



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Administrative Division

Urbana's Market at the Square Staff Report January 20, 2016

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Introduction

The following Market at the Square Staff Report describes activities of Urbana's Market at the Square. The report includes information regarding projects which are in progress, recent requests and recommendations from the public, staff activities, and upcoming events.

- **2015 Season Recap**

- The 2015 Annual report was presented to the Urbana City Council on January 19, 2016. A copy of that report is attached.

- **SNAP/EBT and WIC Update**

- The Market applied for a \$5,000 from LinkUP Illinois to provide administrative and promotional support for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at our farmers market. This is different from the LINK Up double value grant we received in 2015. This grant will specifically go towards helping to cover administrative costs associated with the program and to help pay for expenses related to promoting the program. The grant will be disbursed over a two year (season) timeframe.
- Staff is exploring opportunities for new ways to expand our SNAP and WIC programs at the farmers markets.

- **Illinois Farmers Market Association**

- The 2016 statewide conference will be held on February 16-17, 2016 at the Chicago Cultural Center in Chicago, IL. A fundraiser will be held during the conference on February 16th which includes a screening of *A Farmers Road*, a documentary about Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery (a Market at the Square vendor).
- Natalie Kenny Marquez is currently participating in the Market Manager Certification which will take place over the next month. This is a program sponsored by the Michigan Farmers Market Association and in partnership with the Illinois Farmers Market Association and University of Illinois Extension.

- **2016 Update**

- One goal as Market Director is to keep Urbana's Market at the Square as affordable as possible to all of the valuable vendors and community groups that participate each season. In addition, staff is tasked with ensuring the Market is sustainable and a self-sufficient program of the City of Urbana.

While the cost of living and cost of doing business have increased over the years, the fees at Urbana's Market at the Square have remained at \$20 per space per weekend for the past five years. Staff has reviewed a few different scenarios including various fee structures and reviewed them in comparison to other farmers markets in the area and region. As a result of

this analysis, and in order to meet the increased costs of doing business, staff is proposing that there will be a \$5 per space increase beginning with the 2016 season. The total cost per space will amount to \$25. This increase in vendor fees is reflected in the 2016 Vendor Handbook which will be available online at www.urbanainlinois.us/application beginning February 1, 2016. There will also be hard copies of the Vendor Handbook available in the Community Development Office. A copy of the 2016 Vendor Handbook is attached.

- **Programming**

- Read at the Market, Bike to Market, Art and Performance at the Market, and Sprouts at the Market will continue in 2016. In addition, chef demonstrations will be added to the free all-ages programming available at the farmers markets. These demonstrations will feature local chefs preparing dishes sourcing ingredients found at the farmers market. More details will come as this program is developed over the next few months.