MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Mark E. Biberdorf, Town Manager MEB

COPY TO: Heather Taylor, Assistant Town Manager
Greg Walker, Parks & Recreation Director

DATE: August 28, 2024

SUBJECT: Research on Establishing a Farmers Market in Fletcher

Background:

This is in follow up to a discussion that I had with Council last month about establishing or at least determining interest in establishing a farmers market in Fletcher. The Town has received numerous inquiries about this in the past but has never to my knowledge had an established farmers market in Town. This is an attempt to see if the timing may be right to help facilitate one.

I started my research on this topic by first reaching out to Henderson County's Cooperative Extension Office. I was referred to Karen Blaedow who is an Agricultural Extension Agent in their office. Among her responsibilities is supporting farmers market activities in Henderson County. Ms. Blaedow was a wealth of knowledge on this topic and was also helpful in making suggestions for where a market might work here.

There are presently five farmers markets operating in Henderson County. The Etowah Lions Club has a market that operates on Wednesdays. Flat Rock has a market that operates on Thursdays at Pinecrest ARP Church. Mills River has market that operates on Saturdays at Mills River Elementary School. The remaining two – the Hendersonville Farmers Market and the Tailgate Market – both operate on Saturdays in Hendersonville.

Each of the farmers markets typically have a market manager that helps to coordinate the operation. The market managers collect fees, set ground rules, and monitor the activity of each farmers market. They also attend a monthly Market Managers Meeting that is held via Zoom. Ms. Blaedow from the Extension Office also attends these meetings.

Next Steps:

Some next steps to consider here are first of all determining interest in having a farmers market in Fletcher. I am planning on attending the next Market Managers Meeting on September 17 to discuss this. A potential location in Fletcher would also need to be discussed in addition to a day of the week to operate the market.

If you should have any questions regarding this item prior to the Agenda Review meeting, please feel free to contact me.

MEB/meb