



## 10 Tips for Connecting With Local Officials

Whether you're planning a Farmers Market Week tour with local officials and dignitaries to highlight your amazing farmers and their contributions to local community and economy, or requesting your local government issue a Farmers Market Week proclamation, the first steps are making and nurturing those connections with the powers that be.

- 1) Read up! Google your city, if your market is officially within a city's limits; or your county, if your market is officially in an unincorporated section of the county.
- 2) Get a handle on the structure of your city – or your county; each will have its own website and that's where you will find the most accurate information.
- 3) If you are in a city, MOST LIKELY it will have a mayor. If you are in a county, MOST LIKELY there will be a county "manager". Whichever it is, make sure that you are including communication to either of these people.
- 4) Contact information will be on websites.
- 5) On the city's website, find the list of City Councilors (one who sits on a city or town council). These are elected officials. Each may have a Facebook page and/or a website where you can learn a little bit about their interests. Find the one who comes closest to understanding the value to the community of your farmers market.
- 6) If you are not in a city, but in an unincorporated part of the county, on the county's website, you will find a list of County Commissioners (one who sits on a county council). The titles for these people may vary, but you will note they are elected, typically representing a geographical district or region of the county. Find the one who represents your district – the one who has been put there by your community.
- 7) These people – either the city councilmember that best represents your interests, and the mayor – or the county councilmember who was elected by your district, and the county manager/executive – are your local go-to officials.
- 8) Use email, phone or mail to contact them. They will all have staff that helps with communications; these are also all good people with whom to connect.
- 9) When writing or speaking, be specific and organized in your request for action to be taken or even considered. An in-person meeting for one half hour can offer time for your official to understand your needs and can have a long-lasting effect on a productive relationship.
- 10) Be fearless! These people are elected officials; they are accountable to you, your vendors and your customers.