



The Shopping District

Special Events Committee

August 14, 2020 – ZOOM Meeting

Members: Astrein (Chair), Fehan, Hussey, Kay, Knight, McLeod, Pohlod and Solomon

Staff: Tighe, Brook

1. Welcome and Introductions

PRESENT: Astrein, Fehan, Hussey, Kay, Pohlod, Solomon

ABSENT: McLeod, Knight

ADMINISTRATION: Tighe, Brook

GUESTS: Paul Wells, Birmingham Fire Chief; Kate Milz, Gazelle Sports; Julie Plotnik and Stephanie Freedman – FM founders; Kathy Fusilier, Fusilier Family Farms; Greg Stamatopoulos, Stamatopoulos & Sons Olive Oil

2. Farmers Market

a. Market Format

- i. The group discussed the possibility of changing the format of the market to, once again, a walkable market.

1. Tighe gave an overview of the market's current set-up and the reasons that the drive-through format was selected during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Tighe explained that currently City Commission considers the market a special event, not an essential service.
3. Fusilier proposed opening the market to foot traffic and cited other local markets that have done so successfully – and, in her eyes, safely.
4. Plotnik and Freedman agreed that they would like to see the market go back to a walkable format and they are concerned about losing vendors and customers if a change is not made.
5. Stamatopoulos shared that he has gotten some positive feedback from shopper's about the drive-through format and that, although, ideally he would like a walkable market, he thinks that, if we can get traffic through quicker, the drive-through format is a safer alternative for today's pandemic.
6. Astrein expressed concern over opening the market to foot traffic. He thinks that since all of the other special events in the city have been canceled this summer, having the market open to walking shoppers would not be consistent. He strongly believes the Farmers Market is an event.
7. Kay said that he has done the drive-through market and it took him too long in the line. He would like to see it open back up to a walkable market.
8. Chief Wells shared his concerns that COVID-19 numbers are not going down in metro Detroit. He said that Birmingham is doing fairly well, but having large groups gather could cause an increase in cases.

- ii. The committee voted on whether or not to approach city commission to have the market reclassified as an essential service rather than a special event in order to be able to open the market to walking customers.

Yays – Kay, Hussey, McLeod (via Milz)

Nays – Astrein, Pohlod, Solomon

No vote – Fehan (was not on call for vote)

- b. Vendor layout – it was mentioned that the current layout is moving slowly and people would like to see adjustments made to help streamline the shopping experience.

3. Holiday Activities

- a. Santa House will not be able to be used due to the fact that it is so small and it is expected that we will still be dealing with restrictions due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The committee discussed other possible ideas and plans to continue this discussion at their September meeting.
- b. Carriage Rides – it is unlikely that we will be able to host carriage rides this year. We are looking at alternative holiday activities for the downtown area.
- c. Tree Lighting – Due to the number of people who typically attend the Tree Lighting, the committee does not think that it will be able to be held. Therefore, they are looking at doing a virtual Tree Lighting.
- d. Winter Markt – Although it seems unlikely that our traditional Winter Markt will be able to be held, we will still be submitting a special event application to the city commission. We will include COVID-19 alternate plans.
- e. Other Ideas – The committee discusses the possibility of having carolers in the downtown area, encouraging enhanced window decorating, or even having a tree decorating contest that would also be a charity fundraiser.

- 4. Other Activities** – the committee will brainstorm ideas for other activities to energize the downtown area in the fall and during the holidays.

NEXT MEETING: Friday, September 11 at 8:30 a.m.

2020-21 Budget: \$190,000

Remaining balance after August vouchers: \$187,824