. This was a very successful program and already the redemption rate for these vouchers have increased over the rate reported in 2014. Over an 80% redemption rate for 2015.

- The Market received \$5,000 from LinkUP! Illinois to provide incentives for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients. The purpose of the grant was to increase the affordability and accessibility of nutritious foods sold at Illinois farmers markets for low-income Illinoisans, rebuilding linkages between local agricultural producers and consumers. The funding provided “double value tokens” for LINK Card (Illinois’ SNAP program) shoppers. In other words, the Market was able to offer the customer up to an additional \$20 per weekend through this program. The Market has offered this program in previous seasons, most recently in 2013. The program began in mid-July and funds were exhausted during the October 10, 2015 Market day. Staff are exploring opportunities to continue this program in 2016.
- **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).
  - Natalie Kenny Marquez is enrolled to participate in the Market Manager Certification which will take place in January and February 2016. 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.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

- **Review of Market at the Square Advisory Board Duties, Roles and Responsibilities**

Ms. Marlin introduced this agenda item. Ms. Kenny Marquez asked if anyone had any questions regarding the memo. She then stated that there were some vacancies on the board: Downtown Urbana business rep, art & craft vendor rep, and a community group rep that participates at the Market.

- **Market at the Square Strategic Plan**

Ms. Marlin introduced this agenda item. Ms. Kenny Marquez referenced the Market at the Square Strategic plan that was shared at the last two meetings. She stated that it would be important to take some time out to review the goals that were laid out in the plan to determine if they are still relevant and/or if there are goals that should be pursued. The next step would be to compile a survey to help get the answers on whether or not the goals are still appropriate. Ms. Marlin stated that the board’s input would be combined with the results of the survey to update the current plan. A brief discussion of the matter by members of the Staff and Commission ensued.

**8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Kenny Marquez announced that there would be a CSA Fair on December 14, 2015. She stated that she would be featured in a pre-recorded segment on WCIA's Ag Answers the following morning, November 20<sup>th</sup>, highlighting the fair. Ms. Kenny Marquez also announced that applications and handbooks for the 2016 Market season would be available February 1, 2016 using the same online management system. Ms. Marlin announced that the next meeting would take place on January 28, 2016 at 4:00 pm in the City of Urbana Council Chambers.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Schutte made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Miles seconded the motion. With no further business, Ms. Marlin declared the meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Submitted,

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