



CHURCH STREET MARKETPLACE

Church Street Marketplace District Commission Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners: Mark Bouchett, Becky Holt (Zoom), Linda Magoon, Sam Tolstoi (Zoom), Romeo von Hermann, Erik Monsen, Cara Tobin

Absent: Chris Haessly, Sarah Beal

Staff: Kara Alnasrawi – Executive Director, Samantha McGinnis - Project & Event Manager (Zoom), Stephanie Shohet – Administrative Assistant, Andrew Bacher - Church Street Marketplace Coordinator, Jessica Dudley - Marketing Manager, Aida Washburn - Project & Events Specialist

Members of the Public: Jeff Nick, Alok and Smitha from Maharaja Spice (Zoom), Assistant City Attorney Emmett Wood

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Motion to approve: Linda. Second: Romeo. Approval is unanimous.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve: Linda. Second: Becky. Approval is unanimous.

PUBLIC FORUM – GENERAL

- Jeff Nick points out that the Marketplace has never been reimbursed by the City for snow removal. He feels that this is unfair, and that a line item should be added to the Marketplace budget to cover more law enforcement/security on the street.
- Alok and Smitha from Maharaja Spice, a business being considered for the cart vendor program, introduced themselves and made it clear that they would be willing to discuss menu changes in order to not compete with Laliguras restaurant.

SINGLE DAY STREET ENTERTAINER PERMIT

a. PUBLIC FORUM ON ITEM – No participants

- Andrew explains the proposed change. Currently, traveling performers are only allowed to busk on the Marketplace (with a \$20 permit) if they have a show booked in town that day.

- Marketplace staff suggest that any traveling performer should be able to obtain this permit, whether or not they have a show booked in town.
- Brief discussion follows about the demand for and cost of such a permit.

b. VOTE

- Motion to approve this change: Linda. Second: Romeo. Approval is unanimous.

CART VENDOR SELECTION

a. CART VENDOR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Andrew presents the recommendations made by the Cart Vendor Committee at their recent meeting. This presentation can be found in the agenda packet for this meeting on the City's website
- Discussion ensues about Maharaja Spice and the fact that it serves Indian food and would be directly across the street from Lalgigas Restaurant, which also serves Indian food.
- Maharaja Spice will be managing the cart, but Mathew Panetta is the owner.
- Options are considered for how to make this work for both businesses.
- Eric makes a motion to table the vote on this cart until after Marketplace staff talks to the owners of Lalgigas. Linda seconds this, and commission agrees unanimously.
- Andrew explains the grading rubric, and short discussion follows about the new applicants.

b. VOTES

i. RETURNING CART VENDORS

- Linda makes a motion to approve the recommended slate, Romeo seconds, and approval is unanimous.

ii. NEW CART VENDORS

- Romeo makes the motion to approve the slate, Erik seconds, and approval is unanimous.

EVENTS UPDATE

a. STAFF PRESENTATION ON HOLIDAYS AND PLANS FOR EARLY 2025

- Samantha and Jessica share a presentation about holiday events as well as first quarter 2025 events.
- Merchant response was very positive about the added security, tree lighting, and Festive Fridays.
- Commissioners who attended the UVM Soccer Championship Parade and Sweet Stroll event expressed how wonderful both were and how great it is to see such positive energy on the street.
- Excited discussion follows about the upcoming March Maple Madness event.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Sam reports that we are two-thirds through this fiscal year, and revenue by corporate sponsorships is short due to public safety perception.
- Although maintenance expenses are high, much of that is due to the holidays, so we are good overall.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Kara describes her tour of the South Tower, the new City Place building.
- She explains that the Main Street construction has been very problematic for businesses, and that our office (BWD) will be using money from state grants to market Main Street businesses.
- New parking rates went into effect on January 1, and so far Kara has heard no complaints.
- She explains that Shawn Burke has been hired as the new interim police chief, and he will hold that position for two years.
- She reports that the Committee on Temporary Shelter has opened a shelter in the old Social Security building on Pearl Street.
- The mayor will be holding a meeting next week with bar and restaurant owners to discuss the proposed charter change banning guns in establishments that serve alcohol.
- Kara reports that the brickwork project is completed, and that with leftover funds, we will be amending the budget to cover staff salaries used to manage the project.
- Kara expresses concerns about revenue. Corporate donors are choosing to put their money directly towards social services rather than sponsoring events. To Jeff Nick's point from public forum, she has already requested reimbursement from the City to pay for street maintenance, and this has already started going through approvals.
- Kara reports that new businesses on the street include: FP Movement, Brandy Melville, BrandsBGood, and soon Cappadocia Bistro. Danform Shoes and Fjallraven have gone, and Dear Lucy will be moving into the former Fjallraven location.
- Kara introduces Emmet Wood, new Assistant City Attorney representing the Church Street Marketplace.
- Discussion follows about possible ways to support the struggling Main Street businesses.

CHAIR'S REPORT

- Mark reports that his later store hours in December were great for his business and he hopes we can convince other merchants to expand their hours.
- He expressed his excitement about the new interim police chief.
- He explained that judges seem to be getting the message that merchants are sick of being robbed by the same individuals over and over.
- New residents on the street will be a positive force for improving behavior, and if the community sees how Burlington is working to improve things, they will feel it and start coming back.

MEETING IS ADJOURNED

Next Meeting: March 19, 2025