

FINAL

**LEBANON FOOD TRUCK TASK FORCE
(LFTTF)
MONDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2024 – 8:00AM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL OR
REMOTE VIA VIRTUAL PLATFORM LEBANONNH.GOV/LIVE**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cliff Below (remote), Falguni Mehta, Victoria Smith, Ben Van-Vilet

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Paula Maville, Deputy City Manager for Special Projects

1 The October 21, 2024 Food Truck Task Force Meeting was called to order at 8:05AM by Paula
2 Maville (since no Chairs have been elected yet).

3

4 **1. OLD BUSINESS: NONE**

5

6 **2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Not applicable

7

8 **3. OLD BUSINESS:** Not applicable

9

10 **4. NEW BUSINESS:**

11

12 Ms. Maville started the meeting by explaining her role, the agenda for the day, as well as stating
13 that the biggest challenge will likely be finding the location(s) for these trucks. She then
14 explained the role of the Chair and Vice Chair, and that the first charge of this task force is to
15 assign these roles.

16

17 *Victoria Smith was nominated to be Chair by Falguni Mehta.*

18 *Seconded by Ben Van-Vilet.*

19 **The MOTION was approved (4-0)*

20

21 **APPROVAL OF TASK FORCE CHAIR:**

22 *A MOTION for Approval of the Chair was made by Ms. Mehta.*

23 *The MOTION was seconded by Mr. Van-Vilet.*

24

25 **The Vote on the MOTION was Approved: (4-0)*

26

1 Falguni Mehta was nominated to be Vice Chair by Ben Van-Vilet and seconded by Victoria
2 Smith.

3
4 **APPROVAL OF TASK FORCE VICE CHAIR:**

5 **A MOTION for approval of the Vice Chair was made by Ben Van-Vilet.**

6 **The MOTION was seconded by Victoria Smith.**

7 ***The MOTION was Approved: (4-0)**
8

9 Reviewed the purpose and charge of this task force and agree to the future meeting schedule. Ms.
10 Maville previously provided this Lebanon Food Truck Task Force current City code 179 for them
11 to start familiarizing themselves with this code. There are also relevant zoning regulations and
12 Ms. Maville will provide this task force with these regulations in the future.
13

14 Some Zoning amendments regarding food trucks may be presented to the City Council. If so, they would
15 not become official until perhaps as late as the March election. The Public would not need to vote on
16 anything pertaining to food trucks in residential areas. The Council has the authority to have any
17 amendments put before the public, by placing them on the ballot.
18

19 If zoning amendments are presented, the LFTTF should familiarize themselves with the proposal, so that
20 if they have something they want to recommend, they could present this, or if the LFTTF disagrees, that
21 could be addressed as well.
22

23 Ms. Maville also explained that whatever comes from this task force must be reviewed by the City
24 Council. Chapter 179 regulates these types of things on public property, whereas the Zoning ordinance
25 regulates private property. Neither has control over the other, but each requires approval by the City
26 Council and potentially the votes of Lebanon.
27

28 Ms. Maville explained that this task force is primarily charged with reviewing City Code Chapter 179 and
29 coming up with a comprehensive and sustainable plan for permitting and planning for food truck on
30 public property. She reiterated that finding locations will be the biggest challenge and will be a key focus
31 for this LFTTF; where, how, etc. They are also charged with public outreach, which they will get into
32 soon, after they have a solid understanding of the task at hand, so that they have something to talk with
33 the public about and be able to answer questions. The deadline for this task force is February 15, 2025,
34 and the goal is to have these new regulations in place by the next season in 2025 (April). This will allow
35 for permitting of the food trucks, etc.
36

37 The first thing that this task force needs to do is discuss the current challenges of food trucks. Ms. Mehta
38 (a food truck owner) shared her perspective. One challenge was electricity, as it kept tripping. She was
39 aware that space was an issue for the driveable food trucks. She said some of the neighbors were
40 complaining about the noise. And from a customer perspective, the hours of the trucks are inconsistent so
41 they are not sure when they can get which foods. Also, parking has become more of an issue for
42 customers, since the food trucks are taking up space.
43

44 Mr. Van-Vilet asked if there was any work done on locations for food trucks before. Ms. Maville stated
45 that there has not been. Ms. Mehta stated that Lebanon is a big town and is of the opinion that there are
46 many places that could be viable. She is also aware of some apartment areas that want food trucks nearby.
47

1 Ms. Maville agreed that all these are things that need to be considered, along with whether these locations
2 are public or private property.

3
4 Ms. Smith inquired if a private property owner gave their permission for a food truck to park, would this
5 then be allowed. Food trucks are allowed on some private properties, but with limitations due to current
6 zoning.

7
8 Ms. Smith stated that they need to define who the audience is and consider what they are trying to
9 accomplish. Are we allowing food trucks because the trucks want them, or because our citizens want
10 them? Who is the customer?

11
12 Ms. Maville said that the original regulations were for small vendors and craft fairs, rather than large food
13 trucks. The City wants to be sure that the downtown area is vibrant, and food trucks fit within the
14 guidelines that we have or will have.

15
16 Ms. Maville stated that it would be helpful for this task force to learn more about who the customer is. Is
17 it a drive by person that sees the truck and then stops? Or is it a person that specifically plans to come eat
18 at their preferred food truck here? So, then this is a destination rather than a passerby.

19
20 Ms. Mehta said traffic is a real issue. Some people park illegally to get their food, some do not obey the
21 stop signs, and it creates a danger, particularly for summer camps with many children walking around the
22 green.

23 Ms. Smith made similar comments about the traffic and the fact that people do not always yield or stop
24 when they should.

25
26 Mr. Below commented that having spaces blocked off every day, when the vendor is not there, is not
27 ideal. He suggested that perhaps there be an online site where each vendor could update what dates and
28 times they will be at the downtown area. Areas should not be blocked off if there is no vendor. Some
29 vendors are not local, so that is an issue sometimes as well.

30
31 The combination of having a portal would be convenient for the customers, and accommodating these
32 vendors, is good for the City and the residents and passersby. These add to the perception that Lebanon is
33 a vital community that people want to be part of. Downtown is our major pedestrian zone, so this needs to
34 be taken into consideration.

35
36 Mr. Van-Vilet asked if anyone had considered putting the trucks in the actual park. Ms. Mehta said that a
37 nearby location, rather than right on the green, would be better and look better. She thinks there are
38 several other options, and she thinks people will go there, if they know the trucks are there. She would
39 like to consider right across from the CCBA, on the street. It would be walkable and therefore readily
40 accessible to the Green, and the noise would not interfere with the Green. It becomes a destination.

41
42 Ms. Maville commented that the City owns this property.

43
44 Ms. Smith said that the City is in the exploration stage of what they will be doing with the parking lots in
45 the area behind City Hall, near the Green.

46

1 Ms. Mehta also mentioned that most cities with food trucks have at least a few places for people to sit,
2 such as a few picnic tables.
3

4 Ms. Maville also suggested that this task force consider downtown West Lebanon as an option. It will be
5 under full construction, some streets being made wider, have street trees, and will be very attractive.
6 There will also be a roundabout at Bridge Street intersection, which will help with traffic flow. The
7 widening of the bridge will happen simultaneously. It is not one or the other – Lebanon and West
8 Lebanon both need to be considered by this task force. The City owns streets, sidewalks, parks, parking
9 lots and many of these could be options, including Main Street and Hanover Streets, the parking lots near
10 the Green, etc., etc. The LFTTF will have many locations to consider.
11

12 Mr. Van-Vilet asked if the redevelopment in West Lebanon will have specific areas for this task force to
13 consider. Ms. Maville that these can be part of this consideration. The City has purchased 4-5 lots on
14 Main Street so recommendations coming out of this task force could have some of these areas designated
15 for food trucks. Ms. Maville said that one of the challenges is that currently, food trucks fall under
16 “refreshment stands”, and they need to see if they are already allowed in some areas of West Lebanon,
17 e.g. near Kohl’s. Also, near Etna Road, Juniper Hill (private), etc. Public areas will be much more
18 conducive to food trucks.
19

20 Ms. Smith said that the food trucks are very popular with Dartmouth, so that might be a consideration if it
21 is in Lebanon.
22

23 Mr. Below said that this year the food trucks applying for permits maxed out. Currently these permits run-
24 in three-month increments, quarterly. But this needs to be reviewed because April is frequently too cold,
25 as is late September.
26

27 Ms. Maville said that the goal is to be fair, and the seasonal fee is very reasonable. The City provides the
28 space, and the fee is only \$100 for the season. Some electricity used to be made available, but since it is
29 expensive, they now charge for this. Currently the City has a lottery system, but they have not had to use
30 it so far. It would work on a first come, first serve basis, such as Vendor 1 wants space 1, but Vendor 2
31 wants space 1 as well.
32

33 Ms. Mehta asked them to consider winter month locations as well, if the food trucks have the right
34 equipment. It would be good for the customers as well as the food truck owners – more predictable and a
35 longer season for all. This task force can include some performance language, though Ms. Maville stated
36 that the challenge would be monitoring this.
37

38 Mr. Van-Vilet reiterated that West Lebanon and Lebanon could dovetail so this task force needs to
39 consider all options for both.
40

41 Ms. Maville recapped today’s discussion as follows:

- 42 • Challenges on Colburn Park are currently lack of electricity, noise from generators,
43 heavy traffic, blocked parking spaces, vendors not vending when they have reserved,
44 cones placement and removal, and safety for pedestrians.
45
- 46 • The Task Force talked about private property locations such as Etna Road and Juniper
47 Hill area on Mt. Support.

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- Who is the customer base? The LFTTF needs to understand this thoroughly. Destination for food truck customers, passersby, or a combination of both. Mr. Below added that the visibility is at least initially a factor, so he has concern about these food trucks being highly visible, for continued success. Ms. Maville added that Hanover Street has high visibility, is City property, so this task force could consider this area as well.
- Food trucks are a good opportunity for small businesses to start up.
- Locations – there will be many areas to consider such as the parking lot behind City Hall near the retaining wall, areas in West Lebanon and Lebanon as noted above. And also providing facilities and infrastructure, wherever they will be. Creating these locations as destination areas, so that the public will know both when and where to expect which food trucks.

Future meetings dates will be as follows for the remainder of the year (2024):

Tuesdays, 8:00AM – 9:30AM
November 12, November 19, December 3, December 10th

5. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: No One came forth.

6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: NONE

7. OTHER BUSINESS: NONE

8. ADJOURNMENT:

A MOTION to adjourn was made by Victoria Smith.

Seconded by Ben Van-Vile.

**The MOTION was approved (4-0)*

Meeting was adjourned at 9:20AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cinda Mersel

Recording Secretary