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IATP Applauds Minneapolis City Council Support for New Farmers Markets

Streamlined Process Makes it Easier to Start Small Farmers Markets

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minneapolis City Council approved a provision this week that would make it easier to start a small, local farmers market in the city. The proposal reduces the city's regulatory and licensing fees associated with starting a market and expedites the processing time for approval.

“We have been working over the last several years to organize small farmers markets in low-income communities in Minneapolis that have lacked access to fresh, healthy food like fruits and vegetables,” said Mark Muller, director of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's Environment and Agriculture program. “With the streamlined process, Minneapolis has a great opportunity to promote healthy eating and make fresh produce available near busy areas like churches, community centers, and other community organizations.”

Specifically, the measure would reduce the initial cost of starting a farmers market from \$420 with a \$159 annual fee to \$154, with no annual fee. And it reduces the City's processing time to days rather than weeks. The measure applies only to smaller farmers markets of five vendors or less and they must sell locally-grown produce. The measure goes into effect immediately.

After much delay and struggle this year with fees and deciphering forms, Sabathani Community Center in South Central Minneapolis opened a small local farmers market this July. Art Serotoff, Health and Wellness Manager at the center, is excited to see this process simplified, which will help other similar markets grow in communities of need. “Our community has no other source of fresh produce,” said Serotoff. “We have seen too many great ideas come and go in a heartbeat. The community wants to see things become established. This is particularly acute in poor neighborhoods. Removing red tape for making it happen is a huge advance.”

IATP would like to thank City Council members Cam Gordon, Robert Lilligren, and Elizabeth Glidden who helped to usher the proposal through the council.

The City of Minneapolis currently has 15 farmers markets throughout the city. You can read more about IATP's efforts to start small local farmers markets in Minneapolis at: <http://www.agobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=89106>

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works globally to promote resilient family farms, healthy communities and ecosystems through research and education, science and technology, and advocacy. <http://www.iatp.org>.