



Minutes
Foothills Farmers Market Steering Committee
3 PM, Monday 9-14-09
Cleveland County Extension Center

Attending: Greg Traywick, Jonathan Dyer, Annie Thompson, Christy Underwood, Lowrey Young, Jackie Sibley, Tim Crofts, Wade Nichols, Shannon Hovis, Daniel Shires, Cynthia Glidden

Greg Traywick called the meeting to order in the absence of Dr. Sandy Brenneman and distributed agenda for meeting.

Manager's Report – Jonathan Dyer

Market coordinator Jonathan Dyer reported there was not much change in the market. Vendor attendance is lower on Wednesdays and higher on Saturdays. There were 12 vendors on Saturday, September 12. Lowrey Young (Forever Young's Breads & Spreads) noted that there were some new customers at the Market each week, but that overall sales had dropped

The need for sales verifications from vendors was stressed. Wade Nichols noted that these verifications were needed for grant applications/funding for next season. Jackie Sibley said total season total was needed and a per day average for all participating vendors.

Tim Crofts suggested that vendors ask customers how they found out about market (to assist us in targeting our promotions and advertising). Jackie Sibley committed to developing a survey/questionnaire for consumers.

Jonathan noted that the Community Table was used only one day during the 4 week trial period, but that sales were very good (the entire inventory of muscadine grapes consigned were sold).

All vendors have been visited this season except for Herr Fresh Flowers (they are certified through NC Cooperative Extension in Lincoln County). The need for a certification site visit by FFM representatives is warranted, so that all vendors are certified uniformly.

Daniel Shires and Jonathan Dyer commented on their recent certification site visit to the Thomas Moore farm in Polk County. Daniel indicated that Thomas had the best garden he has seen this season, hands down. They also visited Sara Jane Waterman (A Way of Life Farm) in Rutherford County. Her operation is exceptionally good, but primitive.

There was some talk about coordinating farm tours but liability issues were brought up. Jackie Sibley mentioned the possibility of organizing "fam" (familiarization) tours, allowing vendors, steering committee members and other insiders to visit local producers to learn more about how items sold at the market are produced.

Promotion Team Report – Christy Underwood

Team representative Christy Underwood (Underwood Family Farms) reported on that the team has met twice and developed the following recommendations:

- Serve free samples on the third Saturday of each month, with special advertising in newsletter and newspaper.
- Christine White will provide a spinning demonstration at the September 19 market from 10 AM until 1 PM to commemorate National Spinning & Weaving Week.

- The Polkville Pickers will also lead their popular Bluegrass Jam again on September 19 10-11:30 AM.
- The Steering Committee approved expenditures not to exceed \$100.00 for purchase of handmade basket to be filled with FFM product as a raffle prize. Tickets will be available for sale at the market each day, with the drawing to be held on October 24th. Greg Traywick committed to making flyer for basket raffle.
- Special activities proposed for the Saturday, October 24 market include pumpkin painting, costume contest, Boy Scout cooking demonstration, and Raptor Center display.
- Christy Underwood suggested operating the market on Fridays from 3 to 7 PM instead of Wednesdays during the 2010 season. Tim Crotts voiced concern over Friday afternoons - produce vendors would not have time to replenish their supplies for the Saturday morning market. This proposal was tabled for additional study.

Wade Nichols proposed advertising on radio station WGWG FM 88.3 by becoming an official weather sponsor. The ads would run during the weather spots, five times daily every weekday. He suggested a trial run the last month of market at a cost of \$100 per month. Wade agreed to take care of getting radio ad put together. Daniel Shires moved to proceed with Wade's recommendation and Jonathan Dyer seconded. Motion carried.

Greg mentioned vendor profiles which have been printed in the front page of the Shelby Shopper & Info. Three vendors (Rock Bottom Farms, Baskets by Phyllis, and Quail Hollow Farms) have been featured so far, and the articles have been very well received by the publisher and the readers.

Production Team Report – Daniel Shires

Daniel Shires reported on behalf of Lori Wellmon, who was not present. He noted that extension area agriculture agent Lara Worden is holding a "Ten Acre Tuesdays" workshop series at the Gaston County Extension Center in Dallas. These are being advertised to FFM vendors via our web site, vendor newsletters, and direct mail. A few of our vendors have participated.

The team stressed the need to communicate with vendors about the need for fall crops to ensure adequate product variety and volume for the remainder of the season. A year-round venue would provide sales avenues of early- and late-season crops not normally available during May through October.

The Team recommends developing a survey to determine customer recommendations for additional items they would like to see available at the market. Jackie Sibley volunteered to develop the survey, which would be available online and could be passed on to customers by vendors at FFM. The short survey would address issues including new products, extending the season, changes in hours of operation, etc.

Greg Traywick passed on a suggestion from Phyllis Feaster to keep the market open into November to provide vendors with an opportunity for pre-holiday sales. After some discussion, the Steering Committee reached consensus on operating the market on Saturdays from 8 AM until 1 PM through the end of November.

Organization Team Report – Greg Traywick

Greg Traywick reported that the team met on September 9 and identified two major issues for immediate action (work groups and deadlines were also established):

1. Draft by-laws and operational guidelines.
2. Examine the need for a permanent market address and outline related options/issues.

Note: Minutes from all work team meetings have been posted to the “About our Market” page of www.foothillsfarmersmarket.com.

Food Safety was mentioned as a market issue to be addressed, including encouraging vendor to make bagged portions of their products available (to reduce consumer handling of product and possible contamination). Market representatives should also wear food handling gloves when preparing or serving samples at the Market. Rest rooms and hand washing stations should be made available.

Wade Nichols discussed **grant opportunities**, including Golden Leaf Foundation with \$2.5 million available. Deadline is Nov. 2, '09. Business plan needs to be submitted with grant proposal. Wade will call on Steering Committee members for assistance.

Greg noted the need for consistency, and suggested continuing to pay Jonathan Dyer through end of November (in light of recent decision to extend the market) and to consider him again for the market coordinator position next season. Jackie Sibley moved to retain Jonathan through the winter months, engaging him in preparation and planning for the 2010 season. Motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 PM.