

**MINUTES**  
**MOBILE FOOD VENDORS CITIZEN ADVISORY GROUP MEETING**  
**1-30-14**

**Citizens in Attendance:**

Adams, Tonya	Hudgins, Brenda	
Beard, Natalie	Johnson, Candice	Robertson, Nancy
Bowling, Michael	Johnson, Gwendolyn	Robertson, Robbie
Boyer, Doreen	Kizetschmer, Gus	Saldarriaga, German
Braulio	Lance, Perry	Scherrep, Laura
Bryon, Meredith	Langenbaches, Welsey	Seeley, Brian
Caudle, George	Langurn, Diane	Sims, Kenneth
Connors, Kevin	Martino, Ken	St. Clair, Duncan
Crisan, Kelli	McLendon, Terry	Steindel, Denise
Dalivek, Joel	Merisier, Emma	Stockholm, Brian
Davis, Jeffry	Monce, Debra	Travis, Janelle
Doyle, George	Oakley, Kenny	Travner, Karen
Fergusson, Russell	Oakman, John	Travnerm, Dave
Forrest, Charles	Outwater, Fisk	Wright, Shannon
Guffey, Shawn	Payerle, Lix	Zender, Katie
H, Frances	Pozos, Pedro	
Hegnauer, Dave	Rivera, Avro	
Henderson, Lynn	Robertson, Davin	

**Staff Present:**

Katrina Young, Planning Department	Laura Harmon, Planning Department	Sandra Montgomery, Planning Department
Barry Mosley, Planning Department	Marci Sigmon, Planning Department	Sonda Kennedy, Planning Department
Donald Moore, Neighborhood & Business Services – Code Enforcement	Pat Barker, Police Department	Gulka, Edward, Police Department
Jessica Perry, Mecklenburg County Health Department		

Ms. Katrina Young welcomes everyone to the meeting at 6:06 p.m. She thanked everyone for participating. She asked everyone to introduce themselves to the group.

Ms. Young reviewed the agenda, the roles of the citizen advisory group (CAG) members, staff and the Planning Commission. The purpose of this CAG group is to explore current mobile food vendor regulations and possibly modify the regulations that allow the use in Charlotte.

Ms. Young noted that in 2006, mobile food vendors and City Code Enforcement staff raised concerns about the current standards regulating the use. In 2007, a citizen advisory group was formed to discuss the issues and concerns. The stakeholders met three times, and at the conclusion, a text amendment was filed and approved in late 2008. Today, there is a desire to revisit the regulations. There has also been interest in clustering the use in some locations.

Ms. Young reviewed the current regulations and definition, which is found in the PowerPoint presentation.

She asked if the definition was sufficient or if anything needed to be added. The focus of concerns identified by staff fall into four categories: locations, operating hours, proximity to neighborhoods and secondary impacts. Ms. Young divided everyone into three groups to discuss the pros and cons of these issues. Each group will pick a recorder and spokesperson to report back to the entire group as a whole.

The groups reported back:

**Group #1:**

- Locations:
  - Want to be closer together for events like food truck Friday, chow down.
  - Neighborhoods like clustering; others like the 400' separation. Closer can result in trash, prostitution, litter, noise.
  - Closer to neighborhoods brings events to neighborhoods and benefits families.
  - Center City Partners has their own regulations. How come food trucks can't do this?
  - Clustering results in more exposure, more people, and neighborhood involvement.
  - 400' separation should be reduced on commercial streets.
  - 400' separation is too great for special events. In Dallas, the Convention Center had a clustering of mobile food trucks available for conventioners to eat lunch. This would not be possible here with the separation distance of 400'. Food trucks allow eating on the fly.
  - Permits are valid for 30 days, renewable twice for 90 days on a site per year. A business builds up a reputation and then has to move. Having a permit for a whole year, and being able to move is desired. Others are okay with being tied to a location.
  - Why not regulate by the Economic Development Committee, rather than the Community Safety Committee, because this is a tourist destination.
  - Need special locations.
- Hours:
  - Some people like the hours; others don't. In NoDA, bars and nightclubs are open later and the 9:00 p.m. restriction prevents this use from serving customers leaving these establishments after 9:00 p.m. The bars want people to sober up.
  - Safety concerns, fights, and drunk customers: in the past, the police were called if there were problems. Now, businesses are not robbed with new ways of paying with square deals, smart phones, etc. People will fight no matter where they go to eat.
  - Late night loitering and congregating is an assumption.
  - Allow to open at 6:00 a.m.
  - Closes too early for bar locations.
  - Night life establishments want food trucks later than 9:00 p.m.
- Other Comments:
  - Why regulate at all? Most mobile food vendors don't want to be in the same location all the time. They like to bounce around because people get tired of the food.
  - There should be one permit and they should be allowed to go anywhere, any location.
  - Businesses have a one-year permit, why not us?
  - The separation from neighborhoods was because there was a concern the use would impact the quality of life, there was litter and drugs. But events bring people together.
  - Possible concern of property values.
  - Distance to corner
  - City could gross \$30,000 annually in yearly permits.

**Group #2:**

- Location:
  - Strong consensus that less restrictions are needed than currently are in place. Separation distances may protect residential areas for people that move into the suburbs. Exceptions would be for private catering events.
  - Allow mobile food vendors, with no separation distance in ball parks, public use areas and common areas where people gather.
  - Need different rules for different areas :urban vs. central areas vs. suburbs and the character of the area, mix of businesses, proximity of businesses.
  - Mobile food vendors should be able to park and operate in the right-of-way, if the mobile food vendor vehicle is legal, and the parking space is legal, mobile food vendors can park there and pay the meter.
  - There should not be permits by location. There should be an annual permit system to operate and not have to renew. This would be easier for both the city and the vendors.
  - Allow in commercial zoning, including business parks, office areas. Review the zoning.
  - The separation distance should be less than 400'. Some distance from residential use, rather than a residential district.
- Hours:
  - The majority said that mobile food vendors should be able to operate 24 hours a day. There are people that work 3<sup>rd</sup> shift and hospital workers that frequent this use after their work day.
- Other Comments:
  - Concern about trash, safety, loitering.
  - Can have revitalization of areas, with eyes on the street, a walkable community.
  - Mobile vendors are business incubators, offer a variety of food.
  - Food trucks create jobs.
  - Codes are not clear.
  - Permits should be for a year, with yearly renewals.
  - Can't get a permit quickly.
  - A yearly permit should allow vendor to visit various locations easier.
  - Secondary impacts include trash, safety, loitering.

### **Group #3:**

- Location:
  - Don't locate in front of restaurants.
  - Center City Partners sets the regulations for the uptown area. Outside uptown, there are other regulations. Why are there different regulations?
  - Why can't locate on public private and private property?
  - Told can't park in the street, block the right-of-way, the sidewalks are too narrow. Told we block people from going into the businesses located there.
  - Property owners should be able to decide if food trucks can locate in a parking lot.
  - Operators want spaces uptown open to them. Maybe give a small amount of parking spaces and allow parking in public parks for events, parties.
  - What about locations in CMS schools?
  - Different areas of the City could have different zones and different hours. Year long permits could be purchased for a vendor to operate within those zoning districts rather than paying for one location.
  - Special events vs. regular business
  - Vendors are not in one location for more than 4 hours. They head back to restock and then go back out.
  - Should have less separation distance.

- Most neighborhood representative in the group had no problem with food trucks near their neighborhood.
- Clustering: Depends on the event. Sometimes vendors like to be solo.
- Lowe's can't have a good truck on South Boulevard because they are within 400' of residential. Lowe's would like to have them there.
- 400' should be reduced.
- 400' to single family vs. multi-family. Not 400' to mixed use.
- 400' hard for South Boulevard and Central.
- Neighborhoods like food truck idea.
- Opportunity zones – designated areas for mobile food trucks.
- Hours:
  - Expand the hours to 11:00 p.m.
  - Earlier hours, too.
  - Hours could vary by location. They could be open later, but not near residential areas.
  - Would like longer hours and less separation distance.
  - 9:00 pm is too early to close for bars that are open later.
- Other Comments:
  - Told that generators make noise, but some trucks have quieter generators.
  - Not many safety issues as vendors do not carry as much cash as they used to.
  - With the current regulations, some trucks closed.
  - In Charleston, food trucks are there when the bars close.
  - Food truck vendor parks in front of his own establishment. Does it matter if the same owner?
  - The cost of permits should be revisited. Longer time period and lower rate.
- No one had crime problems.

Ms. Young thanked the groups for their work. Additional comments from members included:

- Extend hours past 9 p.m.
- Require vendors to use a card instead of accepting cash.
- In Atlanta, trucks operate and plug in for power. Is Charlotte thinking about this? Maybe in a business area?

The issues listed by each group are as follows:

Locations	
<p><u>Pro's</u></p> <p>YES on closer for better service for community</p> <hr/> <p>more exposure bigger crowds Food trucks work together better create jobs neighborhoods requesting F&amp;S</p> <hr/> <p>Center City separate regulation</p> <p>(Food trucks not in Economic Development tourist destination)</p> <p><b>Community Safety</b></p>	<p><u>Con's</u></p> <p>TO MANY cluttering in neighborhoods (past)</p> <p>TRASH Prostitution in NOISE - neighborhood</p> <p>NOT CLEAN CODES</p> <hr/> <p>2006 Food truck in Mexico's Culture 1-30-14</p> <p>Group 1 3 1 of 6</p>

Locations	
<p><u>Pro</u></p> <p>400 ft reduced on commercial</p> <p>400 ft on public</p> <p>Different standards for Brick &amp; mortar</p> <p>Eat on fly need special locations quick service lunch</p> <p>Special ok on Eateries in neighborhoods</p>	<p><u>Cons</u></p> <p>- Possible concern of property value</p> <hr/> <p>Distance to center</p> <hr/> <p>Where other communities? Rules in question</p> <p>1-30-14 Group 1 3 2 of 6</p>

OPENING HOUR	
PRO	CON
Safety	TO: EARLY FOR BAR LOCATIONS to close
Businesses not robbed	TO: LATE OF START 8 AM allow at 6:00 AM.
Rules BEFORE C.C. <del>MASS</del> MACHINES	Night Life Establishments want food trucks later
Rules BEFORE it was CASH - and no CC's	Midnight Rodeo is private or with late night trucks
CONCERN of FIGHTS	- Brick & Mortar have same FIGHTS of concern
Fighting AFTER BAR that's why you should close Early	- Fighting is A CONCERN
Food truck HAS ability to call police about FIGHTS of public safety issues	late night has being congregations and loitering Assumption

1-30-14  
Group 1  
3 of 6

How Long Permit Valid For
- BUSINESS PARKS want food vendors
- NOT FEASIBLE with limits
- Change to year
- 90 days active only certain days
- Why REGULATE AT ALL!!!
MOST food vendors don't want to do the same PLACE
- permit used anywhere/or location
City could GROSS 30k annually if year permits

1-30-14  
Group 1  
4 of 6

## Continue Permit

- Businesses have 1 year permits  
Why not Food trucks
- It used to be 1 yr permits in the past.
- Why are Food truck EVEN permitted?

Group 13 1-30-14  
5 of 6

## Separation From Neighborhoods

- Concern of Litter, Drugs, Prostitution  
Impact quality of life  
Property values
- Close to neighborhood brings  
event to the hoods and benefits  
families.
- Conflict of interest
- North v.s. South Korea

1-30-14  
Group 13  
6 of 6

# Locations?

Group

(2)

Yes: What organization

Residential / Suburban

Need more Flex

Urban

- exceptions: private catering hired for event
- Public use areas
- Need different rules for different areas;
  - character of area
  - use of area
  - mix of businesses
  - proximity of businesses
- Park in legal spaces
- Allow in commercial zoning → business parks; review zones

## Hours?

- Extend hours → longer on weekends? 24 hrs vs. weekdays

## Length of permit?

- 1 year → renewed yearly
- Can visit various locations easier; can't get permit quickly
- 1 fee for all zones

1-3

Group 2

1 of 2

## Separation from residential?

Yes — see question #1  
Consider difference in residential (LESS 400FT)  
Zoning vs. mixed use

## Secondary Impacts

- Trash
- Safety
- Parking on street (Vendor off curbside)
- Loitering
- revit. communities
- business incubators
- Variety of food

1-30-14

Group 2

2 of 2



## LOCATION

Group 3

①

- 1) STREETS
- 2) PUBLIC PARKS  
ETC
- 3) CMS PROPERTY
- 4) UPTOWN
- 5) CDOT DESIGNATE  
SPOTS (PARKING SPACES)

Group 3

1-30-14

1 of 6

## Hours

2

- Late night - expand hours
- Vary by location
- Special events vs. ~~at~~ regular business  
    ↳ different zones / different hours
- Zone (like NoDa) - 1 fee for entire year
- Hours earlier?

Group 3

1-30-14

2 of 6

## Distance

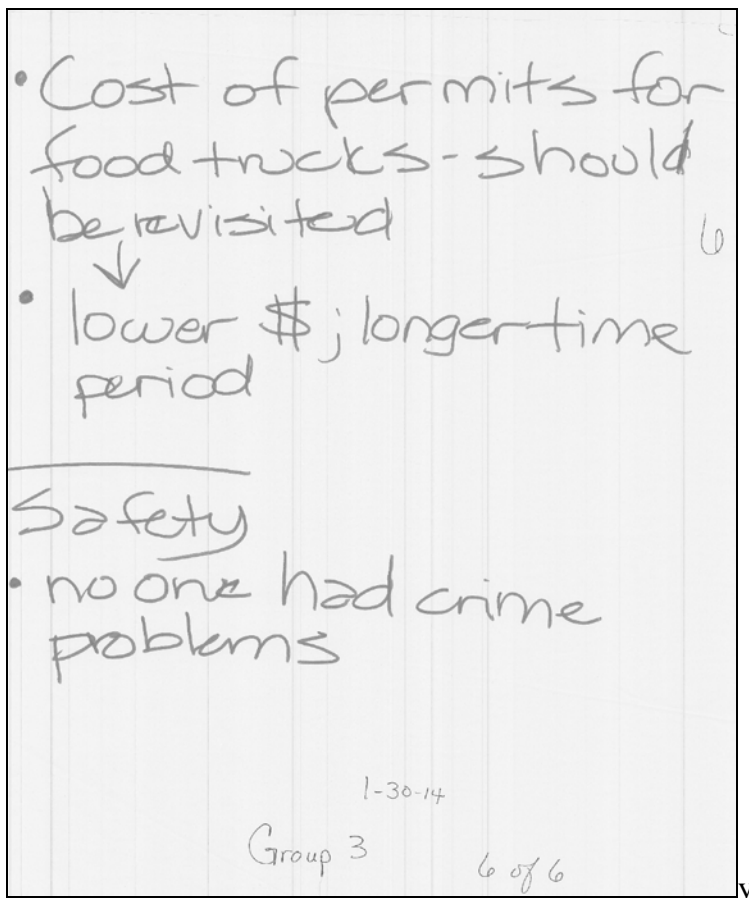
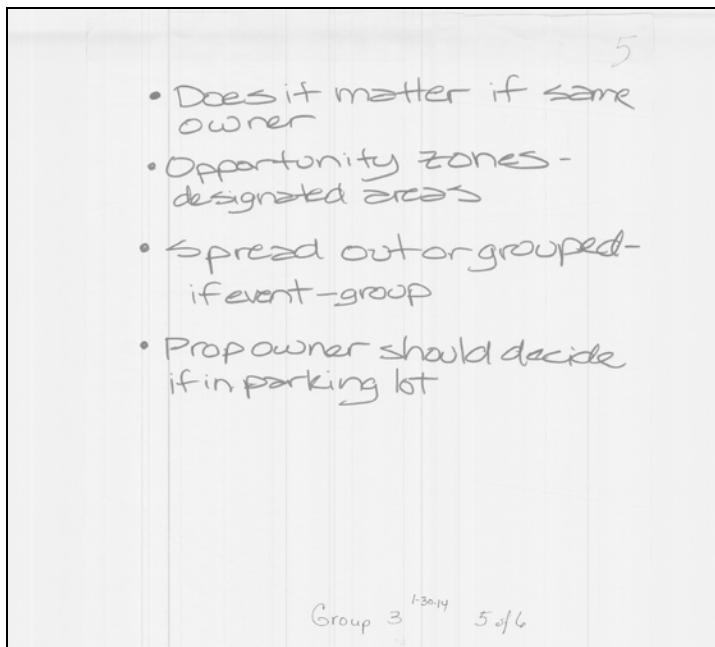
- Lowe's - 400' - too close to residential
- 400' to SF vs mf  
↳ not mixed use
- Noise from generator  
newer trucks <sup>↓</sup> silencers
- Typically not in location more than 4 hours
- Newer regulations - some trucks closed

Group 3 <sup>1-30-14</sup> 3 of 6

## Separation Distance

- Hard for So Blvd + Central - 400'
- 9pm - too early; bars open later
- Charleston - trucks there when bars close
- Neigh rep - like food truck ideas
- Food truck owner parks in front of own test - 2 <sup>X per week</sup>

Group 3 <sup>1-30-14</sup> 4 of 6



The next steps will be to assemble and categorize the feedback. At the next meeting, staff will share the results and drill down to get a consensus on what we can take to City Council in terms of a text amendment. Staff will also present some research about what other communities are doing. The next meeting will be held on March 10 (*Note: this has since changed to March 11*).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.