

Farmers Market Manager Report for 4/21/2022 Meeting

by Charlie Reed

Move Feedback:

Customer feedback that we've been hearing has been overwhelmingly positive, and increased visitation reflects that. Online chatter (shared by Theresa) also positive. One customer expressed disagreement with the move. Addressed below in "Vendor Issues" section.

Vendor feedback is positive regarding increased customer presence and atmosphere. Change is difficult and it has hit some vendors more. Addressed below.

Move Learnings:

Feedback from vendors, Pound House reps, the FMC, and Customers is integral to our move's evolution. PH expressed concerns with vehicles on the grounds. Vendors expressed concerns about not being able to drive on the grounds. Charlie and Johnna remain focused on safety at the entrance during set-up and closing, with vendor traffic funneled through a tight entrance. After 4/6 market, Charlie, Jenny, Gouri and Marianne had an emergency meeting to discuss expanding market to outside of fence on city property. Michelle allowed vendors who need to pull their vehicles or trailers to their booths to use this area. Expansion and evolution outside will continue as needed, with market focus to remain on integration with PH as well.

The 4/13 market was the first to use areas outside the PH fence. Vendors assigned those spots were skeptical to start and, with one exception, thrilled by market's end.

With current logistics, PH grounds can support +/- 50 vendors. Additional carts and volunteers at closing would boost that. City property adjacent to PH can potentially support an additional +/-50 working from vehicles. Additional signage will be needed to direct customer flow.

Visitation:

Perhaps due to better ability to count with controlled entrance, the clicker is showing much higher numbers:

- 3/16 (last day at Triangle) – 500
- 3/23 (first day at PH) – 596
- 3/30 (Grand Opening) – 711 (highest we've counted)
- 4/6 – 541
- 4/13 – 626 (#2 we've counted, ahead of 625 at 10/6/2021 market)

Totals and Averages by Month (2021)						
	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Cust Per Market	527	409	437	563	475	438

Totals and Averages by Month (2022)				
	Jan	Feb	March	April
Cust Per Market	344	323	564	583.5

With more accurate counting ability, a trend is emerging to support assumptions made by vendors who said sales increase first and third markets due to pay periods.

Sales:

The last five markets have seen total sales surpass \$20,000, with a new high set 3/30: \$25,000.

Perspective: over the previous year, the market had not surpassed \$20k more than two consecutive weeks, with the exception of December, 2021, which saw three in a row.

Vendor Applications:

FMC volunteers met Monday 4/11 to review applications and ensure proper procedures are followed.

This support is appreciated. I haven't had time as of yet to follow up. Essentially, applications are still on hold. I've provisionally approved select vendors and let them know that formal approval has not yet been given.

Vendor Issues:

[Vendor]: 4/6 – called City Hall to make complaint about favoritism toward his competitor. My response email is below.

[Vendor]: 3/30 – after owner steadily complained to fellow vendors about new location's difficult accessibility for vehicles and having to carry wares, owner also shared complaints with customer who approached me to air the concern. I spoke with vendor to address. When we opened outside of 4/13 market for vendors to park and sell, [Vendor] owner refused to accept outside placement and insisted "normal" spot inside fence.

Vehicle breaking and entering concern at 4/13 market. No request from vendor making complaint for report or police. Email below.

Charlie Out: I'll be visiting my mom for her 70th and will be out May 5-15. With Johnna, the market will be in good hands and we'll work to make sure she's prepared. Thomas, who assisted me during Johnna's recent absence, will support, but volunteers for set-up and breakdown would be helpful.

Truck: Flat-bed truck panels were installed and we hope to begin using the truck 4/20.

Pumpkin Fest: Charlie met with Pumpkin Fest organizers 4/14 to begin discussion of sharing PH grounds for six weeks in Sept/Oct. Per staff report, will debrief FMC.

Social Media:

- Instagram followers up to 2,210 (+76 over last month).
- After a year, followers are up almost 1,000.

Newsletter:

1. Subscribers: 1,429 (up 104)
 - a. *Heavy spike after Edible Austin's call-out*

Market Bucks and Vendor Payments:

No market bucks were returned this month. However, \$50 in wooden nickels were returned to vendors who had not been reading Monday emails for six months, in which I announced the nickels were discontinued. After locating the customer using the nickels, she said she purchased them at the Friends

Foundation Auction in 2020 and was told around then that they would never expire. Vendors (Thai Gourmet, SpaceCow Bakery) will be compensated.

DSFM Sales Data				
Market Date	3.23	3.30	4.06	4.13
Vendors	47	47	45	47
Vendors Reporting	45	47	45	47
Total Sales	24,270.00	25,893.00	23,310.00	22,817.00
Average per Vendor	539.33	550.91	518.00	485.47
Farmers	2,358.00	3,857.00	1,905.00	1,850.00
Ranchers	6,172.00	5,806.00	6,680.00	6,472.00
Crafts	655.00	1,690.00	1,878.00	2,267.00
Foods	13,845.00	13,590.00	12,077.00	11,628.00
Baker	1,385.00	2,486.00	1,659.00	2,032.00
Beverage	3,770.00	3,166.00	2,322.00	2,921.00
Value Add	7,450.00	6,988.00	7,326.00	6,075.00
Pet	1,240.00	950.00	770.00	600.00
Visitors	596	711	541	626
Sales per Capita	\$40.72	\$36.42	\$43.09	\$36.45
Temperature	70	82	80	93
Skies	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Clear
Humidity <small>(low=1,med=2,high=3)</small>	1	1	1	1
Winds (15 mph+)		20	20	15
Music	J.Kirk	Trio	J.Rivers	A.Dormont

Totals and Averages by Month (FY'22)							
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
# Markets	4	4 (3)	5 (4)	4 (3)	4 (3)	5 (4)	2
Vendors	165	134	183	154	113	220	92
Vendors Reporting	165	124	179	117	92	172	92
Total Sales	\$76,769	\$59,596	\$76,769	\$47,366	\$41,824	\$92,611	\$46,127
Avg. per Market	\$19,192	\$19,865	\$19,192	\$15,789	\$13,941	\$23,153	\$23,064
Average per Vendor	\$465.27	\$480.61	\$428.88	\$404.84	\$454.61	\$538.44	\$501.38
Customers	2250	1425	1750	1375	970	2257	1167
Per Market	563	475	438	344	323	564	583.5
Sales per Customer	\$34.12	\$41.82	\$43.87	\$43.06	\$43.06	\$41.03	\$39.53

Email to vendor in regard to accusation of favoritism:

Dear [Vendor],

I want to thank you for your long-time, consistent presence within the Dripping Springs Farmers Market. You've developed strong and lasting relationships with customers, and there's nothing more valued in the market than that.

As you know, the market's change of locations has presented a range of challenges. In anticipation of challenges known and unpredictable, I let vendors know we would likely need a month to gain a better understanding of the new location's capabilities and limitations. It is an iterative learning process in which feedback from all 65 of our regular participants is not just valued, but integral to our evolution.

With that in mind, I was disheartened that you all felt the need to escalate your concerns. [Vendor], we speak every week, and I'm sorry that you did not feel heard. I understand that you all are running a business in which every customer counts, and I apologize again for not being able to assure you that your success, along with our other vendors' success, is a primary goal of ours. After all, our market's success is entirely dependent upon your ability to profit.

For the last ten months, I have [*] consistently turned away applicants in the [*] category with respect to your business needs. With that said, our market also has financial needs, as our new location brings new financial obligations. While we increased rates slightly, we are mainly counting on the extra space at our new location to house additional vendors who will help us meet our additional costs. I believe the market's growth allows us to take in up to two additional vendors in the category. With the same respect I had in turning away vendors, I am now letting you know that I will begin accepting applications.

As you know, I manage the market's operations while the Farmers Market Committee curates the vendor portfolio, and the decision of which vendors participate ultimately rests with them. If you have any concerns about my re-opening of this category, please direct them to the FMC.

Finally, I want to assure you both that your voice is being heard, and to best facilitate that I request that all market-related communications from [Vendor] come through e-mail.

Thank you again for your long-time participation in the Dripping Springs Farmers Market – I look forward to your contributions to our continued growth. If you feel our efforts to meet your needs are not sufficient, I fully respect your choice to take your business elsewhere.

Charlie

Email to Vendor in regard to vendor complaint about B&E:

[Vendor],

I want to let you know that a vendor came to me with a complaint during yesterday's market, stating she came upon one of the two [Vendor] vendors in her front seat looking through her car. She indicated it was the older man wearing an orange shirt. She declined to file a report or press charges and said nothing was missing.

Additionally, the two vendors for [Vendor] arrived well after the market had opened, were not set up until 4pm, and did not arrive with signed rules.

As the complaining vendor did not wish to file a report or even make a witness statement, I'm not required to do anything regarding the complaint, but as [Vendor's] presence in the market is valued, I want to ensure you are aware of your employees' habits should they be detrimental to your business. As their lateness cost them the busiest hour of the market, with a number of customers asking where they were, I would say that is detrimental.

Going forward, when new hires are sent to market, please make sure they bring initialed and signed copies of the attached rules. If they are going to be late, it would be a courtesy to your many repeat customers for us to be able to communicate [Vendor's] "traffic delay," so let us know next time.

Thank you,

Charlie