Topic: 2026 MSD Farmers Market and The Proposed Closing of Sandusky Street

I want to go on record and state that although closing the middle block of Sandusky Street may sound like an exciting idea on the surface, in practice it is very debatable that it will be a good change for the downtown merchants and restaurants that are affected by the street closing.

For example: The Hamburger Inn has a strong Saturday morning breakfast crowd and many of their customers are older with limited mobility. As a result they park almost exclusively on Sandusky in the middle block. These older Vets and residents will effectively be shut out of one of their cherished activities for the duration of the farmers market season.

It also takes time to both close and then re-open the street, so access for the prime lunch hour crowd is also questionable for all the restaurants on the block. In addition to this, most door dashers and people who pick-up to-go food for themselves will not be able to do so during the street closing until nearly 1:00 PM. This revenue is crucial to many restaurants and can account for up to 30% of sales.

As a retailer I would normally be in favor of a closed street, however because the city doesn't have the money to close the street properly 23 times as they would for the Delaware Arts Festival, they have devised a cheaper layout that creates a major barrier between the farmers market customers and the stores/restaurants. There will only be a center walkway down Sandusky with the back of the vendor booths facing the storefronts, plus an added barrier of parked vendor cars according to the current plan.

In addition our city will also now incur a NEW expense every week for closing the block and since there's only limited tax revenue available, something else will see a cut to make the finances work.

It should be noted that this plan was implemented without any real discussion with the business owners who would be affected. Our first notification was an email from MSD after it had already been approved. A public hearing, a business survey, an economic impact study prior would have gone a long way to shape a more reasonable alternative. (FYI: I have worked out several better options and would love to share these with staff and council ASAP to help prevent the economic harm of the current proposal.)

I would urge council to rescind approval and postpone the street closings until a better, more inclusive plan can be formulated. It is an important part of councils responsibility to promote the welfare of the downtown businesses, not create inadvertent harm. I would urge you to consider this an emergency and act immediately, so there is sufficient time to work out an acceptable alternative for the 2026 season.

Respectfully,

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