

January 11, 2021

To the Market Corporation and to the Mayor and Council of the City of Hamilton:

I regretfully submit my resignation as Director and Chair of the Hamilton Farmers' Market Board in protest of an avoidable crisis forced upon the Hamilton Farmers' Market during the pandemic.

The crisis was twice avoidable. The first opportunity was for Council to provide a substitute of the Federal CECRA program so that the Market Corporation could replicate 6 months of rent reductions that commercial landlords provided under CECRA to small businesses who experienced financial hardship due to COVID-19. A second fall-back opportunity was for the Market Corporation to use the Farmers' Market Reserve Account to accommodate just 3 months of rent reductions during the worst part of the lockdown and restricted market access that resulted in a 75% drop in customer counts.

The first opportunity would have required modest one-time funding that surely could have been accommodated within Hamilton's projected operating surplus or from COVID-related relief funds provided to Hamilton from other governments. Alternatively, the second opportunity would have been free to taxpayers since it would have used funds accumulated from a private sponsorship.

I am the longest serving board member of 6 years, with my tenure starting as Secretary-Treasurer when I co-signed the Market Corporation's acceptance of an operating agreement with the City of Hamilton for the corporation to self-govern with the support of City Council and staff.

After engaging with 6000 emails, 1050 working documents, and participating in 68 of 70 board meetings that cumulatively considered 590 meeting documents, I conclude this volunteer position grateful for the opportunity to have served the Market Corporation and the people that its marketplace brings together throughout the year.

Hamilton's quality of life and sense of place is boosted by the fresh and friendly offerings at its central market. This market brings together the best local and global foods and flowers and crafts, in one convenient location that would be the equivalent to an entire BIA shopping district. The Hamilton Farmers' Market provides year-round sustenance to a broad socioeconomic and cultural spectrum. The Market offers a diversity of products from a diversity of proprietors, from the longest-running family business in the city to younger ventures from newcomers and established residents. Its mix of short and long supply chains provide resilience and food security, while its proximity allows shoppers to minimize their carbon footprint. The Market is a hotspot of vitality within a precarious landscape.

The market is at its best when it is governed by those who have the lived experience of selling or shopping in the market. I encourage you to select a dedicated market shopper to fill my vacancy.

Sincerely,



Eric Miller