



MINUTES
Foothills Farmers' Market Steering Committee
4 PM Monday, July 13, 2009
Cleveland County Extension Center

Present: Dr. Sandy Brenneman (moderator), Christy Underwood, Loyd Lewis, Annie Thompson (guest), Linda Lemons (guest), Daniel Shires, Greg Traywick, Jonathan Dyer, Wade Nichols, Tim Crotts, Johnny White

Agenda: Dr. Brenneman proposed the following agenda items preceded by bullets (●). Steering committee members added additional discussion items preceded by arrows (▶):

1) Operations

- Managers report
- rules & accountability efforts
- bad-mouthing on the street
- ▶ sandwich board signs (Greg Traywick)
- ▶ vendor application from Dressing on the Side (Wade Nichols)
- ▶ media opportunities (Greg Traywick)
- ▶ tents (Greg Traywick)
- ▶ pricing issues (Loyd Lewis)
- ▶ entertainment (Tim Crotts)

2) Planning/Development

- framework
- visits
- research on co-ops for increasing access of growers
- Golden Leaf
- other grants

Discussion Items:

- Resale Policy
Jonathan Dyer presented an informal managers report, noting that vendor participation, product selection and sales are gaining momentum. He noted that vendor morale has improved following the June 16 letter clarifying the 20% resale rule. Market spot-checks have been conducted, but no field visits have been conducted since the initial certification visits were performed early in the season. Loyd Lewis pointed out that vendors are still unhappy with the situation at the Market. Sandy Brenneman noted that he had confronted a vendor who was badmouthing on the street. Loyd added that vendors are also complaining about questionable selling practices... for example, a vendor who is undercutting others by visiting tents to determine how competitors are pricing their goods, going back to their tent and posting lowering prices in an effort to gain sales. Other steering committee members noted that the 20% allowable resale policy is difficult to define, confusing to the general public, and nearly impossible to monitor. Tim Crotts noted that many markets are operating very successfully as certified grower markets, in which vendors are required to grow 100 percent of what they sell. The 20% allowable resale policy offers flexibility to vendors, but also creates loopholes and problems. Sandy Brenneman raised the idea of creating a farmers' cooperative or CSA to provide customers with access to a broader range of

foods that are produced with the local area. Johnny White supported the idea. Wade Nichols noted that the concept could prove successful, but should be well-planned and perhaps organized as a formal and separate entity.

Board Action: Tim Crofts moved that the 20% allowable resale policy be rescinded and that Foothills Farmers' Market be designated a 100% certified growers' market effective Saturday, July 18, 2009. Loyd Lewis seconded. Christy Underwood raised the question of the fairness of changing a policy mid-season. Others questioned the ethics of advertising that "We Grow What We Sell" while our operational guidelines permit otherwise. Motion carried unanimously. Greg Traywick was charged with informing vendors about the change by letter.

- Marketing/Promotions

Steering committee members discussed the need for additional signage in the Uptown area on market days to bring attention to FHFMM. Greg Traywick reported that double-sided sandwich board signs are available from Sloan Graphic Arts for \$130 each. Cost to the market could be reduced if City of Shelby can do the printing and sign holders are available online.

Local newspaper features in the Shelby Star and Shelby Shopper prior to the July 4 market seem to have produced positive results. Local media is now more open to providing "free" publicity, including running Vendor Profiles, provided FHFMM does the photography and writing.

- Finances

Greg Traywick reported a current unencumbered balance of \$1,087 in the checking account. He anticipates an allocation of \$3,000 from Cleveland County to cover the market coordinator's salary (\$500 per month) for the remainder of the 2009 season (July – October) and the beginning of the 2010 season (May – June). Jonathan noted that we are currently generating approximately \$1,000 per month from vendor fees each month.

- Grants

Wade Nichols reported that Golden Leaf has implemented an *Open Grants Program* that places high priority (\$5 million) on the areas of agriculture (including the local foods movement). Other projects that focus on other opportunities to support and develop economic strength in tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and/or rural communities are also welcomed. The Open Grants Program began July 1, 2009 and replaces the former Golden LEAF Annual Grants Cycle. This program will make it easier for applicants to submit proposals to Golden LEAF and make funding opportunities available throughout the year. Other sources of funding are also available, including the Sustainable Agriculture, Research & Education (SARE) program.

- Tents

Greg Traywick reported that 3-4 of the market-owned tents have been significantly damaged and are in need of repair. Some replacement parts have been ordered. The market may need to explore purchasing additional tents in the future.

It was also noted that FHFMM policy specifies that tents and/or spots cannot be reserved, but are made available to vendors on a first-come, first-served basis each market day.

- Planning

Sandy Brenneman provided a brief overview of the planning process and key issues that need to be assigned to action teams, including:

- a) education & training related to season extension and product diversification
- b) surveys and data collection
- c) site visits to other markets/research
- d) demonstrations/entertainment/activities

Action Items:

- 1) **Field monitoring:** The following team was appointed to conduct field monitoring visits with vendors: Christy Underwood, Daniel Shires, Jonathan Dyer, and Sandy Brenneman. NC Cooperative Extension (Annie Thompson) was charged with developing a visitation schedule.
- 2) **Sandwich board signs:** Greg Traywick was authorized to purchase 4 sandwich board signs to be placed strategically on street corners in Uptown Shelby on market days (Jonathan Dyer responsible for set-up and retrieval). Wade Nichols charged with checking on capability of City of Shelby to do printing for these signs, and Annie Thompson charged with checking out availability/cost of substrate.
- 3) **Dressing on the Side:** Greg Traywick will communicate with Kathy Woody regarding NCDA&CS policies regarding sale of items at farmers' markets and work with her in regard to her vendor application.
- 4) **Vendor Profiles:** Greg Traywick and Jonathan Dyer will begin taking photographs and conducting interviews in support of vendor profiles and are responsible for submitting them to local media (Jackie Sibley can serve as a media liaison). Wade Nichols offered editing assistance.
- 5) **Entertainment.** Tim Crotts volunteered to provide leadership to securing live entertainment for Saturday markets.
- 6) **Cooperatives:** Wade Nichols will develop a one-page overview of farmer cooperatives with relevant points that need to be addressed by the Steering Committee in future discussions.
- 7) **Golden Leaf & Other Grants.** Wade Nichols will provide leadership to researching and application.
- 8) **Planning & Development.** Sandy Brenneman will continue to provide leadership to developing the framework, but other identified work teams will need to be appointed to address tasks contained within this framework.