

CITY OF HAMILTON

MOTION

General Issues Committee: June 3, 2020

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR J. FARR.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR

Hamilton Farmers' Market Governance Model

WHEREAS, the Hamilton Farmers' Market Corporation and its Board of Directors was established in January of 2015;

WHEREAS, there has been a significant increase in competition to the Market with the opening of a major grocery retail store in the vicinity;

WHEREAS, competitors are generally open significantly longer hours, more days of the week, and have ample convenient, free parking;

WHEREAS, online grocery shopping has added an additional form of competition aided by the large-scale marketing efforts of major retailers;

WHEREAS, despite best efforts by the Board and staff, the volume of traffic and shoppers in the Market has declined and many vendors report that their sales have fallen steadily;

WHEREAS, while the City subsidy for the Market has been reduced during this period, due largely to the generous sponsorship of Meridian Credit Union, and that sponsorship agreement expires in approximately 2 ½ years;

WHEREAS, after the first 5 years of the current governance model, many of the vendor businesses are not trending in a positive direction; therefore, a governance model review has recently been initiated by staff to research comparator market models with board or advisory board structures;

WHEREAS, the Hamilton Farmers' Market is the only retail business operated by the City of Hamilton;

WHEREAS, the City has realized strong positive financial and community benefits as a result of outsourcing the operations of other non-core assets such as the airport, the

convention centre, the arena, and the concert hall, to operators whose core business is to run these types of facilities;

WHEREAS, the continuing revitalization of the city and the growth of both commercial and residential properties may lend itself to a qualified third-party operator being interested in operating the Market on behalf of the City;

WHEREAS, the Market vendors might benefit from a third-party operator that would bring proven consumer marketing capabilities, which in turn should bring more shoppers to the Market, and has demonstrated experience in facilities management, customer service, and operations; and,

WHEREAS, the City may see a sustainable levy reduction, and the broader community may experience an enhanced shopping experience;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That staff be directed to issue a Request for Proposals in April 2020, and a report back to the General Issues Committee no later than the end of June 2020 with those results; and,
- (b) That staff be directed to utilize the governance model review research that is currently under way, to inform the Request for Proposal scope.