



**MINUTES**  
**Foothills Farmers' Market Steering Committee**  
**Monday, October 12, 2009, 3 PM**  
**Cleveland County Extension Center**

**Present:** Lori Wellmon, Loyd Lewis, Tim Crofts, Johnny White, Greg Traywick, Linda Lemons (recording), Sandy Brenneman (moderator), Daniel Shires, Wade Nichols, Jonathan Dyer, Jo Boggs, Charles Wilson.

▶ denotes action items

**Market Coordinator's Report** (Jonathan Dyer):

Vendor participation is declining as we near the end of the season, with an average of 7 vendors on Saturdays and 4 on Wednesdays. ▶FFM may be offering more late-season supply during our second season of operation, but we need to quantify this (Greg Traywick & Jonathan Dyer were asked signed to compile the data).

The Community Table was utilized only once during the trial period, but the muscadine grapes that were consigned sold well. ▶The Community Table will be retained as an alternative marketing option for growers and as a vehicle for increasing product diversity, but the **Steering Committee** needs to explore why it was not better utilized.

Two new vendors from Rutherford County, Lindy Abrams (Holla Holler Farm) and Thomas Carson (Puzzle Peace Farm), participated in the Saturday, October 10 market and reported satisfaction with their first experience. ▶They will be scheduled for a certification site visit.

Certification site visit to Herr Fresh Flowers was planned for today, but due to rain was re-scheduled for Monday, October 19.

▶The **Organizational Team** was asked to support the market coordinator in developing and implementing strategies for collecting data on vendor sales and foot traffic.

Jonathan noted that there is very little market activity in early mornings, and that vendors has suggested opening later. **After some discussion, the steering committee voted to change the operating hours to 9 AM until 1 PM for the remainder of the 2009 season.** ▶This schedule change will need to be communicated to stakeholders via direct mail, web site, Shelby Shopper, Cable 19, Talk of the Town, flyers, etc.

**Promotion Team Report** (Greg Traywick):

The Promotion Team has met twice, and has successfully incorporated live music (Polkville Pickers), food samples, and a spinning demonstration into market activities. Lowrey Young and others have visited other markets including Gastonia, and are compiling ideas related to their charge. ▶The **Promotion Team** will meet soon with the **market coordinator** to begin making plans for the 2010 season, and hope to get entertainment, demonstrations and other activities scheduled and booked in advance.

The profiles appearing on the front page of the Shelby Shopper & Info are increasing sales for featured vendors. Vendors have provided staff at the Shopper with appreciation gifts from FFM.

The team is currently raffling a handmade market basket to be filled with items from the market. Drawing will be held on October 24 in conjunction with Art of Sound and Livermush Expo. Each steering committee member received 10 tickets by mail and was asked to sell or purchase them to demonstrate their personal commitment to the success of FFM.

NC Cooperative Extension will be featuring FFM at a booth during October 20-22 at the Cleveland County Employees' Health and Benefits Fair. ► **Vendors and other volunteers** are needed to man the booth during the hours of 11 AM – 2 PM each day of operation.

Tim Crotts reported that the Polkville Pickers have expressed interest in becoming a regular monthly feature at FFM. ► The Promotion Team was asked to explore strategies for demonstrating our appreciation to them (honorariums, tip buckets, etc.).

Other activities and events, including the HarvestWorks mobile petting zoos, sheep shearing demonstrations, goat milking demonstrations and other hands-on activities were mentioned as possible attractions, but we need additional space. ► **Wade Nichols** was charged with exploring the possibility of closing off the entire block of Washington Street on market days and to arrange for securing the necessary permits for the 2010 season.

► Tim Crotts requested that Promotion Team meetings be held on Mondays to enable him to participate.

Greg Traywick presented a quote received from Laurie Ziemer, account executive with HPC Printing in Hendersonville, NC for the design and production of 1,000 rack cards for \$335.61. Jo Boggs acknowledged the quality of work and fairness in pricing, but encouraged FFM to contract with local firms whenever possible. Because budget is limited and we are so late in the current season, the rack cards will not be considered at this time.

Wade Nichols also shared possibilities with regard to securing printed shopping bags at some point in the future.

### **Production Team Report** (Lori Wellmon):

The Production Team has identified the need to engage vendors in two (2) face-to-face meetings as outlined below:

- **November 16, 2009 at Harvest Works**

6-7 PM	Arrival, meal & conversation
7 PM	“Ways to Extend Your Growing Season: Moving from a Home Gardener to a Market Grower” – Daniel Shires
7:30 PM	Vendor Needs Assessment/Feedback

1. **Organization Team** to present working drafts of bylaws and operational guidelines for vendor review and feedback.
2. **Organization Team** to report on grant-writing efforts.
3. **Steering Committee** to present results of revised customer survey (including request for new products, etc.).
4. **Steering Committee** to identify vendor-specific and/or market equipment, supply, training, or other needs to be incorporated into Extension programming efforts and future grant requests.

**Note:** Harvest Works will provide the meal at \$5 per person. RSVP will be required.

- **January 14, 2009 at NC Cooperative Extension**

1. Encourage vendors to share production plans for 2010 and engage them in discussion aimed at reducing oversupply and gaining commitments for the production of new commodities (based on customer survey data and collective knowledge/experience).
2. Establish a vendor-friendly system for informing market management about when various commodities will be available for sale (to assist in web site maintenance, e-newsletter development, media efforts, special events, and other customer relations/promotional activities).
3. Provide an in-depth training session related to season extension, specialty crops and/or value-added production.

**Note:** The Production Team will meet at **2 PM on Friday, November 20** at the County Extension Center to plan this meeting.

### **Organization Team Report** (Sandy Brenneman & Wade Nichols)

Sandy Brenneman distributed and summarized copies of the minutes of the September 28 Organization Team meeting, including a summary of the resource needs identified for FFM.

► Sandy Brenneman, Wade Nichols, Greg Traywick, and Lara Worden will meet at 10 AM on Friday, October 16 to begin developing a business plan to support long-range planning efforts, various grant applications, 501(c)3 determination requests, and incorporation documents.

### **Satellite Market**

Greg Traywick reported that he had spoken with Anne Short earlier during the day, and that the satellite market which had been operating rather successfully in the Cleveland County Health Department Parking lot on Tuesdays has been closed. ► The market's new governing documents should reflect our policy related to supporting satellite markets, including the issue of whether items sold through them must be grown/produced by the vendor. The satellite market at the Health Department is highly valued by the Steering Committee because it is in keeping with our philosophy and mission, and should provide avenues for EBT sales, WIC vouchers, etc.

## **Financial Report**

Greg Traywick delivered a financial report which reflected all account activity for the 2009 operating season to date (April 30 – September 30, 2009) and a current account balance of \$3,264.10. It was noted that county funds (\$3,000 annually) provide only half of the cost of our market coordinator and that a range of other goods and services have been provided by supporting organizations (including NC Cooperative Extension, NC Travel & Tourism, Uptown Shelby Association, and City of Shelby) at no direct cost to FFM. ► FFM needs a sound business plan and operating budget established in order to ensure that we have sufficient funding to meet our needs.

► The Steering Committee noted that EZ-Up Direct tents and replacements parts are extremely expensive and encourage the investigation of cheaper options, including less expensive tents from Wal-Mart or Lowes, or perhaps requiring vendors to provide their own tents.

The next Steering Committee Meeting was set for 3 PM on Monday, November 9 at the County Extension Center.