

Peterborough Regional Farmers' Network Issue Transformation Protocol

1. Context:

The objective of this Protocol is to transform any issue associated with the Peterborough Regional Farmers Network's ("The Network" or "PRFN") operation, real or perceived, into a positive result consistent with the Network's mandate.

The PRFN is a registered not-for-profit corporation whose mandate is to:

- a) Advocate for regional food sovereignty, fair marketplaces, and policies at all levels of government and civil society that support farming businesses;
- b) Promote and support collaborative relationships;
- c) Interconnect farmers to build an inclusive agricultural and business community;
- d) Research, develop and apply best practices for agricultural production, distribution, and marketing;
- e) Consult with farmers and community stakeholders to identify, develop, and review projects and goals that support the local food system; and
- f) Operate under the guiding principles of openness, honesty and transparency.

The PRFN is advancing a number of initiatives, one of which is The Peterborough Regional Farmers' Market (PRFM or "The Market"). PRFN is governed by a volunteer Board or Directors, as outlined in its bylaws.

This document has been prepared to outline the process by which issues related to the mandate of The Network may be identified and considered. For concerns related to the Market, individuals are encouraged to review the Peterborough Regional Farmers' Market Conflict Resolution Protocol.

2. Approach:

Any party with a direct interest in the Network may bring forward issues to the attention of the Board of Directors. The process is intended to ensure that those raising concerns are provided a vehicle to:

- a) Identify the party's direct interest
- b) clearly articulate the concern and its direct relationship to the Network's mandate;
- c) identify what efforts have been made to address the concern;
- d) suggest solutions to the concern; and
- e) receive feedback from the Board of Directors.

The process provides a framework for the Board to screen requests, consider efforts undertaken outside this process, identify the potential impacts to other interests, assess proposed solutions and make a determination.

3. Issue Identification Process:

A request should provide sufficient information to allow the PRFN Board to determine whether the request should be investigated further. It is the responsibility of the individual(s) raising a concern to demonstrate that the request is credible, worthy of consideration and within the scope and mandate of the PRFN to resolve.

A request, in writing, addressed to the Board Chair, must contain at a minimum, the following information:

- a) outline of the party's direct interest in the PRFN;
- b) description of the issue and/or changes being requested;
- c) rationale for the changes being requested;
- d) description and results of efforts taken to date to resolve the issue; and
- e) description of how the proposed changes may impact or benefit other stakeholders with an interest in PRFN.

The level of detail contained within the request will depend on the complexity of the issues and/or changes being proposed. PRFN will be responsible for maintaining records for all requests.

4. PRFN Initial Assessment

The PRFN Board is responsible for overall governance of the Network and will assess third party requests to inform whether the request should proceed through the review process. The assessment will consider the following criteria:

- a) Is the issue directly related to the mandate of the PRFN;
- b) Is the request within the scope of the PRFN to address;
- c) Is there an alternative method to deal with the request rather than through the PRFN;
- d) Is the request supported by other potentially affected parties; and
- e) Has the request been considered previously?

Where a request does not contain sufficient information to complete an assessment, the PRFN will return the proposal to the third party with a request for additional information.

When the PRFN Board has completed the assessment of the complete request, written notification will be provided to the requestor within thirty (30) days. The notification will include: a summary of the request and supporting rationale; results of the assessment; a determination of whether the request will be further considered; and if so, the approach to such consideration.

5. PRFN Decision

An issue that meets the criteria for consideration through the assessment process will be reviewed by the PRFN Board of Directors. The Board, at its discretion may:

- a) request additional information from the third party;
- b) seek input from other potentially impacted interests;
- c) seek external expertise and advice; and/or
- d) provide for an in-person discussion.

After considering the issue and proposed solution, the Board may:

- a) adopt the proposed solution/change;
- b) adopt the proposed solution/change with modifications; or
- c) reject the proposed solution/change.

Notice of the Board's decision will be provided, in writing, within thirty (30) days of the completion of the review.