

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND COUNCIL

**FROM: DIANNE HOWARD, ARTISAN PLAZA FARMERS MARKET
COORDINATOR**

SUBJECT: One Farmers Market Location at Artisan Plaza, a Combined Market

DATE: May 4, 2020

BACKGROUND

I was contacted by the Executive Director of the Minnesota Farmers Market Association, Kathy Zeman, yesterday. She informed me that in the Twin City area there have been some legal actions taken against both a market manager and a couple of markets located on City property due to conflicts arising in part from the Covid 19 pandemic. The last time that Council discussed the two farmers markets it was agreed upon to retain two separate locations. I am truly concerned about continuing two separate locations on the same day for the farmer's markets for a few reasons.

It is impossible for a market manager to efficiently oversee two markets in two separate locations on the same day. Being able to effectively manage the markets has never been more important than it is now with the Covid 19 virus.

The Downtown Farmers Market has also had safety concerns because of its location and the extreme congestion that exists in the City parking lot. This is not a location that is copacetic for the needed safety precautions that should be taken to ensure the safety of our customers, vendors, and the City against any claims.

The downtown City lot is zoned B-1, Central Business District, and does not allow for Farmer's Market use. Artisan Plaza is zoned B-2, Highway Business District and allows for outdoor sales under 152.648 (I).

The Artisan Plaza Farmers Market location is currently putting into place a sound safety protocol as recommended by the Minnesota Farmers Market Association and has welcomed all vendors to combine at one location at 1233 4th Street S., due to safety and virus concerns.

I truly believe in the food program in Cannon Falls and have worked with it for the past seven years, acquiring all of the required training and certifications needed to lead the food aggregation program, the farm to school program and farmers markets legally while meeting all safety standards.

The Artisan Plaza Farmers Market is licensed with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture as a food aggregation business, (a license held under our Cannon Falls EDA umbrella), and is further supported by Renewing the Countryside, Compeer, South Eastern Minnesota Initiatives Foundation, SHIP, and the MN Extension Office.

RECOMMENDATION

I respectfully request a motion approving the combination of the Artisan Plaza Farmers Market and the Downtown Farmers Market at the 1233 4th Street S. location in Cannon Falls.