

Plan for Easley farmers market moves ahead

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The idea for a possible downtown farmers market is starting to take shape in Easley.

City leaders are looking at starting a market possibly in the large parking lot in front of City Hall.

"Part of the reason we're looking at doing this is to both help the local farmers and help the citizens get fresh grown produce," said Easley City Councilman Chris Mann, who is a member of a committee formed to look at the idea.

At a recent committee meeting, members debated what day and time would be good along with other issues like how much would be charged for farmers to participate.

Mann said a possible participation fee could be \$5 to \$10 if farmers provided their own set up of tents, tables or stands.

Committee members have said Saturday mornings would be a potential time for a farmers market, but Mann said they should also consider other times like Thursday or Friday afternoons from 3 or 4 p.m. until 8 p.m.

"Everyone has it on a Saturday morning," he said. "Do we want to compete against Greenville? I don't know that we do."

Scott Buckhiester, vice president of operations for DunBurks Premier Events, which manages the city's events, said there could be parking issues on a weekday.

He said the city hall parking lot isn't empty on weekday afternoons and said they would need to begin clearing people out of the lot at noon.

City Councilman Kim Valentin, who is chairing the committee, said the committee wants public comment on the proposal and where such a market should be located.

Mann said he would talk with the Clemson extension office to get feedback and to reach out to farmers who might participate to gauge their interest.

He said they also need to look at what restrictions or regulations they would put on the farmers market, whether they would limit it to products grown in South Carolina, in a 100-mile radius of Easley or some other way.

The committee is scheduled to meet again March 12 at 6 p.m. at City Hall.