

UNITED GROWTH FOR KENT COUNTY COALITION MEETING MINUTES

May 19, 2009

Present: Carol Townsend, Lynne Ferrell, David Anderson, Mary Jane Robinson, Thomas Dudek, Sylvia Harris, Rick Chapla, Jill Meyer, Peggy Killmer, Eric Doyle, Mike Williams, Steve DeVries, Marsha Wilcox, Michael Raley, Scott Harvey, Kevin Wisselink, Gail Heffner, Diane Miller, Chris Thompson, Katherine Karnes, Christine Helms-Maletic

Mike Williams, president, called the meeting to order.

PRESENTATION: Christine Helms-Maletic, Midtown Neighborhood Association

Christine gave a presentation on the future of the Fulton Street Farmers Market, which the Midtown Neighborhood Association took charge of in 2005. A feasibility study on future plans for the market was conducted by the Project for Public Places, and was funded by the City of Grand Rapids, Steelcase, the Frey Foundation, the Grand Rapids Community Foundation, and United Growth for Kent County. From the study come the following nine recommendations:

1. Construct a headhouse
 - The headhouse could include a food prep area, an ATM, a food education center, a water fountain, and perhaps even some vendors.
2. Keep the market open year-round
 - Though there are vendors that operate year-round, it would be considered desirable to find more that will do the same.
3. Expand the Plaza
 - Increase the amount of tables, chairs, and benches
 - Facilitate greater bike parking
 - Accommodate social interaction away from vendors, so they can more easily conduct business, while abstaining from any stifling of the social aspect of the market.
4. Build a permanent shed
5. Improve parking circulation
 - Use double-load aisles to prevent the congestion that has been a problem in past years.
6. Encourage alternative modes of transportation
 - Raise awareness as to the relative convenience of Rapid Line 14, which stops directly near the market.

- Use expanded bike parking to encourage greater use of bikes
 - Increase the number of crosswalks, allowing ease of movement between both sides of the street.
7. Incorporate green design
 8. Lease the existing space for retail
 - This is not likely to happen, given the building's size and historical significance.
 9. Retain existing management
 - It is important to keep the Vendor Committee in power, as it is comprised of some of the very vendors who keep the market alive, and it gives a voice to the vendors who participate every year.

Christine also mentioned that SNAP processing, a means by which market patrons on food stamps can use their benefits at the market, is in the works for the future. Cynthia Price noted that the system is already in use at the Southeast Area Farmers Market.

The fundraising goal for the Fulton Street Farmers Market has been set at \$2.8 million, and it is hoped that this money can be obtained by means of the following:

- A recent agreement between the city and the Midtown Neighborhood Association, in which the city will commit
- Grant-writing
- A possible capital campaign

Christine's presentation also outlined a phased implementation comprised of the following steps:

1. Build the permanent shed
2. Perform direly needed maintenance on the existing building
3. Include a vehicular through-aisle (with pedestrian safety in mind)
4. Build the headhouse
5. Enclose the first section of the shed

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board Reports: Kendra reported that a tour of Newberry Place co-housing development will beheld on July 15. Participants are to bring their own lunch, but a beverage will be provided. There is no cost for the tour.

Revitalizing Neighborhoods: Carol reported that the third and final zoning workshop has been scheduled for June 24, from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm, at the Kent/MSU Extension. She also noted that the MSU Urban Planning students finished their research and submitted their report.

Land Preservation Education: Kendra reported that an evening outing to the outdoor concert and farmer's market has been scheduled for July 15.

After the announcement that the next meeting is to be held on June 16 at 8:30 am, the Coalition meeting adjourned to break up into committees at approximately 9:30 am.