

Hello. This year is a little bit different in that we are having our annual meeting before Holiday Market. Many of us are busy preparing for an event that attracts thousands from around our state, and yet we know the value of coming together...of being together, and reflecting on this year, while also looking towards the future.

We have had an eventful year, and at the same time, we are, perhaps, as strong as we've ever been.

After many years of keeping the space fees the same at the Park Blocks, prior to the start of this year, your Board of Directors made the difficult decision to raise these fees as well as Holiday Market fees. After many volunteer hours were given in lengthy committee and Board meetings, a strategy for staying a step ahead of State Minimum Wage increases, Dept. of Labor law changes and increasing costs of services, rent and products while keeping in mind our long-held values, including that of a business incubator and MEMBERSHIP organization, was translated into an Annual Budget for Market.

We have seen a proliferation of task forces, and volunteer participation in these groups as well as in committees. You have heard from representatives of these 11 groups tonight. Here is a recap of the committees and forces that have been in action this year:

- **The Street Team**
- **Survey Task Force**
- **Food Court Committee**
- **Standards Committee**
- **Code of Conduct Task Force** – responding to members' needs to provide a revised policy and developing a behavior incident report form and process.
- **Budget Committee**
- **Personnel Committee**
- **The Sustainability Committee**
- **Holiday Market**
- **Downtown Developments Task Force**
- **The Leave of Absence Task Force** that worked hard on a policy revision

Though our community of artists and crafters is one of support and family, we are not insulated, and in fact, we are experiencing a time in which our presence, our wisdom, our values, are relevant as the City and County collaborate to make some long-term decisions and Urban Renewal Funds have been earmarked for the improvement of some downtown public spaces, including the Park Blocks. Our collective voice, echoing Saturday Market's values, is being heard and we are considered major stakeholders in the downtown along with our fellow Lane County Farmers Market vendors. Both our organizations are united in our desire to remain collocated in our current locations. There is strength in this unified message, while at the same time, we respect how each of our organizations have taken different paths and are happy with who we are.

In just the last week, the Park Blocks has been a focus in the news, as increased police presence and concerns of safety and public space use have gained more attention. And yet, through all of this, we will continue to make a family-friendly, safe, community event called Saturday Market at this very place. We will continue to be an inspiration for the good that can happen in our public spaces; we are living proof.

We have identified some work to be done beginning in the new year... some of these include shining a light on how to best prepare to take action when extreme weather is forecast during the Park Blocks season, creating a

Policy Manual that puts all our current policies at the fingertips of membership and staff and refining the Duplication Policy for Food Court members, to name a few.

This year we have 585 market members, 29 more than in 2015. 364 members are signed up for Holiday Market this year (as compared to 375 in 2015), but booking is still in progress for opening weekend, with 18 spaces left. The rest of the show is booked!

This Park Blocks season, we started out with a mix of returning and new staff. I am happy to report that we have streamlined our operations and will likely have money unspent in wage budget accounts for site crew and info booth.

This Holiday Market, will be Vi's last show as our Membership Services Coordinator, she has served the Market since 1990! There will never be another Vi. We thank her sincerely for all she has done to keep this ship running smoothly and wish her the very best in her retirement!

These are exciting times...and although there has understandably been some fear from our membership that has come with the uncertainty of how things will shake it when it comes down to locating the City Hall and Courthouse buildings and LCFM, the impact on our market, improvements to spaces and changes to streets downtown...I see us at the table and making plans to make the most of the opportunities when they present themselves. We have visionaries and safe-keepers in our market. We have critical thinkers, youthful energy and wise ones among us. We are ready to not just be a part of the changes in our downtown, but to be leaders in the shaping of our public spaces in particular and to continue to provide a place for people who make things to launch and run their business. I am honored to work for Saturday Market and energized for what we have the ability to do in the near future to improve our Park Blocks home, we are well on our way to making things happen by speaking clearly to local government staff, officials, community members and partners.

I would like to take a moment now to remember those in our Market family who have passed from this earth this year: Mike Mortemore, Michael Dibitetto, Pam Raynor, Jan Bullock, Yoo Xiong, Alex Cieplinski, Eagle Park Slim, Buddy Sawyer and Ongkar Wallen.

We welcome into our family with open arms: Amelia Margaret Rose, daughter of Amanda Ryznar and Ed Phillips and Amelia Jane Scott, daughter of Jessica Simmons and granddaughter of the late Dotti Smith.

With passion and precision, with creativity and courageous action, we are a beautiful community of people spreading our art, our values and our love into the world at a time when the world can use all the love we've got to give.

All we need is love.