



# STAFF REPORT

## Town of Nags Head

### Planning & Development Department

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To: Board of Commissioners  
From: Kelly Wyatt, Deputy Director of Planning & Development  
Date: February 24, 2020  
Subject: Art and Culture Committee Update

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Planning Staff and members of the Nags Head Art and Culture Committee will be providing a brief presentation to the Board of Commissioners at their March 4, 2020 meeting. The intent of the presentation is to highlight efforts by the Committee during the 2019 Season, and to provide information on what the Committee would like to achieve during the upcoming 2020 Season.

#### **2019 Season**

Of note, the 2019 Dowdy Park Farmers Market consisted of 50 vendors of which approximately 23 provided consumables (fresh fruit, vegetables, cheeses, baked goods, fermented foods, jellies, sauces, etc.). Many vendors were local, however, it is important to note that many of the farmers came from as far as Currituck, Swan Quarter, Columbia, and Edenton, making their participation in the market very valuable.

The Market's visitation peaked in July, with approximately 740 in attendance at one market. The lowest number of attendees to the Market came in September with approximately 480 at one market. Event Coordinator, Paige Griffin, takes great care and pride in her role with the Town and strived to make connections with patrons at each market noting from where they were visiting, what they enjoyed about the market and any constructive comments that they may have. Visitors were primarily from Virginia, Delaware, Maryland, Washington D.C, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Michigan, Indiana, Tennessee, Florida, Oklahoma, Arizona and Illinois. Visitors expressed how enjoyable the experience was, citing the variety and quality of vendors, the friendly atmosphere, and the ease of strolling the aisles. While criticism was minimal, there were two comments routinely heard, 1) it is difficult for locals to attend, and 2) it is not held weekly such that vacationers would have an opportunity to attend each week.

The Dowdy Park Farmers Market social media presence increased tremendously from the 2018 season to the 2019 season with our "engagements" (meaning how often the market is "talked" about, shared or tagged) up by 800%. Additionally, the number of community partnerships increased significantly in 2019 including:

- Village Realty – Weekly Fitness Program, Yoga
- SPCA – Pet Adoptions and Information

- YMCA – Weekly Fitness Program, Tai Chi
- First Flight Society – Celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lunar Landing
- Outer Banks Hospital – Diabetes & Nutrition Information
- Dare Health and Human Services – Free Diabetes Screenings
- Trillium Health – Nutrition and Housing Assistance Programs
- NC Works – Job Search Information
- Lost Colony Children’s Theatre – Characters from Wanda’s Monster Play
- Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education – Education on Bats & Bat Boxes
- North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island – Education on Local Marine Life and Reptiles

Dowdy Park was also the location for a successful concert series in 2019. There was a total of eleven concerts over the months of June, July and August with a variety of genres including beach music, oldies, country, folk and bluegrass. Attendance varied based on the band and weather conditions but on average there was 125 people at each event.

## **2020 Season**

Plans for the 2020 Season are already in development. In terms of the Market, while there is consensus to keep the number of vendors at or around 50-60, the most significant change would be to change the frequency of the market from once every two weeks (from June through September) to holding it weekly during the months of July and August only, with a kick-off event in late June and possibly a Fall Festival in October and a Holiday Market in December. This would provide farmers with an opportunity to sell more produce during the primary growing season, it would offer weekly visitors an opportunity to experience the market, and the markets proposed outside of July and August would likely be held on a weekend so locals could attend. The Committee is also interested in exploring evening markets, also making it more conducive for locals to attend. It is also important to note that market dates in September for the last two seasons have been impacted, if not cancelled, because of weather.

With regard to the concert series, the Committee would seek to continue these events, focusing on scheduling a concert every Wednesday night through the months of June, July and August. Ms. Griffin has already been coordinating with other organizations offering concerts such as the Dare County Arts Council and the Town of Duck to try to maximize efforts for summer entertainment at Dowdy Park. Having observed attendees of the concerts often times bringing in food, and with the consensus of the Committee, Staff would like to pursue an option of having a food truck onsite during these Wednesday evening concerts (it should be noted that events held by entities other than the Town at Dowdy Park are able to include food trucks, but regulations currently preclude this as an option for the concert series). This opportunity would be extended locally and limited to one truck per event; if the Board is supportive of this as an option, changes to the Town Code would be necessary.

In addition to the Dowdy Park Farmers Market and the concert series, Committee continues to work on the Art Mast Project, of which one art panel has been completed and four are currently being painted by local artists. The Little Red Mailbox of Hope

continues to be utilized by the community and there is interest by the Outer Banks Women's Club to donate a Little Free Library. The Committee is currently discussing other initiatives throughout the Town, including but not limited to offerings at Whalebone Park, Barnes Street Park, the Gallery Row area, and the Dog Park.

Planning Staff and members of the Committee will be available for questions and input from the Board of Commissioners following the presentation.