

# Downtown Mebane Farmers Market

## Guidelines

### Article I, Location

The Downtown Mebane Farmers Market (herein referred to as DMFM) is located at 102 E. Ruffin Street Mebane, NC 27302, which is the City parking lot between the Dollar General and the Downtown Mebane Pocket Park.

The DMFM Mailing Address is City of Mebane, 106 E Washington St., Mebane, NC 27302.

### Article II, Mission and Vision

Our mission statement sets our focus for the coming years: the **MISSION** of the Downtown Mebane Farmers Market is to support a diverse group of local farmers, artists, and producers by providing a clean, friendly, and vibrant atmosphere in which they can sell their goods directly to all members of the community.

By providing a place where local farms and producers can grow and thrive and where all residents have reliable access to fresh, healthy food and locally made products, we hope to achieve our long-term **VISION**: to foster a vibrant and healthy community through a sustainable network of vendors and community members based on honest, positive, and mutually beneficial relationships.

### Article III, Vendor Membership

- I. *DMFM Vendor Membership.* A farmer, business, or artisan who currently engages in the production of farm or agricultural-related products or handcrafted goods for direct sale to the community is welcome to apply for DMFM vendor membership. A vendor must be the producer of items sold. They must also adhere to the DMFM Guidelines and Vendor Rules & Regulations as approved by the City of Mebane and current vendors.
- II. *Vendor Requirements.* A DMFM vendor is a farm or business, etc., that has been accepted by the City of Mebane and current vendors following the application and site visit inspection and has paid any applicable fees.

- A. A vendor must reside and/or produce all goods and services within a reasonable vicinity of Alamance or Orange County. Exceptions may be made for items that add interest and value to the market.
  - B. A vendor must produce items sold at the market.
- III. *Fees.* Vendor fees, including application fees, annual fees, and guest fees will be proposed by the City of Mebane and current vendors.
- IV. *Applying for Vendor Membership.* Vendor membership applications should be submitted to the City of Mebane. Vendor membership applications are approved or denied by a majority vote of the current vendors based upon availability of space, consideration of an applicant's contributions to the market, and impact on DMFM's mission and purpose.
  - A. Vendors' farms or facilities must be located within a reasonable vicinity of Alamance or Orange County. Exceptions may be made for items that add interest and value to the market.
  - B. Market applicants must allow an initial site visit inspection to take place. The site visit will be conducted by employees of the City of Mebane and, as needed, current vendors. This site visit will ensure that the applicant is the producer of goods that are sold and that generally accepted practices and procedures are being used. All vendor applications are pending approval until satisfactory completion of this site visit.
  - C. The number of vendors selling certain products is set at the discretion of DMFM staff and may vary depending on the type of product offered. Preference will be given to vendors who commit to consistent market attendance (full-year over seasonal; weekly over bi-weekly, etc.)
- V. *Resignation.* A vendor may resign at any time in writing to the City of Mebane (e-mail is an acceptable form of writing).
- VI. *Vendor Membership Termination.* The City of Mebane and/or current vendors may vote to suspend a vendor or expel a vendor with just cause. Vendors have the right to be notified before action is taken. Just cause will include but is not limited to:
  - A. Failure to abide by DMFM Guidelines and Rules & Regulations.
  - B. Failure to pay any applicable fees.

- C. Selling any products not grown or produced by the vendor, without prior approval.

#### **Article IV, DMFM Meetings & Correspondence**

- I. *Monthly Meetings.* DMFM monthly meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of every month at the Mebane Arts & Community Center (633 Corregidor Street Mebane, NC 27302). The purpose of monthly meetings will be to discuss changes in policy, to disseminate information that impacts the market, and to review vendor applications, concerns, etc. Attendance is not mandatory, but it is encouraged and will be recorded. Meeting frequency may be changed at any time with first, approval by the City of Mebane, and secondly, by vote from eligible vendors.
- II. *Special Meetings.* Special meetings of vendors may be called by the City of Mebane at their discretion or at the request of the vendors if deemed necessary.
- III. *Notice of Meetings.* Notice of all annual and special meetings of vendors will be prepared and communicated at least 7 days prior to the date of each meeting. Notice will include place, time, and purpose of the meeting.
- IV. *Voting.* Vendors who regularly attend meetings will be permitted to vote on policy, applicant acceptance, and items relevant to the success of DMFM.
  - A. Voting will take place through an online poll.
  - B. Each eligible vendor may vote only once regarding a given issue.
  - C. To be eligible to vote, the vendor must attend 7 of the previous 12 meetings (approximately 60%) of monthly meetings beginning the month after their application has been approved and will be rolling. New vendors will not receive the ability to vote until they have attended 7 meetings of the first 12.

#### **Article V, Duties of the City of Mebane and Vendors**

- I. *Duties of the City of Mebane.*
  - A. *Regulatory Oversight:* The City of Mebane may establish and enforce regulations or guidelines governing the operation of the Farmers Market. This could involve health and safety standards, zoning regulations, vendor

qualifications, permits, and compliance with local laws.

- B. **Financial Support:** Providing funding or grants to support the market's operations, infrastructure development, marketing efforts, or educational programs. This might also include budget allocation, financial oversight, and auditing to ensure appropriate use of funds.
- C. **Infrastructure and Logistics:** Assisting with the provision of infrastructure, such as setting up necessary storage, access to utilities (electricity, water), waste management, parking, and overall logistics to ensure the smooth functioning of the market.
- D. **Promotion and Marketing:** Collaborating on marketing strategies, advertising, and promotion to increase public awareness and participation in the Farmers Market. This might involve joint efforts in advertising campaigns, social media management, or community outreach.
- E. **Community Engagement:** Facilitating engagement between the market and the local community. This could include organizing events, workshops, or educational programs related to agriculture, nutrition, cooking, or sustainable living.
- F. **Conflict Resolution and Support:** Acting as a mediator or providing support in case of disputes or conflicts among vendors, farmers, volunteers, or other stakeholders involved in the market's operation. In some cases, the City will make firm decisions when issues arise, and decisions must be made separately from the Market Coordinator or the Vendors.
- G. **Policy Development and Support:** Collaborating with the Market Coordinator and the vendors in developing policies that align with the city's goals and values, supporting the sustainable growth and development of the market.
- H. **Evaluation and Improvement:** Conducting assessments or surveys to gather feedback from stakeholders and the public, and using this information to improve the market's operations, amenities, and overall experience.
- I. **Legal and Administrative Support:** Providing legal advice, administrative assistance, or any necessary resources to ensure the market complies with legal requirements and operates efficiently.
- J. **Sustainability and Growth:** Assisting in long-term planning, sustainability efforts, and growth strategies for the Farmers Market, ensuring it remains an asset to the community.

## II. *Duties of the Vendors.*

- A. **Maintain Professionalism:** Uphold professionalism in their interactions with fellow vendors, city leaders, the market coordinator, volunteers, and customers. This includes prompt communication, respecting others' space, and addressing any issues or conflicts in a respectful and timely manner. No matter at a meeting at the market site, or in casual conversation outside of the market, all vendors should always be professional.
- B. **Collaborate and Support:** Foster a collaborative environment by sharing knowledge, resources, and experiences with other vendors. Encourage and support new vendors entering the market, contributing to a thriving and diverse marketplace.
- C. **Contribute to Market Promotion:** Actively participate in marketing efforts, such as sharing social media posts, distributing flyers, or promoting the market through their own channels to increase awareness and foot traffic. When sharing on social media, make sure that they are showcasing themselves in a polite manner, showcasing other vendors, and tagging the city in posts.
- D. **Conduct Sustainable Practices:** Embrace sustainable practices not only in their products but also in their operations. This includes reducing waste, utilizing eco-friendly packaging, and minimizing their environmental footprint as much as possible.
- E. **Attend and Engage in Meetings:** Attend meetings called by the market coordinator, city leaders, or the board, and provide input, and actively engage in discussions regarding market operations, policies, and improvements.
- F. **Support Market Events:** Participate in and support special events or initiatives organized by the market, such as themed market days, seasonal celebrations, or educational workshops aimed at benefiting the community.
- G. **Contribute to a Welcoming Atmosphere:** Create a welcoming and inclusive environment at their stalls, engaging with customers from diverse backgrounds, offering a friendly and informative experience, and contributing positively to the overall ambiance of the market.
- H. **Adhere to Ethical Business Practices:** Operate their businesses ethically and transparently, including fair pricing, honest representation of products, and compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- I. **Regularly Evaluate and Improve:** Continuously evaluate their business practices, product quality, and customer service, seeking avenues for

improvement to meet the evolving needs and preferences of their clientele.

- J. Foster Community Relationships: Actively engage with the local community outside of market hours, building relationships that extend beyond the market to further support and promote the market's values and offerings."
- III. *FM Coordinator.* The Farmers Market Coordinator plays a crucial role in ensuring the smooth operation and success of the market. Their duties can be diverse and may include:
- A. Planning and Coordination: Organizing the logistics of the market, including vendor selection, stall allocation, scheduling, and coordinating with local authorities for permits and compliance.
  - B. Vendor Management: Recruiting, communicating with, and managing vendors. This involves working with city leaders to maintain vendor records, handle applications, collect fees, and ensure compliance with market rules and regulations.
  - C. Facility Management: Overseeing the setup and breakdown of the market, ensuring the availability of necessary infrastructure (such as tents, tables, and utilities), managing the layout, and ensuring a clean and safe environment for vendors and visitors.
  - D. Promotion and Marketing: Developing and implementing marketing strategies to attract visitors, collaborating with local media, managing social media accounts, creating promotional materials, and advertising market events. Most of which will take place on-site during market hours.
  - E. Community Engagement: Building relationships with the local community, partnering with community organizations, organizing educational programs, workshops, or events, and engaging in outreach efforts to promote the market's offerings.
  - F. Conflict Resolution: Addressing any issues or conflicts that arise, at the Farmers Market, among vendors, visitors, or other stakeholders, acting as a mediator, and finding solutions to ensure a harmonious market environment
  - G. Evaluation and Improvement: Collecting feedback from vendors and visitors, conducting surveys, and using data to evaluate the market's performance, implementing improvements based on feedback to enhance

the market's offerings and experience.

- H. Compliance Requirements: Ensuring the market adheres to local regulations and health and safety standards.
- I. Reporting and Communication: Providing regular updates and reports to City Leaders, the board or relevant authorities, communicating market activities, successes, challenges, and future plans effectively.
- J. Collaboration with Stakeholders: Working closely with the board of vendors, city leaders, local businesses, and community groups to align the market's goals with broader community interests and needs.

## **Article VI, Miscellaneous**

- I. *Market Season.*
  - A. The market season will run annually from the beginning of April to the middle of November.
  - B. The market may include skip dates for the following downtown events and festivals: Mebane Dogwood Festival and AutumnFest. The City of Mebane reserves the right to add to this list, assuming it does not exceed 5 weekends.
  - C. Pop-up markets outside of these dates may be offered as interest and availability allow.
- II. *Fiscal Year.* The City of Mebane's fiscal year is July 1 - June 30.

## **Article VII, Amendments**

- I. *Amendments to Guidelines. (TBD)*