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Published February 27th, 2013

## Shorter Season Ahead for 2013 Orinda Farmers' Market

*By Laurie Snyder*

The Orinda City Council approved a two-year extension Feb. 19 of the city's contract with the Contra Costa Certified Farmers' Market, which has managed Orinda's Saturday shopping venue since 1997. Fresh veggie fans were disappointed to learn, however, that the market will return to a shortened schedule from May through the first weekend of November.

CCCFM had opened Orinda's market earlier in 2012 - for a trial period starting March 3 - at Orindans' request, but found that the market was unable to sustain an extended season, according to a city staff report.

Council Member Victoria Smith pointed to Moraga's successful operation of a year-round venue, and asked if their market is drawing away Orindans. CCCFM staff explained that a shift in the Orinda location had not helped and added that, although patrons had pressed for a longer season, many later told them they had not attended when the weather was cold or rainy. "The truth is it's a small space," said Janis Faust, CCCFM's manager for Orinda. Faust and her colleagues also noticed lower attendance on Stanford and Cal football weekends, and stated that many farmers' markets had experienced declines during the weak economy.

The council also inquired about advertising, with Smith remarking on postcards she receives at her home and business from Moraga's market. CCCFM staff described their efforts, and said they were considering sending similar mailers. Parks and Recreation Director Michelle Lacy said CCCFM will also run a large ad in her department's spring-summer guide. "We feel strongly about being a part of the community," said Faust. "Our vendors absolutely love the people of Orinda."

Smith asked CCCFM to provide a written copy of its marketing plan for input by city staff. Mayor Amy Worth also suggested that a CCCFM representative attend the Mayor's Liaison meetings held the first Tuesday of each month. Those sessions give the leaders of non-profits and other groups the chance to educate city leaders, the media, and each other about their services and special events.

"Springtime is coming," said Worth. Opening day for the 2013 Orinda Farmers' Market will be the first Saturday in May from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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[back](#)

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