

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Economic Development Division

memorandum

TO: Urbana's Market at the Square Advisory Board

FROM: Natalie Kenny Marquez, Director, Market at the Square

DATE: April 19, 2017

SUBJECT: Market at the Square Strategic Plan Update

Introduction

The Community Development Services Department completed a strategic planning process for the Market in 2011. This effort was in response to the Urbana City Council's goals to incorporate the Market as part of the City's environmental sustainability and economic development goals and in response to community interest in the future of the Market. A Steering Committee of stakeholders was recruited to help guide the planning process. As part of the effort during the data gathering stage, the City conducted extensive outreach, including several public meetings, a survey, and an open house. The Steering Committee studied the history of the Market as well as recent trends and issues. From this information, a mission statement for the Market was developed and a set of goals and implementation strategies were formulated. The Market at the Square Strategic Plan was approved in late 2011 and many of its recommendations have been implemented, including the formation of the Market at the Square Advisory Board.

Background

In 2016 it was an appropriate time to undertake a review and update of the goals and implementation strategies as outlined in the 2011 Market at the Square Strategic Plan. A survey was implemented the first full week of January 2016 in order to gain feedback on the Market's current strategic goals and to determine if they are still relevant and whether there are new goals that should be pursued. The survey was directed to past and present Market at the Square vendors, community groups, and patrons. The survey closed on January 28, 2016 and over 300 responses were received. The survey results were shared with the Market at the Square Advisory Board and discussed at the February 18, 2016 special meeting.

At the March 17, 2016 Special Meeting, the Market at the Square Advisory Board was joined by a facilitator, Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant of New Leaf Consulting, to review the current Market at the Square mission statement and goals. The Market at the Square Advisory Board members affirmed the Market at the Square mission at this meeting, and proceeded to refine the 10 goals from the 2011 Strategic Plan into seven, new draft priorities.

At the March 17, 2016 Special Meeting, staff asked that the Market at the Square Advisory Board members review the seven new draft priorities. The priorities were then affirmed at the April 28, 2016 meeting and include the following:

1. Ensure that the provision of a variety of fresh, healthy, local, high-quality foods remains the cornerstone of the Market
2. Enhance the quality of life in Urbana and the surrounding community by providing community activities which foster social gathering and interaction.
3. Promote the Market as an educational forum for consumers to learn about the uses and benefits of quality, locally grown and/or prepared foods.
4. Enhance the Market's role in the local food system, vendor profitability, and in the local economy.
5. Consider the future growth of the Market and ensure that the Market remains consistent in its mission and remains as a financially self-sufficient program of the City of Urbana.
6. Encourage a dynamic, high quality growers Market.
7. Promote the inclusion of stakeholders in the decision-making process for the Market.

As a final step in the Strategic Plan Update process, the Market at the Square Advisory Board drafted a series of initiatives to supplement the Market's seven priorities. Attached is a complete draft of the updated Strategic Plan for review and affirmation at the April 19th meeting.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Market at the Square Advisory board affirm the attached updated Strategic Plan at the April 19th meeting. This will conclude the Strategic Plan Update Process.