



Food Truck Committee Meeting, Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 4:30 - 6:30 pm, meet outside City Hall, 149 Church Street, for walkthrough 11/20/2019

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

Food Truck Committee Meeting, Wednesday, November 20, 2019, 4:30 pm, Conference Room 12, City Hall, 149 Church St., Burlington

Generated by Sidney Durmick on Friday, November 22

Minutes

Members Present: Chip Mason, Sandi Pasagic, Alex Bunten, Debra Miller, Chiuho Sampson, Jeff Nick, Chris Haessly

Members Absent: Kara Alnasrawi, Will Clavelle, □□□□

Staff Present: Adam Roof, Christine Dunbar, Sidney Durmick

Chair C Mason called meeting to order at 4:36 pm

1. Walkthrough

Christine Dunbar and Sidney Durmick led the Committee in a walkthrough of the Central Peddling District to examine the current twelve (12) permitted food truck and cart sites within the District

2.0 Adopt/Amend the Agenda

Motion to Adopt the Agenda

Motion by J Nick, second by A Bunten

Final Resolution: Motion passed unanimously

3.0 Public Forum

No members of the public were present.

4.0 Best Practices for Food Truck Regulation



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Type: Discussion

- C Mason noted that the previous meeting indicated that the Committee had reservations about food trucks in the Central Peddling District, and reminded them that their recommendation to the Licensing Committee could be to not consider expanding the sites or potential uses of food trucks in that area
- S Durmick presented research on food truck best practices, which can be found in the meeting's agenda in BoardDocs under the "Food Truck Committee" tab: <https://go.boarddocs.com/vt/burlingtonvt/Board.nsf/Public#>
- C Sampson confirmed that the Health Department is responsible for administering waste/gray water and grease removal sanitation policies for Food Trucks
- D Miller noted how trash receptacles should have to be within a certain distance from the cart or truck. C Mason commented that making the ordinance too descriptive can remove needed situational flexibility, and instead the ordinance could be amended to say that trash receptacles must be a sufficient size in order to generate the trash from the related cart or food truck
- C Mason suggested that the Committee not move forward with restricting types of foods based upon proximity to similar businesses based upon a conversation he had with the City Attorney
- D Miller remarked that other municipalities had distance restrictions on food trucks in relation to residential districts and brick and mortar restaurants. C Haessly said he would not support a blanket ban on food trucks in the residential sections of the Central Peddling District. A Roof asserted that an ordinance restricting food trucks from being a certain distance from a residential area would be one and the same as banning food trucks from the Central Peddling District
- J Nick asked where the interest in food trucks has been coming from, since he had never heard of any interest in Church Street Marketplace Commission meetings. C Dunbar responded that the vendors themselves are interested. A Roof added that a commission meeting isn't an accurate way to measure interest. He continued by referring to the popular Arts Riot Truck Stop, indicating that this isn't a question of interest but of where to put the food trucks, best practices, competition, need for greater access to and diversity of businesses, adding vibrancy to side streets etc.
- D Miller pressed that the competition from the Arts Riot Truck Stop has negatively affected brick and mortar businesses in the South End. She continued that businesses on the Church Street Marketplace pay a premium to be there, and food trucks would need to pay six to seven thousand dollars annually to be in the Downtown area in order to maintain a level playing field. A Roof pointed out that comparability of cost is a separate conversation from whether food trucks should be permitted in the downtown district. C Mason pointed out that Truck Stop is a good example of a lost opportunity in the downtown district because they don't currently have the option to hold such an event. C Haessly felt that a balance needs to be struck between maintaining a level playing field so existing businesses are not adversely impacted and creating food truck opportunities so entrepreneurs have opportunities to start their own businesses; he asked if staff could get data from Planning and Zoning visually representing the usage of properties within the Central Peddling District (mixed-use, commercial, residential, etc.)
- D Miller stated that the population of Burlington is not large enough to support existing businesses and food trucks. S Pasagic noted that the example cities listed (e.g. Portland, Atlanta, and Sarasota) have a vibrant food truck scene, but not in the center of their downtown areas
- J Nick agreed with example ordinances which require restroom facilities to be secured for food truck employees and affirmed that food trucks should not be able to block the view of retail signage or store access by parking immediately



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adjacent to existing businesses. C Mason suggested that the Committee recommend to the License Committee that they take into consideration whether food truck sites will visually block businesses

- A Roof asked if food trucks should be spread out, densely packed in a row, or non-existent in the Central Peddling District. D Miller mentioned that currently, food trucks have to be 30 ft away from businesses selling similar products. C Mason asked if this is an appropriate distance. D Miller said that the food carts on Church Street, which pay a lot of money to be there, should be protected from the presence of competing food trucks which would not have to pay that fee
- C Mason pointed out that other jurisdictions have food truck pilot programs in place which test the effects of food trucks without fully committing to whole sale changes. C Haessly was in favor of starting a food-truck pilot-program, but D Miller stressed that a pilot-program could negatively impact Church Street businesses. J Nick agreed and stated that food trucks will negatively affect brick and mortar businesses which stay open all year, since food trucks have the mobile ability to leave during the slow season. C Sampson said she appreciated the competition brought by food trucks, because she can show how her business is different. She felt that a pilot-program would work well on Bank Street because it is usually quite empty
- C Mason pointed out that Poco, a new restaurant on lower Main Street, is a popular eatery that is bringing more pedestrians to a less visited area, and it started out as a food-truck
- J Nick asked why food trucks don't find locations on private properties to which C Haessly replied that they would have to receive permission from the landowner. J Nick felt that the City should not provide a platform for competition to the food carts and restaurants that pay taxes to the City, potentially harming businesses that are already in place.
- C Dunbar noted that it is disheartening to consistently turn away new Americans and people who want to start businesses for the first time because the City does not support them.
- C Haessly remarked that there should be a limit to the total number of peddlers, but not a predetermined spot designation. S Pasagic felt that a better way would be to predetermine different spots from which food truck vendors could choose from.
- J Nick asked if they currently charge the parking rate for a space taken up by a food truck. C Dunbar replied yes, they can either pay the meter while they are there or buy a bag from DPW. From a parking standpoint alone, J Nick stated that food trucks should not be on or around the Church Street Marketplace.
- C Haessly asked if participants of Truck Stop are among those who have been turned down for permits in the Downtown area. C Dunbar responded that they are.
- C Mason asked if anyone had any opinions on what the fee structure for food trucks should be in the Central Peddling District. D Miller figured that because she pays \$2,500/month for her business's take out window, food trucks should have to pay a similar fee. C Mason was concerned with that fee structure because he felt that her suggested amount was too far a leap from the current fee of \$300/year, and would deter those interested in hosting a food truck downtown. C Haessly commented that considering inflation, the \$300/year fee from 1995 would now be about \$505/year. Although he felt that the rate should increase, he did not believe that food truck fees should have to compare to the Church Street Marketplace fees because they would be cost prohibitive and prevent a lot of people from starting their businesses. S Pasagic stated that he currently pays \$2700/year for his food cart on Church Street, he has to stand outside, and can only operate 5 months out of the year; if food trucks were to be allowed near his business, he would not have the same economic opportunity
- A Roof mentioned that if there were a food truck program in the downtown area, it should be strictly linked to the City's efforts in supporting new entrepreneurs as a transitional opportunity. If a food truck program focused upon these goals, it would be more cognizant of potentially harmful competition in the downtown area



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- A Bunten asked about the average revenue of a food truck, and added that this number could potentially be used to determine their fee. C Mason did not feel that this was a fair way to determine the fee.
- J Nick noted that he was fearful of food trucks taking pedestrian traffic, business, and parking away from Church Street, and felt that food carts would be a less obtrusive way to help new entrepreneurs enter the downtown area. C Dunbar agreed on paper, but said that in reality, food trucks are trendy and most people who come to apply for a spot are applying for food trucks, not food carts. C Sampson suggested that there be tiered fees: a higher fee for food trucks and a lower fee for food carts
- A Bunten noted that the Committee could most likely all agree that none of the current food truck locations are currently viable

5.0 Committee Member Items

The Committee Members scheduled the next meeting for Wednesday, December 18th at 5:30 pm

6.0 Communications

Motion to accept the Communications

Minutes from: 11/06/2019

Motion by C Mason, second by D Miller

Final Resolution: Motion passed unanimously

7.0 Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

Motion by C Mason, second by C Haessly

Final Resolution: Motion passed unanimously