

Minutes of The Hamilton Farmers' Market Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, September 11th, 2023 - 4:00pm in Room 264, Hamilton City Hall

Directors Present: Cameron Kroetsch, Jeff Beattie, Anne Miller, John Alexander (virtually), Celina Masoudi, Shane Coleman

Directors Absent: Eva Marsden

City Staff Present: Bill Slowka, Cindy Vo, Sarah Ehmke

Meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm

1. Delegation Request:

Darren Kregar, The Market General Store

Moved by John Alexander / 2nd by Anne Miller.

Darren Kregar: The June 26th agenda, the only item on the agenda was to review and discuss the future of the visionary report. This was confirmed by Cameron at the start of the meeting.

At the meeting, Cameron Kroetsch informed the board that the board needed to provide feedback to the city regarding the following:

1. Is the HFM Board in agreement with the overall vision and guiding principles recommended by PPS?
2. Are there any changes/inputs to the report that the board is recommending to Council?
3. Does the board support the staff recommendation authorizing staff to undertake a concept study for the physical design and layout of the current market. The cost of this study would be up to \$200,00.00.

My first question is, has the board advice been presented to the City and has the city accepted the visionary study?

Also, according to visionary study, 167 members of the public and 19 vendors took the survey. Of those 83 stated that hours/days should be changed. This suggests that 56% do not want a change where 44% do.

1. Many of my suppliers only deliver on Tuesday. I have to be at the market 5 days.
2. Increased spoilage. Stock food for 4 days.
3. Staffing
4. Rent increase for extended hours
5. 30-40k of increased cost – where is that coming from?
6. Majority of vendors are not in support

All vendors should be open posted hours, especially those are on the board.

Motion to receive the delegation: (Moved by Jeff Beattie / 2nd by John Alexander)

2. Approve Agenda

Bill request to add headings to this agenda:

Committees of the Board – Discussion (All)

Capital Project Update (Bill)

Cameron Kroetsch request to add:

Operations Committee and Marketing Committee to the Agenda moving forward

Approved by John Alexander / 2nd by Jeff Beattie

3. Declarations of interest

None declared

4. Approve minutes of previous meeting June 5th & June 26, 2023 (Attachment A)

Moved by Anne Miller / 2nd John Alexander. Motion carried.

5. Board communication received or sent since prior Board meeting: None

6. York Blvd Animation Presentation (Sarah Ehmke, Senior Project Manager, Tourism and Culture)

Shane Coleman: I like the idea of having a simple bench by the window slats. Seating concept could be worked on a bit more.

Anne Miller: Not happy with the seating concept in the York Space. We should put more effort into renting that space out, we need more revenue. I've suggested before to add some plants in the space. Great space for a vendor that sells alcohol. Why are we having trouble finding a vendor? I have seen other Markets use the ground space for pubs. We should be renting that space instead.

Celina Masoudi: I love the concept. I see a lot of people sitting in the library and this could be a nice contemporary addition for seating. I like that it is not heavy, easy to move. It'd be a great space for eating or reading a book. Where is the funding coming from? I like concept 1 and 3. I think this is a great idea.

Jeff Beattie: I'm in favour of doing something different with the space. If we do not act on this, nothing will happen. I like that it is modular, easy to move, there can be different configurations. This is where other public spaces are gearing towards. We are anticipating the funding from Planning and Economic Development. It is important that we step up.

John Alexander: I think we should rent the space but I do like the idea of putting up the wagons, incur people to use that space, seating around the edging, move it from the market floor.

Cameron Kroetsch: I think these designs are good. I don't think they quite maximize the space. We had a samosa vendor there before and I think he maximized the space. This seems a little sparse. I think that we have a problem with renting it out. Where would we store this furniture in the market? Are there other uses for this furniture? I like the bench idea looking into the market, that would be great to have. The goal is to have seating up there. Need to be able to move furniture for holidays. I like Anne's suggestion with more plants. The library has tons of live plants and it makes it feel inviting, refreshing. This can help with the space feeling more animated and active.

Anne Miller: I like the idea of vendors using that space temporarily. I'm willing to get involved with getting that space as well as getting the Market Association involved. Even if it's just a display, better than nothing. Saturdays would be the best days.

Cameron Kroetsch: The city is not just going to give us 20k. What about installing a large service to allow a restaurant to operate there.. ventilation. considering a big change to the market. Animate the space. There are 3 things happening here, furniture would be helpful as a place for people to eat and read.. primarily accessible things... number 2, existing vendors using that space.. number 3.. bringing other people that might be more flexible, put all of our resources together to revitalize the space.

Bill, come back with your recommendation.

Anne Miller: We need members from Management and vendors who can bring creativity and carry this until the end of the year. It would be best to have a permanent tenant. Have that space look creative, inviting, vendors can do some taste testing and sampling.

Motion: Bill work with Sarah, come back with another presentation.

1. Variety of Furniture – feedback from people
2. Find a way to work with existing vendors to fill that space when no events are happening
3. Flexible lease arrangement for someone from the public

Motion: Moved by Jeff Beattie / 2nd by John Alexander. Motion carries.

7. **New Market Hours Communication Strategy (Bill)**

Jeff Beattie: Been working with a lot of international students, perhaps do a scavenger hunt at the market with them, City is trying to help the market.

Cameron Kroetsch: Great to see the Hamilton Farmers' Market booth at Supercrawl. Perhaps we can work with Brandon (Latin Foods & Products) to put a banner on the side of the building. We should invest in some directional banners or signage to tell people how to get to the market.

Motion: Report back with something brief on opportunities – banners and directional signs towards the Hamilton Farmers' Market. (Moved by Cameron Kroetsch / 2nd by Shane Coleman. Motion carries)

Shane Coleman: We need to reach out to other buildings as well like McMaster residences or hotels?

Bill Slowka: We have recently joined a hotel group for one year as a trial to promote the Market within their properties which feature accommodations with kitchenettes. There will be information in the hotel rooms on how to get to us and hopefully attract them to visit and buy groceries with us. We will see what the feedback is like. This new relationship is set to begin in October 2023.

8. **2024 Market Fees / Vendor Attendance Policy (Bill)**

Bill Slowka: There has not been a fee increase in the HFM since 2017 at which time the increase was 2%. Costs continue to escalate post-pandemic and the 2023 forecasted City Levy is \$290K.

Cameron Kroetsch: Propose something prepared for November meeting. Allow vendors to go back to the vendors, have a Stallholder Association Meeting between now and November. provide us some feedback so we can vote in November. Aim for November to have a policy in place. I think we need to have a clear policy, roll it out in November, we have an education period. I think that's reasonable.

Motion: Moved by Cameron Kroetsch / 2nd by Celina Masoudi. Motion carries.

John Alexander: This will allow us time to incorporate this in the 2024 Stallholder Contracts.

Bill Slowka: We can incorporate any changes to the rules of the market as well. Our rules are an appendix to the HFM License Agreement and accepted when you the contract is signed.

9. **Vision and Guiding Principles Review (Bill)**

Cameron Kroetsch: I'm for asking Council for what we need, if we don't make the ask, it's going to get harder to ask the question. It is quite clear what the market needs, more visibility on marketing. More administrative support... increase the funding we have. Bring forward budget #1, budget #2, let Council

make the decision. I keep hearing from the vendors that we don't need more staff yet they expect more services than what they are getting.

We need to take a more animated mindset. What if we closed York Boulevard several times a year and make it a street -style Farmers Market? We would need support from the vendors and have someone be available to run it. We need different skill sets, managing vendor relationships, functions, events. There is lots of expectations, but I want more responses, we got a small group of people. Try to divide it, this can increase their availability.

Shane Coleman: I agree on this vision, I feel the medium-term recommendation is to “ensure adequate accessible transportation”.

Cameron Kroetsch: We should discuss this at every meeting.

Ray Kessler: Awkward arrangement between the City and HFM Corporation. Our operating agreement provides City resources however the question becomes.. where is the ask for the business case? Typically, there is a business case as part of the budgeting for additional resources. A couple of different ways to address this, this is important. Deliver the resources we require based on the Corporation. It would benefit the Board if the Board put forward a request to the City for the additional resources to be deployed at the Market supported by a business case as to why the resources are required to move the Market forward.

Cameron Kroetsch: We have a business case – The Visioning Consultant's Report. They provided the business case for that, we are going through the transition, there is going to be a tremendous transition. The Market is expected to manage that transition.

Ray Kessler: One suggestion to make is possibly bring forward “the ask” or the “business case” for the next Board Meeting in October.

Motion:

1. Coming forward with a 'Business Case' for October's Board Meeting.
2. Coming forward with a 'Budget' for October's Board Meeting.

Motion: Moved by Cameron Kroetsch / 2nd by Celina Masoudi. Motion carries.

10. Committees of the Board – Discussion (All)

Cameron Kroetsch: Think about how we accept delegations. Is it about the board or board activity, vendor concerns? We have 4 Vendor representatives to be here, everyone got a chance to vote for these vendors. We need a mechanism for you to use and treat this like a board.

We have the President of the Stallholder's Association here, perhaps you can give us monthly presentations that you want to bring up from the vendors. It does not make sense to have vendors here to discuss about other vendors. I'll leave it with you Anne to propose something, present a formal, function about raising issues.

Celina Masoudi: If a vendor has an issue, should they go to the Stallholder's Association?

Cameron Kroetsch: Operational Committee would deal with operational issues, then we have Marketing Committee to help with marketing issues. There are things that the vendors have issues with that are solely operational, these are things for the Market Manager to deal with.

Bring a report here and we can talk about it, bring recommendations. Use those mechanisms available. Think it through, so they can bring recommendations forward.

Celina Masoudi: I'm not notified or invited to these Stallholder Association meetings. How can we combine the two as a Vendor representative. I want to hear their concerns and address them, but I feel excluded from that. Maybe the Operations Committee is the vendors committee.

Anne Miller: Celina, I will try to work on that. I was looking through some notes that I had on the Vendor's advisory committee, before Covid. It functioned very well. I will share my notes with you. Basically, the association was not up and functioning then and was only dealing with Market insurance. A combination of citizen members and board members were able to get a lot done. It was productive. I will re-look those notes and operations could be called, vendor advisory. I still think we need representation from the Association.

John Alexander: Celina, I do believe the representative is handing out the Stallholder Association meeting memo in person, if you did not receive it in person, it was not intentional. What is the status of getting the Citizen Members on the Board?

Cameron Kroetsch: I'm on that. I think the answer is very soon. We have meetings booked September 12th, 15th, and sometime in October. We have a different approach now. Why are we selecting people? Do we have enough qualified applicants? Very valuable to do that. In the past, we had traditional rules in selecting, which were not working. The Hamilton Farmers' Market interviews are coming up soon, once those interviews are done, then it goes to Council to be appointed. My expectation is that we'll have up to 5 Citizen Boards Members coming on board by year's end.

Ray Kessler: Remind Board Members that we are going to start the Governance Review. Some of the questions that are being asked to make note of. The consultants will be talking to the Board and the vendors at some point. These types of issues is precisely what you want to raise so they can get it right. Very valuable for us to raise those with the consultants.

Cameron Kroetsch: I'll have some clarity. We know where things go, how to solve them. I've been hearing at this Board that "things were not moving along". I see a lot of issues are moving along, the Board is here to make decisions. We will be making lots more.

11. Capital Product Update (Bill)

Bill Slowka: Rules around how reserves can be applied. To the Board, to make a motion, request of the City permission to spend for a specific project. One way we can get this project accomplished by using our market reserve funds. Back in 2017 with the sponsorship arrangement with Meridian, we accumulated money into our market reserve. At the Board's decision, to improve the market, improve the customer experience. These types of spending decisions are not included as part of our operational budget.

Discussed upgrading the freight elevator in detail. What are some ways we can protect the garage doors from being damaged? We must find preventative measures, perhaps adding more speed bumps to slow the trucks down. Wait for the door to rise, to go underneath, they don't wait for the door to go all the way up, that's our challenge. Therefore, it is getting damaged frequently.

Cameron Kroetsch: Let's decide in our October meeting.

Regular Reports:

12. Councillor's Update (Cameron Kroetsch / Jeff Beattie)

Cameron Kroetsch: We can talk about the remaining points in our next meeting, double up the information Bill, for the Manager's Report.

Motion: Bill to look for fleet and vehicle information for the Santa & Grey Cup Parade.
(Moved by Shane Coleman / 2nd by Anne Miller)

13. **Market Manager's Report (Bill) - POSTPONED**
14. **Finance and Audit Committee (No report)**
15. **Marketing Committee (No Report)**
16. **Vendor Attendance Report (No Report) – POSTPONED**
17. **HFM Foot Traffic Report (Bill) - POSTPONED**
18. **Outstanding Business List Update (Bill) - POSTPONED**

IN CAMERA - Private & Confidential – Personnel

Motion: To move into Camera with only Directors and Ray Kessler (Cameron Kroetsch / 2nd by Celina Masoudi)

Jeff Beattie: The Chair had to leave to another meeting, we have concluded our In-Camera Session. We have a future agenda item we are going to add.

Motion to add: Comprehensive Discussion – Security Functions

Moved by Anne Miller / 2nd by Shane Coleman. Motion Carries

Motion: To move out of camera (Jeff Beattie / 2nd by John Alexander)

Future Meetings:

Next In-Person Board Meeting: Monday, October 2nd, 2023 at 5pm (Room 264, Hamilton City Hall)

Finance Meeting – TBA
Marketing Meeting – TBA
Operations Committee – TBA

Adjournment: 6:50 pm – Jeff Beattie moved to Adjourn / 2nd by Shane Coleman.