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###### **Flea Market Vendor Meeting**

###### **DATE + TIME: February 23rd, 2022, 4:45 pm - 7:00 pm**

###### **LOCATION: Berryessa Flea Market, Garden at the Flea**

**HOST: *City of San José* & Berryessa Flea Market Vendors Association (BFVA)**

**MEETING OVERVIEW**

**Objectives**

* Provide information and updates to Flea Market Vendors
* Get vendors’ reactions and feedback
* Collect vendors’ contact information to establish a direct communication channel
* Explain the details of the Flea Market Advisory Group
* Connect vendors with business support service providers through a resource fair

Staff provided interpretation and small group facilitation in Spanish, Vietnamese, and English. A supervised area for children, and refreshments, were also available.

**Attendance**

Approximately 150 vendors attended the event.

**City Staff Project Team – Presenters:**

* Nanci Klein, Director​
* Blage Zelalich, Acting Deputy Director, Business Development ​
* Lori Severino, Assistant to the City Manager​
* Adolfo Ruelas, Business Development Officer​

**Berryessa Flea Market Vendor Association (BFVA) Team:**

* Roberto Gonzalez, BFVA President
* Mariana Mejia, BFVA VP
* Kaled Escobedo, Secretary​
* Keila Escobedo, Treasure
* Chris Lepe (Notetaker)

**Discussion Groups – Facilitators:**

* Roberto Gonzalez, BFVA President (Spanish Group)
* Mariana Mejia, BFVA VP (Spanish Group)
* Adolfo Ruelas, Business Development Officer (Spanish Group)
* Salvador Alvarez – Office of Economic Development (Spanish Group)
* Nathan Donato-Weinstein, Business Development Officer (English Group)
* Huong Tran, work2future

**City Staff Support:**

* Elisabeth Handler, Public Information Manager
* Cameron Childers, Business Development Officer
* Jiawei Tang, Business Development Officer
* Emily Lipoma, Office of Economic Development
* Nguyen Pham, Office of Economic Development
* Regina Howson, Office of Economic Development Intern
* Alex Mueller, Office of Economic Development Intern
* Alejandra Saucedo, PRNS Staff
* Priscilla Cervantes, PRNS Staff

**Agenda**

4:45  Resource Fair - part 1

5:20  Presentation (5:20 p.m.)​

* Goals
* City Council Direction
* Workplan​
* Next Steps

5:40  ​Group discussions in Spanish, Vietnamese and English

6:20  Resource Fair – part 2

**MEETING SUMMARY**

At the start of the outreach event, vendors were introduced to service providers, resource fair style, and had the opportunity to interact and learn more about the services and products these providers offered.

City staff then presented the meeting’s objectives and a workplan for the transition fund and Advisory Group. Berryessa Flea Market Vendors Association staff also provided context for the meeting and explained how they are working with City staff.

Next, City staff broke the attendees out into small groups, organized by language (Spanish, English, Vietnamese, and Mandarin). During the multilingual small group discussions, meeting participants were encouraged to answer the four questions below related to the staff presentation.

* Do you have questions about the Advisory Group process?
* Are you interested in being part of the stakeholder group to draft the Advisory Group charter?
* What are your thoughts about the City’s goals, workplan, and spending plan for the initial $500,000 of the transition fund?
* What types of technical assistance would you find most helpful?

After the presentation and Small Group discussions, vendors had additional opportunity to talk to the service providers.

**Feedback: Key Themes**

Many vendors expressed concerns or questions about the following: The Advisory Group role and formation process; the current status of the Flea Market and timeline for potential closure; transition fund goals, size, and timing; City assistance for flea vendors; and recent parking/rent increases.

Vendors also shared some ideas/solutions for the market's future, such as a multi-level Flea Market on the 5-acre site designated by the new re-zoning, and marketing/branding to promote their business.

See below for photos of the notes taken during the group discussions. The notes are also transcribed here:

1. **Spanish Group Notes/Feedback - Salvador Alvarez & Roberto Gonzalez Group**

* ***What are the qualifications to join the Advisory Group?***
  + Vendor/business owner at the Flea Market
  + Still working out the details

* ***Why will we have an Advisory Group when we have an association?***
  + It is important to have the association to organize vendors and efforts, but we still need a variety of businesses at the Advisory Group table to speak for themselves

* ***Will everything that was voted on by council be respected?***
  + Yes.

* ***What is the timeline process?***
  + By summer a consultant will be hired
  + Property owners are beginning to talk to developers
  + By fall the Advisory Group will be started
* ***What is a consultant?***
  + A paid organization/company to assist the City.
  + Professional with experience working on projects like the Flea Market

* ***Will there be time to transition to a new site? What will happen during the construction process to move to another place?***
  + The earliest the vendors would be impacted is 2024; but a closure could come later
  + There are lots of possibilities. for example, if housing is developed more quickly, the Flea Market could occupy a temporary location on-site before transitioning to another location or model
  + The association is really prioritizing the search for a different site.

* ***A lot of people think the Flea Market is already closed. Is there a way to get the word out that the market is still going?***
  + Good idea!
  + It has been a year since Univision announced the Flea Market was closing. How can we boost our message that it is still open?  It was national news and people from other states think it is closed.
  + News media needs to do a better job explaining the Flea Market is still open and what the process will be.
  + Media needs to be clear that the market is still open; but a perception exists that it is closing
  + We can use social media to get the word out.
  + One vendor shared that he created business cards listing his social media and contact info to stay close to his customers, and this has worked for him.
  + Jesus Flores, Latino Business Foundation, shared that he has helped many vendors through his logo design course
* ***Has the City spoken with the owners about the parking rates?***
  + No.  The City was unaware the property owners were raising parking rates.

* ***Who wants to be part of the Advisor Group?  11 hands raised.***

1. **Spanish Group Notes/Feedback – Adolfo Ruelas & Regina Howson Group:**

***Main Questions/Comments:***

* What are the purpose and duties of the council and the advisory group?
* Will the Flea Market stay in San Jose?
* What happens if we don’t find a place before 2024?
* Can the $7 million investment go towards making five-acre market here multi-level?
* Part of the San Jose Flea Market is the outdoor aspect
* What are we doing with the money right now?
* It`s been a year and no progress
* What does “explore possible sites” entail exactly
* The seven million is not enough for all vendors
* Meetings like this seems like politics

***Desired Resources:***

* Stop parking cost hike
* Stop rent increases

***The Main Need:*** have a new Flea Market location

1. **English Group Notes/Feedback - Nathan Donato-Weinstein & Emily Lipoma**

***Main Questions/Comments:***

* How frequent will future meetings be? Better and earlier notification of meetings would be helpful.
* Regularly scheduled meetings would be helpful because then they can be anticipated.
* When will the vendors be updated on the results of the timeline?
* Vendors would like to see announcements of future meetings on the Flea Market website.
* The vendors are looking for information on key milestones: what will the closing date be? (They need to know for decision making.)
* The vendors would like to be able to make a plan for alternatives, plan A vs plan B (relocate or not) and have resources set up for both/either.
* There isn’t necessarily consensus between the vendors and the vendor association. The vendor association doesn’t necessarily represent everyone.
* Question: Will the future of the Flea Market be here or somewhere else? And if it’s elsewhere, will it be economically feasible for vendors to still operate? (Will it still be affordable?)
* What will it look like? Will the same customers come?
* Why not relocate to the fairgrounds?
* What is the City’s involvement in negotiating for the fairgrounds?
* If there’s only 5 acres, how is it decided who’s a vendor there and who isn’t?
* What’s the number of people on the advisory group? What is the set up and application process?
* For vendors who can’t fit on the 5 acres, what happens to them? Do they get compensated?
* What’s the money going to? Want to make sure funds aren’t eaten by a consultant.
* Could the City send out a quarterly report with updates? Or do a newsletter? (website is difficult)
* Why wouldn’t the development be in phases?
* Concern: that buying and selling the land could go quickly. The unknown timing and phasing is frustrating.
* Customer traffic has declined. Customers think it’s closed, no/low advertising done.

***What do you need?***

* Parking and rent costs decrease customers; need to get customers in.
* Loans? No, vendors can’t pay them back if not selling in the future.
* Assistance with future constrictions on vendors
* Marketing support (currently it’s a long process, and a lot of customers think the Flea Market is closed.)

**Vietnamese Group Notes/Feedback - Huong Tran Group & Nguyen Pham:**

***Main Questions/Comments:***

* The Vietnamese-speaking vendors expressed concerns about the market parking fees.
* The Vietnamese-speaking vendors had questions about the purpose of the meeting. They stated, “if you already plan to close the market, why host this meeting? Just let us know the timeline.”
* The Vietnamese-speaking vendors suggested that there will be grants and not loans made available for them.

1. **Mandarin Group Notes/Feedback - Jiawei Tang:**

***Main Questions/Comments:***

* The Mandarin speaking vendors were not aware of this meeting until the day of the meeting. They also did not know the purpose of the meeting
* They expressed concern over the parking fee.
* They expressed the fear of being kicked out at any time. One of the vendors provided an example of the Flea Market sending staff to look through her entire stock of goods for copyright violations.
* They were not interested in loans, or to expand their business. They just want to stay in business at the Flea Market.
* They want to be in the loop for future communications. They asked for Mandarin notifications, or translation services.