

April 17, 2014

To the Mayor and the City Council of Annapolis, Maryland;

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on Monday, April 7 and testify concerning the 2014 Lease of Public Parking Lots to FRESHFARM Markets, Inc. by the City of Annapolis for the operation of our Sunday farmers market.

That evening Alderman Littman raised several questions about the lease fee and the cost of our other market sites that I wanted to answer in more detail. I thought this information would be useful to the Economic Matters and Rules and City Government committees when they meet in the next two weeks.

What do our other market sites cost FRESHFARM Markets:

Maryland: We have 3 sites in Maryland: Annapolis, Silver Spring and St Michaels. The other two Maryland market sites are virtually free. On Saturday in Silver Spring we occupy the Downtown Silver Spring pedestrian mall, the prime retail space in Silver Spring, and pay \$1 per season. In St Michaels we occupy the municipal parking lot for the town and pay nothing.

Virginia: We have two market sites, Crystal City which is on a major city sidewalk, and Ballston which is in the prime neighborhood park. We pay nothing for these sites. In fact, the Crystal City and Ballston Business Improvement Districts underwrite a substantial portion of the costs of operating these markets. This means the BID's actually pay FRESHFARM Markets to operate our seasonal markets as they see the markets as a clear public benefit to their communities and in response to the number one request from their citizens who want farmers market in their neighborhoods.

District of Columbia: We have 6 market sites in the city of Washington DC. For three of these markets we pay \$50.00 per month for a public space permit. For the three markets where we close down busy public streets on a weekday, we also pay for the metered parking on that street. Two of our DC markets are largely underwritten, that is paid for, by the Downtown Business Improvement District and a city developer.

History and Basis for the Annapolis lease fee: The City of Annapolis, through the Economic Development Office headed up Mike Miron, recruited FRESHFARM Markets to come to Annapolis in 2008. The Office of Economic Development and the City of Annapolis financially supported our farmers market operations for the first two years. Subsequently the lease fee rate was set at \$1.00 per year until raised to \$50.00 per month (\$350.00 annually) in 2011. The \$50.00 per month lease fee is based on the public space fees charged to FRESHFARM Markets by the City of Washington DC. This fee change was instigated in 2011 based on the testimony of Bernadine Prince, Co-Executive Director of FREHSARM Markets, before the City Council.

Conclusion: FRESHFARM Markets requests not to pay a \$50.00 per month lease fee for the Annapolis City Dock for several reasons.

- FRESHFARM Markets is a nonprofit 501 (c) 3 organization whose mission to build an economically viable and sustainable local food system in the Chesapeake Bay region. We have public and charitable goals including a weekly gleaning program and an annual Thanksgiving Food Drive for the Annapolis Lighthouse shelter and our ongoing Chef at Market program. This year we will be adding a SNAP and Matching Dollars program. <http://www.freshfarmmarkets.org/programs.php>
- The Annapolis FRESHFARM Markets, founded in 2008, continues to be a breakeven market
- The City of Annapolis actively recruited FRESHFARM Markets to come in 2008 and saw our establishment of a farmers market at City Dock as a way of providing a service to downtown Annapolis. The goal of establishing a producer-only farmers market at City Dock was to
 - Enliven the Annapolis waterfront on Sunday morning when there was limited activity and infuse more liveliness into the scene
 - Establish the market on Sunday AM when there was Free Parking and thus encourage city residents and locals to come downtown, patronize local businesses and create a real community gathering place

We believe FRESHFARM Markets has been successful in building a lively market place in the center of Annapolis and attracting and building a clientele for the farmers markets and downtown businesses. With your support of this weekly market, we can continue to build and grow this community gathering place.

Finally, we invite each of you to come join us in Sunday morning, May 4 at 8AM to ring the bells and open the market for the 2014 season. We are also hoping that Governor O'Malley and his family will come for the festivities.

Many thanks,
Ann Yonkers

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