



FREDERICK

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ad Hoc Pop-Up Dining Committee Meeting Minutes March 1, 2022, Noon - PM

The Meeting was held virtually using MS Teams.

The Meeting was Recorded and posted on City Website

All meeting documents are posted on the City Website

The General Public was provided a call-in phone number to listen to the meeting.

Committee members in attendance: Bruce Albaugh, Dr. Alison Bomba, Waymon Wright, Mindy Cawley, Drennan Hicks, Marien Hornyack, Caiti Smith, Judy Ruzdin, Tristan Wasley, Shantay Dubay, Pam Francis, Jeff Griffin, Karina Goytia

Staff and Ex-Officio in attendance: Allen Etzler, Kara Norman, Sandra Wastler, Sean Walker, Lt. Matt Carrado

Manager of Economic Development initiated the meeting at 12 noon and notified the participants that the meeting was being recorded. Welcome was provided by Mary Ford-Naill, Dept of Economic Development.

1. **Welcome/Overview** – Mary Ford-Naill

Mary Ford-Naill welcomed the committee members and members of the public and thanked them for their participation. She made the committee aware that Director Richard Griffin was called out of town and would not be participating in the meeting. Ford-Naill mentioned that the Committee would review Food Truck operations in the City Food Trucks followed by discussion regarding the recommendations by the Committee for all aspects of outdoor dining. These recommendations would be used as a basis to draft future legislation regarding outdoor dining in the City of Frederick.

Ford-Naill introduced Becky Kaler with Economic Development, to provide an overview of Food Trucks. Ford-Naill advised that City staff continues to accept public commentary on program recommendations through Friday, March 4th, 2022. She reminded the Committee that program recommendations were made by staff in response to trends towards al fresco dining and the ongoing pandemic. Key considerations are safety, parking equity, fiscal equity, aesthetics. The goal is to recommend al fresco dining experiences that are safe, equitable, attractive, temporary and provide multi-year options.

2. **Presentation of Expanded Food Truck Staff Recommendations** –Becky Kaler, Business Development Specialist/ DED

Food trucks - Highlights of the staff recommended program included:

- Increased hours of operation: 9am – 9pm daily (expanded from 10am to dusk in Sec 29-10-c)
- May remain on a particular property for all or part of that 12-hour period
- May operate on privately-owned, non-residential property w. permission of property owner
 - Does not supersede restriction of operating within the Historic District with permitted exceptions of craft beverage establishments and Carroll Creek Park
- A map was shown explaining areas allowed for normal and temporary food truck operation

Pros:

- Safe, unique outdoor dining options for residential and commercial neighborhoods and parks
- Expands popular presence already at craft beverage establishments
- Provides opportunity for food truck businesses to generate additional revenue in COVID recovery

Cons:

- Competes with tax-paying brick and mortar restaurants
- Potentially reduces on-site parking at private properties
- Hard to enforce

- Clarification requested on where food trucks would be allowed to operate. The major restriction would be within the Historic Downtown unless tied to a craft beverage establishment. Refer to map
- Question about special events and food trucks i.e., Festival of Arts. Vendor/peddler regulations permits exemption to Carroll Creek Park

Ford-Naill began review of all staff recommendations and moderated input/feedback from committee members on each program

- ## 3. **Recommendations and discussion of Sidewalk Cafes** –Time frame – permanent, Hours – business hours, Locations – Any restaurant with sidewalks, Fee - \$128 initial fee & \$65 annually, Insurance, Permits required by DPW & Property Owner Authorization
- Requested clarification on what is considered permanent. Existing City legislation provides description of what is permitted in relation to sidewalk cafés.

4. **Recommendations and discussion of Street Closure**

NOT RECOMMENDED.

- Ford-Naill addressed that public commentary by City stakeholders was received and the committee would not be recommending street closure options.
- There was limited discussion and consensus on this recommendation by committee members in attendance.

5. **Recommendations and discussion of Parklets** – Time frame: April 15- Oct 31, Type of use: Dining, Retail or Sidewalk re-route, Hours: 8am – 12am (midnight), Locations: Downtown Frederick Streets, Fees: \$468/mo./space Market/Patrick, \$234/mo./space side streets, Insurance required, permits: legal agreement with City DED & parklet review by DPW, Specs: Custom built, Factory manufactured, City owned water filled barriers

- Committee members responded positively to the recommended reduction for the parklet option.
- Inquiry as to how many businesses does the City anticipate will take advantage of the parklet program. Staff shared with the committee that several businesses expressed interest in future participation in the parklet program
- There was commentary about establishing prorata rates for partial months (when applicable.)
- Establish if a business can have a parklet removed before the end of the outdoor dining timeframe.
- Determine if a business may elect to only use/have the parklet for a particular month.
- Determine if two businesses rent/share parking spaces to reduce cost.
- Safety is the first concern but aesthetics are also very important. Recommendation that the City regulate with required design specifications for how a parklet will look.
- Discussed need for policing businesses that are NOT utilizing their parklets and needlessly taking up a parking space. Some voiced belief that reducing the cost of parklets may help incentivize use.
- Re-evaluate cost of on street parking overall.
- Educate people to use public parking garages and not rely on spaces on Market and Patrick Streets.
- Recommend that the City reinstate 30-minute parking signs (such as those implemented during the pandemic at selected meters.
- With regards to sidewalk re-route (such as used with Isabella's), recommended that the walkway needs to be the same level as sidewalks or required ramps. It was brought to the committee's attention that Firestones had issues that the walkway was a different level than sidewalk and didn't work as well because of physical reality of street/curb.
- Comments were shared that parking spaces lost to parklet use is minimal compared to increased foot traffic. There was a discussion that increased foot traffic should positively impact downtown retailers. Downtown is an urban environment, and some parking issues should be expected.

- Confirmed that under current proposal, parklets that overrun another businesses property line may happen if both adjacent property owner approves as well as business owner that is being encroached upon.
6. **Recommendations and discussion of Outdoor Dining in Parks** – Time frame: Apr 15 – Oct 31, Type of use: Dining, Hours: 8am -12am (midnight), Location: City parks, Fees: \$100/mo./table, Insurance required, Permits: Legal agreement with City DED, Specs: 42” high removable barrier
 - Dining in Carroll Creek Park by LaPaz and Wine Kitchen were provided as an example.
 - While offered for any park within the City, only establishments along CCP have been able to make it work logistically. If a restaurant figures out a way to make another park work, this may present future opportunities.
 - There were discussions that food trucks could thrive by working in collaboration with a restaurant or other food trucks in parks.

 7. **Recommendations and discussion of Private Property** – Time frame: Year-round, Type of Use: Dining, Hours: Business hours, Location: Private property – parking lots, alleys, open space, Fees: DPW permit review fee, no insurance required by City, Permits: From DPW & Property owner authorization, Design specs: 42” high semi-permanent barrier
 - **No discussion**

 8. **Recommendations and discussion of Food Trucks** – Time frame: Year-round, Type of Use: Food delivery, Hours: 9am – 9pm, Location: Privately owned non-residential property. Already allowed in residential. Not permitted in historic district except when tied to craft beverage manufacturers. Fees: DPW permit review fee, no insurance required by City, Permits: from DPW & Property owner authorization, No design specs
 - **No discussion**

Ford-Naill put the question forward of needing any further meetings by the committee, March 8 is an option. It was decided another meeting is not required

Final comments: There was consensus by the committee that the recommendations presented do reflect the discussions and sentiment of the committee

- Committee voiced diverse opinions about the issue of parking: some see the potential lack of parking as a detriment to retailers; others felt that downtown is an urban environment and parking limitations should be expected.
- There was a suggestion of a ‘deeper dive’ into the street closure program to make it work for everyone. A future committee could meet for a longer period and provide more comprehensive insight. It was suggested that the City not use data from the last two years (during the pandemic) for these types of outdoor dining decisions.
 - Street closure is NOT the same suggestion as a pedestrian mall. These are two entirely different concepts.

- Annapolis does street closure during week vs. the weekend. The committee did not review street closure options other than what was brought forth as a recommendation (street closure on weekends during the month of July.)
 - There is hope that the City will look at Streetscape options comprehensively. A more long-term review could help shape the look for downtown and this could be a future discussion topic like the Outdoor Dining discussion.
 - It was suggested that an event be created once a month separate from 1st Saturday to involve Food Trucks, street closure, dance floors, promotions like a smaller version of Colorfest to expand vitality downtown.
 - A retailer who lives downtown expressed enjoyment walking everywhere and the urban aspects of the City but stated that the voices of the retailers should be reviewed with regards to parking issues and lost revenue.
9. **Closing & next steps** – Mary Ford-Naill, Manager, Dept. of Economic Development
- Recommendations will be handed off to City Legal Department to draft legislation that will go to workshop for further discussion and public meeting for final votes by Aldermen.
 - Committee reminded the group to send last questions and comments to popupdining@cityoffrederickmd.gov.

The meeting ended at 1PM and the Committee was reminded that the City will post minutes from the meeting on the City Pop-Up Dining webpage along with the recording of the meeting.