

Town Hall Meeting Synopsis May 22nd, 2025, 4:30-6:30pm

Introductions & Announcements

Doug Robertson (Board Chair) makes a few announcements:

- This Saturday Market (SM) season has started off well with great attendance and increased revenues
- The City of Eugene has been a great support and partner
- This Town Hall Meeting is a result of the Board increasing transparency and allowing for greater member input regarding the upcoming Holiday Market (HM) changes
- Agenda changes:
 - 1st- Holiday Market
 - 2nd- Budget concerns and impact
 - 3rd- Protestor Issues

Holiday Market

Dara Robertson (HM Co-Chair) presents: Holiday Market Survey Results; there were 362 valid HM survey results and 51 surveys that need to be followed up on. Still waiting for further results from Members that only do HM.

- Double Points November: 256- yes, 95- no, 11- questioning. Therefore, those that sell on the Park Blocks the 1st weekend of November will receive double points.
- Park Blocks March opening: 161- yes, 192- no, 9- questioning. Therefore, SM season remains opening in April, however, Shannon has made arrangement with the Farmer's Market (FM) to allow selling opportunities at the FM during March (see office for details).
- Holiday Market hours of operation:

10-6	101 votes
10-5	192 votes
9-5	25 votes
Don't Care	44 votes

Changing the hours of operation for Holiday Market does not change the price of our contract with the LEC. Time change impacts customer traffic and consistency. The impacts of changing hours on our Food Court must be considered when making this change (they are 13 votes).

Holiday Market Memorial Benches: There are bench plans at the office if you want to build your own or you can contact Doug or Dara Robertson if you would like to purchase an already made bench to decorate (\$75.00). If you want the bench varnished (highly recommended) it is an additional \$25.00. The Memorial benches will be scattered throughout the Holiday Market for the season.

Food Court

Casey Marks Fife Ito (Food Court Co-Chair) presents:

- Sales plummet after 4:00pm
- FC needs flexibility
- There is an inequity between the votes of FC versus the Crafters
- 9-10am hour is positive for many FC members (Breakfast Club)
- Suggests creating a “Member take-out” menu for the later hours

Booth Holder of Record

Sonia Ostendorf (Membership Coordinator) presents: Members that have Booth Holder of Record Status have been placed in new correlating spaces.

“The best solution I can come up with would be to get people the closest available space with their same neighborhoods. Each neighborhood has a clear set of BHOR that needed to be placed back into their spaces.”

New Holiday Market Map concerns:

- How will my customers find me?
- I have worked for 30 years for my booth and no longer will have the number of points to get it back. Many people do the minimum number of markets required to keep their space after they get it.
- Health issues that make load in difficult.

- LOA's that were taken over the past 2 years will not have any HM points, leaving them with no space.
- My neighbors have been my family for the past 20 years and I simply will not do HM without them.

Comments from Members

"Please honor the survey results. Majority vote wins."

"Different hours for Saturday and Sunday."

"Open when the people are there."

"Increase hours... it is Christmas time!"

"Need Marketing strategy to drive customers to certain hours with potency, consistency, and quality."

"Support the Food Court"

"Use the last hour to clean up, prep for next day, inventory, go shopping, etc."

"Need new survey design"

"Hold off on changes until we see what changes with the new website"

"Results thus far will be presented to the Board"

Budget

Doug Robertson (Board Chair) presents:

He outlines some of the budgetary issues the Market faces

- Over abundant income projection for 2024 (37K deficit)
- Inflation has risen 24% since 2019, last increase of Booth Fees was in 2019 from \$13.00 to \$15.00
- Health Insurance has doubled in the last 6 years
- With 20-25% membership increase, administrative tasks have increased
- Hard costs/ overhead has increased

- Legal Services for Market
- HM24 fees increased 5% last year when it should have been 27% with the rise in expenses
- Staff training and education
- Need to bring our marketing budget back to a robust level

Doug explained that had we increased the fees last year we would have had approximately \$27,215 additional revenue. In our 1st five weeks this season, we could have had \$4260.00 in additional revenue. He also stated that by reviewing our finances and all the increasing costs, inflation, tariffs, etc. the prudent raise should be \$10, but suggested that we could break it into 2 increases. So, looking towards next year, it is recommended that we have another \$5.00 increase.

Recommendations from the Budget Committee:

1. Increase Park Block booth fees \$5.00 for 8x8 and Food Court and \$2.00 for 4x4 (Making booth fees \$20.00 and \$10.00 plus 10%) starting in June
2. Cut HM25 days from 15 to 13 and increase the fees by 10% (this makes the fees essentially as much as last year)
3. New website and technology will bring more efficiency and accuracy
4. Plan on increasing booth fees for SM2026 and possibly reserve fees

Security

*(*Security is a contracted service necessary to have our event on the Park Blocks and at Holiday Market. It is necessary from a safety perspective as well as for us to have our permit.)*

David Jones (Specialized Event Enhancement Solutions Security) presents:

Our mission is to make sure that all that attend the Saturday and Holiday Market; vendors, crafters, musicians, food vendors, the public in general are protected from each other, from elements outside of the market that want to come in and disrupt the Market.

We try to deter these elements. We look for things that are out of place or people having mental issues. We are 1st responders/ we de-escalate the disturbances.

We have been a part of this Market for over 25 years. We love Saturday Market.

Comments from Members

"I would support a \$10.00 increase."

"People can always make a donation of additional \$5.00 on the envelope."

"Tighten our belt, too much staff."

"If you can afford it, make an angel donation when you see your neighbor struggling."

"Cutting staff is an easy, thoughtless solution that doesn't address the situation. Maybe we switch to a flat fee in the future; \$5.00 increase now."

"We need legal representation."

"Only 3 people should be staff."

"Membership is the management to our staff, and it is really sad that members say our staff is not necessary or not doing a good job. Be a good Manager and support our staff."

"Veronica's last day was today, so we no longer have an assistant manager, and we have no immediate intention of hiring another."

"Could we implement a sliding scale for those that cannot afford it."

"Budget transparency."

"Holiday Market Guidebook should be scrapped if it costs us money."

Protestors: Reformed Baptist Church (anti abortionists)

Doug Robertson (Board Chair) presents:

Shannon and I met with the Downtown Incident Commander (Ray Brown), 2 EPD Lieutenants, and 1 Sergeant this week regarding the protestors. They discussed being between a rock and a hard place regarding their legal strategy. The current supreme court rulings regarding free speech do not permit the police to stop the protestors from exercising their 1st amendment rights.

Regarding the amplification, there is no ruling on decibel levels therefore there is no enforceable level. Even though there are City amplification ordinances and permits required to use amplified devices in the City of Eugene, the Supreme Court ruling protecting free speech trumps the city laws.

The police went on to caution Market members and members of the public to refrain from harassing the protestors, defacing or destroying their property or they would be forced to arrest the member or patron. They do not want to do this.

Shannon Lee-Hutson (General Manager) presents:

There are some strategies we are employing at this time.

- “Who to Contact” brochure. Please write to your city and state officials, letting them know of the issues we endure at the hands of these people.
- Two flyers regarding amplified sound (Lenny Gould wrote): (1) for Market members detailing how to respond to the amplification nuisance and (2) for the public, your customers that want to join us in stopping the amplification.
- We have an individual who is reaching out to the Church to try to reason with them
- We are joining up with the Farmer’s Market and Free People’s Plaza to collectively join forces.
- We need to fill the public spaces (on the corners) with other protesters, small booths, debris, etc...
- Ask the community for support: reach out to groups that will come out to support us with bodies on the corners.

- Documentation: Every Member should document their loss in revenue during the time they are occupying space on the corners. You can do this with your square app or compare it to other similar days on the Park Blocks when they were not here.
- Document occurrences you witness of harassment or personal attacks. They can have a speech about anti-abortion, but they cannot point to a young woman and call her a baby murderer and tell her she will burn in hell.
- Document your experience and what your customers' experiences if they share with you.
- We need to address them civilly, legally, and it is a matter of who has the best documentation. We need to show how our 250+ businesses have been injured.
- Ignore them: do not engage.
- Refrain from harassing or increasing violence. Choose peace.

Meeting ends at 7:00pm

***All questions asked during the meeting we written down and answered to the best of our ability. The Q&A Town Hall meeting sheet is available upon request.