



April 28, 2025

Sole Voting Member of the Hamilton Farmers' Market Corporation
71 Main Street West
Hamilton ON L8P 4Y5

Thank you for agreeing to give the Hamilton Farmers' Market Board of Directors an opportunity to make recommendations related to the outcome of the final Governance and Operational Review conducted by Optimus SBR on behalf of the City of Hamilton.

In general, the HFM Board found the suggestions and recommendations positive and feels things are moving in a good overall direction at the HFM. The addition of many new Board members and a renewed focus on governance have helped the HFM Board to overcome some of the challenges it faced in the previous term of Council. We're also starting to rebound after the height of the pandemic and vendors in the market are feeling good about the direction things are headed in.

That being said, we know there's much to be done and a new governance model is needed in order for us to be successful.


The HFM Board reviewed the documents provided by Optimus SBR and has the following recommendations that we're asking be implemented as part of the final report and recommendations from City staff to Council -

- (1) Ensure vendors still have a place on the HFM Board** - we recommend creating two non voting seats for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Vendors Association on the HFM Board
 - Vendors said it was important to them not to lose their voice on the HFM Board as they have a unique perspective about its operations and are often first to learn about issues that may require the Board's attention or intervention
 - Vendors recognized there are times when there may be a conflict of interest so non voting roles would work best to minimize these conflicts

- (2) **Create an adequate number of HFM Board Committees** - we recommend having an Operations Committee, at minimum
- We think an Operations Committee would allow more informal participation from vendors interested in the day to day challenges at the HFM without having to take up time at Board meetings to discuss these issues in detail
 - We recommend a member of the Board act as Chair of each Committee
- (3) **Allow the HFM Board to develop questions and participate in the interview process for recruiting new members** - we recommend letting the HFM Board write the main questions that will be asked and to let a member of the HFM Board participate in the screening process
- We think it's important for new members of the HFM Board to have a demonstrable connection to the HFM (e.g. regular shopper, shared values, can articulate their connection to the market and reason for wanting to join)
 - We recognize that the Selection Committee is currently made up of only Councillors but hope there can be a way to open the process up to include at least one member of the HFM Board in creating questions and assisting in screening applicants
- (4) **Ensure all HFM Staff continue to be employees of the City of Hamilton** - we recommend this to ensure they have access to good benefits and pensions
- We recognize this may be tricky, given the new structure, but think it's essential to ensure that HFM Staff continue to have access to good benefits and pensions as this will help the HFM to better retain and recruit
- (5) **Develop an implementation plan for the recommendations put forward by Optimus SBR as quickly as possible** - we recommend retaining Optimus SBR to complete this work rather than asking City staff to take it on
- We think this will speed up the process of completing an implementation plan as Optimus SBR has been doing this work for years and is the one who made the recommendations in the first place

- There are not currently any additional City resources available to do this work, which means it will have to be done in addition to someone's current workload
- (6) Continue to appoint two members of Council to the HFM Board** - we recommend continuing the current practice of appointing two members of Council to the Board
- We think this will help with continuity and issues with respect to funding for the HFM during the annual budget process

We appreciate you considering our recommendations and look forward to the Governance and Operational Review being implemented as soon as possible so we can start to benefit from its impact. We know there are many changes needed to continue to make the HFM an asset that all Hamiltonians are proud of and we're eager to get started.



Cameron Kroetsch
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