



Staff Report

Date: May 14, 2015
To: Mayor Brekhus and Town Council
From: Dianne Thompson, Interim Town Manager
Subject: Farmers Market Proposal

Recommendation:

Council consider approval of the Farmers Market proposal submitted by Marin Community Farm Stands for May through October 2015.

Background and discussion:

At the request of a Council member, the Town Manager requested proposals for a Farmers Market from two vendors, James Baum, President of Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA, and Lynn Bagley, Director of Golden Gate Farmers Market Association, (the former Farmers Market manager). Only one vendor (James Baum) submitted a proposal (see attached).

The written proposal from Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA provides a weekly Farm Stand in Ross from noon to 7:30 pm on Thursdays, from late May through October of this year. The Farm Stand is an aggregation of various vendors, and is different than a traditional Farmers Market which normally includes a number of different vendors on-site. As an aggregator, Mr. Baum represents a number of different vendors and sells their products. The proposal identifies a portion of the Common along Lagunitas Road as the desired location due to shade, visibility and the likely availability of electrical power. Mr. Baum would propose to conduct only this Farm Stand in Ross.

Fiscal, resource and timeline impacts:

The Town would add an electrical power supply to an existing street light pole at minimal cost. This power would be utilized by Mr. Baum to provide power to his truck which is used for storage of perishable items such as meat, cheese and seafood.

Alternative actions:

Reject the proposal and direct staff to work with the former Farmers Market vendor.

Environmental review (if applicable):

N/A

Attachments:

- Proposal from Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA



MARIN COMMUNITY FARM STANDS & CSA
PO BOX 134 - SAN GERONIMO, CALIFORNIA 94963
(415) 497-9496

4/30/2015

Dianne Thompson
Interim Town Manager
Town of Ross
PO Box 320
31 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard
Ross, California 94957

Dear Dianne,

At your request, Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA (MCFS) is submitting our proposal to the Ross Town Council. Our concept calls for operation of the Ross Organic Farm Stand & CSA at the Commons on the grass in the wooded area across from the Ross Post Office. The Farm Stand would be open every Thursday 12:00 PM - 7:30 PM May thru October.

As you know, MCFS is an aggregator and creates Food Hubs throughout Marin County at its farm stands. What this means is that we represent over 40 local and regional organic farmers, ranchers and artisan producers and bring only certified organic produce to market under one farm stand. The advantages are many, but the most important ones are high quality certified organic produce from Marin growers, a small footprint in set-up and teardown, and we service communities that are too small for a Certified Farmers Markets. We propose the Ross Organic Farm Stand operate with six canopies but may in the future expand the number of canopies to further accommodate the Town Of Ross while at the same time minimize impact on the community. We hope you and the Ross Town Council will support our vision by allowing MCFS to operate the Ross Organic Farm Stand & CSA as a weekly community market. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
James J. Baum

President MCFS
james@communityfarmstands.com



MARIN COMMUNITY FARM STANDS & CSA
PO BOX 134 - SAN GERONIMO, CALIFORNIA 94963
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PROPOSAL

Ross Organic Farm Stand

April 30, 2015

Presented to:

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Presented by:

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Executive Summary

Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA (MCFS), originally established in 2003, has for the past 13 years brought the bounty of local organic produce and artisan products to various towns, community centers, and private organizations throughout Marin County. We currently operate seasonal markets in the towns of San Anselmo and Forest Knolls. Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA represents the cooperative efforts of more than 40 Marin County organic farmers, producers and artisans from the communities of Bolinas, Point Reyes, Inverness, Nicasio, Petaluma, Tomales, Lagunitas and San Anselmo. The variety of their produce and products is an excellent reflection of our local micro climate and speaks of the local expertise of family run farms. Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA also brings the message of sustainability into the communities that it serves. We strive to offer the Marin County harvest but when certain staple products are not available in Marin, we go to the next closest farm within our bioregion, thereby weaving the growing communal web that unites local farmers and local tables.

The proposed Ross Organic Farm Stand & CSA uses the aggregation model for marketing sustainable farm fresh local organic produce and products. We maintain the highest standards of quality and local food production. This model allows for an extremely diverse farm stand to come to market without the impact and carbon footprint of many farmers trucking produce onto the site. The Ross Organic Farm Stand & CSA will aggregate produce and products from local organic farms while maintaining market pricing consistent with the agricultural industry. A seasonal marketplace under one Farm Stand will represent many local Marin organic farms. "Many under one."

MCFS will have a low impact on daily life in the Ross Community because there will not be multiple farmers that require setting up, breaking down, parking and offloading of transport vehicles and trucks. MCFS is licensed through the California Department of Food and Agriculture and is regulated by Marin County Weights and Measures, the Agricultural Commissioner and Environmental Health Services. Our Farm Stands consists of a small number of canopies and several tables to offer a one stop shop for our customers. Delivery of produce, which would occur in the late morning, is always swift and only involves 1 to 2 five minute stops as we manage to carpool the produce from different farms. MCFS only needs one parking spot for our refrigerated truck.

Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA brings to the Ross Community:

1. **Vision** - MCFS will transform a small area across the street from the Ross Post Office into a Community Cultural Event.
2. **Goodwill** - MCFS has an excellent reputation in the community.
3. **Logo & Branding** - The MCFS logo is readily recognizable, unique and consistent with the vision of pure wholesome food availability. Our logo brands the concept of seasonal, local, organic.
4. **Email Marketing** - MCFS has developed a method of generating an accurate list of people who by choice want to follow the Farm Stands throughout Marin County. This method uses internet technology. People enter their own email address and information directly into an MCFS database. This process already exists at our current Organic Farm Stands and we have in place 1800 subscribers.
5. **Food Industry Expertise**
6. **All insurance and permits required under law**
7. **A CSA program** to match the theme of seasonal, local, organic. Additional information on MCFS and the aggregation business model can be found at our website www.communityfarmstands.com

Proposal for Organic Farm Stand

MCFS proposes to operate a local community market at a site across the street from the Town Of Ross Post Office. It will feature the finest local organic produce and products, baked goods, local artisan foods, natural and pasture raised grass-fed meats (beef, pork, lamb) and wild, line-caught locally sourced seafood. People respond positively to local. MCFS has a 13 year business history in Marin County and over 30 business references. MCFS is an aggregator of produce from these local organic producers.

In order to prepare a successful market in Ross, MCFS would need the support of the Ross Town Council as follows:

Signage – A-frames placed in both directions along Sir Francis Drake leading up to the intersection of Drake and Lagunitas Road. These signs will give both traffic directions ample notice of The Farm Stand's location and where to turn in. I have signs for this purpose but need permission to deploy them with balloons displayed on market days.

Power supply – a single standard 110 volt 3 prong outlet 20 amp capacity for one line. If this proves difficult, use of a generator will be required.

Running Water - Availability of running water is preferable, however, we can bring water in.

Proposal for CSA

MCFS also proposes to establish a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) which is an alternative, locally based model of agriculture and food distribution. CSA members or subscribers pay at the onset of the growing season for a share of the anticipated harvest; once harvesting begins, they receive weekly shares of vegetables and fruit, in a vegetable box, and also sometimes herbs, cut flowers, honey, eggs, dairy products and meat as well. Shares in the CSA will be marketed to the existing MCFS email list together with new inquiries from the Ross Community. MCFS currently has 1800 email addresses from Marin County residents. These people have all shopped at one of our farm stands and agreed to receive timely email information from MCFS. Presently, the information consists of available produce and its source. We intend to publish additional information about nutrition and recipes for all produce sold at the Ross Community Farm Stand. The CSA process calls for assembly of the shares at either an MCFS facility or at the Farm Stand site. Customers will pick up their paid in advance share box each week.

Existing business relationships with local organic producers and artisans

More information about MCFS local, regional and artisan producers, can be found at <http://www.communityfarmstands.com/producers.html>



Local Producers & Artisans

1. Star Route Farms
2. Paradise Valley Produce
3. Gospel Flat Farm
4. Chileno Valley Ranch
5. Cow Girl Creamery
6. Nicasio Valley Cheese Co
7. Mt Barnabe Farm
8. Cow Track Ranch
9. Sartori Farms
10. Fairfax Fresh
11. La Tercera
12. Giacomini Dairy
13. Little Organic Farms
14. Worsley Farms
15. Marin Roots Farm
16. McEvoy Ranch
17. Brickmaiden Breads
18. Hog Island Oyster Co.
19. Red Hill Farms
20. County Line Harvest
21. Redwood Hill Farm
22. Lunny Family Farms
23. Drakes Bay Oyster Co
24. Big Mesa Farm
25. Cypress Grove



Regional Producers

1. Full Belly Farm
2. Twin Girls Farms
3. Swanton Berry Farm
4. Hidden Star Orchards
5. Solano Mushroom Farm

Local Artisans

1. Brickmaiden Breads
2. Papermill Pies
3. Bonnie Bee And Company

Hours of Operation

12:00 PM – 7:30 PM

MCFS requires hours of operation longer than 4 hours at any given farm stand. All MCFS Organic Farm Stands operate for 8 hours for a viable farm stand. Since this is an aggregation model the produce is purchased and because the margins are small all produce must be sold for a farm stand to be sustainable. It is for this reason that providing a longer market day will allow enough commerce to fulfill this requirement. We would arrive as early as 10:00 am for set up and be open for business by noon.

Seasonal Operation

The proposed market will operate seasonally, from May thru October. Availability of produce and products will determine exact dates.

Mix of Producers, Artisans, Farmers using Aggregation

MCFS will through the aggregation process combine organic produce from local and regional farms and present them under one farm stand. Produce that is not certified organic will not be offered at MCFS farm stands. Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA will be in a position to bring a full farm stand featuring grass-fed meats and wild line-caught seafood under one manager on Thursdays, operating at the Ross Commons shaded area across from the Town Of Ross Post Office.

Existing MCFS Markets 2015 Schedule

Fridays

San Anselmo Organic Farm Stand

11:00 AM - 7:30 PM

San Anselmo Town Hall

525 San Anselmo Avenue

San Anselmo, CA 94960

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday

The Farm Stand

11:00 AM – 7:30 PM

6700 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

Forest Knolls CA 94933

Contracting experience with Marin County Municipalities

In recent years MCFS has held discussions with elected officials in the towns of Mill Valley, Tiburon, Novato and San Anselmo. In some towns we have been contacted by their Chamber of Commerce (Tiburon). In San Anselmo, we have direct contact with town officials, managers, and council members. MCFS has presented before the town councils in Ross and San Anselmo with favorable outcomes. We have successfully negotiated the use of A-Frame signs to promote the Ross Organic Farm Stand at the Marin Art & Garden Center. MCFS Farm Stands are viewed as community cultural events and received permission to display such signs. In 2006, MCFS presented before the San Anselmo town council. We were sponsored by The San Anselmo Quality of Life Commission to create the San Anselmo Organic Farm Stand every Friday on the town lawn. We presented again in 2007 and received a one-year contract. In 2008 MCFS negotiated a three-year contract and another three-year contract was awarded in 2011 and a third consecutive three-year contract was just awarded in 2014.

References

Warren Weber

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MCFS Management and Key Employees and Contractors

James J. Baum – Founder and President MCFS

James is the CEO of Marin Community Farm Stands & CSA; a Marin County based organic farm stand and CSA that sells the finest produce & products that are seasonal, organic & locally grown. James has been in the food industry for 12 years and brings extensive experience in food transportation, preparation, marketing, sales, production, aggregation, and redistribution through the various communities in Marin County. He has extensive experience working with the public. Recently, he has championed the preservation and continued sustainability of the local sea food industry at Drakes Bay. James specializes in using technology to bring a competitive advantage to his marketing. More information about James Baum can be found at the MCFS website.

<http://www.communityfarmstands.com/index.html>

Les H. Baum - Vice President MCFS

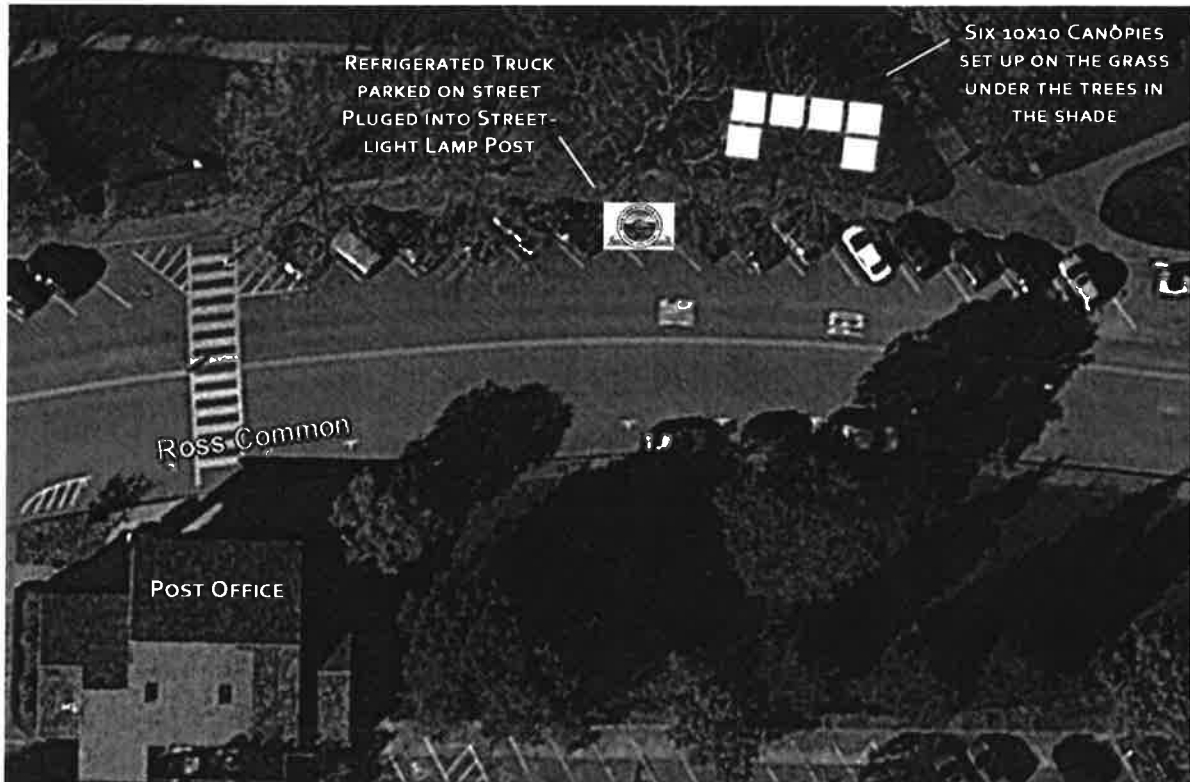
Les is a senior business analyst with 30 years business experience in the financial services industry. He has extensive experience in marketing, business software development and technology use for marketing and sales. Les is the database administrator for MCFS, publishes the weekly newsletters and blogs, and supports the daily operations of MCFS.

Marketing Strategy

Sales and marketing is one of the most important functions of a local marketplace as it addresses the core challenge of the local organic food industry—creating market access for growers while meeting market demand for consumers. MCFS has the sales and marketing experience to implement this vision. MCFS uses internet technology in marketing its own farm stands. This process includes a sign-up feature to receive news of the marketplace. MCFS publishes produce and product availability for its daily markets electronically through email and blog. This insures that only people who request such information will receive it. We do not buy or rent lists or conduct spam type email campaigns. MCFS has a comprehensive website and Facebook presence. Print media advertising will feature the Farm Stand together with the message of seasonal, local, and organic. Approved A-frame signs, road banners, Internet and social networking are all required for a successful marketing strategy.

Location of Ross Organic Farm Stand & CSA

The location of the proposed Ross Organic Farm Stand & CSA will be across the street from the Town Of Ross US Post Office.



This view shows the proposed Ross Organic Farm Stand & CSA located across the street from the Town Of Ross US Post Office. The smaller footprint of the farm stand will allow for normal parking and traffic. MCFS asks the Town Of Ross to make available electric power at this site by taping into existing electrical in the lamp post and create a 110 / 20 amp plug.

MCFS in Marin County



Figure 1 Tamalpais Marquis used to advertise the San Anselmo Organic Farm Stand



Figure 2 MCFS refrigerated truck is easily recognized everywhere

Appendix

Links to MCFS website

<http://www.communityfarmstands.com>

<http://www.communityfarmstands.com/blog.html>

<http://www.communityfarmstands.com/san-anselmo.html>

<http://www.communityfarmstands.com/farm-stand-tv.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Marin-Community-Farm-Stands-CSA/648938848570032>