

Dear Banff Council and people of Banff,

It is with great sadness that I have to inform Council and the people of Banff that I am no longer the operator of the Banff Farmers' Market. First I would like to thank Council for their support going back 9 years ago when I proposed the idea of the market to Council and it was approved. Since the first market year starting with 20 vendors and 25 tents we have come a long way with 78 vendors and 90 tents in the 2018 season. I have enjoyed the continual support and praises of Town Council members and more importantly the people of Banff. With that said I have not been feeling the same support from Council as of late concerning the current situation.

I have worked hard and made investments in the past 8 years to bring the market to where it is today. It is my love and passion for our great town that made the market what it is, a highly anticipated weekly event for locals and visitors alike. I feel like I did a great job operating the market, making improvements every year by stepping up the quality of vendors and by creating an amazing music program. Over the years I have assembled an effective, passionate team to provide the best product possible.

As everybody knows it is not easy for a person to find their niche in town and make a decent living. Very few of my classmates from Banff High School actually still live here, they have moved on to places with a lower cost of living. A significant portion of my yearly income is now gone due to a move from town administration that has left me totally blindsided. More importantly however, I will be missing the weekly contact with the community and the knowledge that I was giving back to the town with an authentic, successful event.

Never in 8 years of a great working relationship with the Town of Banff have I had to make my intent to operate the market the following year known eight months in advance. Since the beginning in 2010 it was assumed by both TOB and myself that I would be organizing the market. The Director of Communications says that because I did not give 8 months notice prior to commencement of the market, other applications were accepted. In fact, over the past 8 years, town administration would always contact me first during the winter months asking if I would manage the market again. In the past, I have never had reason to be concerned that the market, that I founded, was in jeopardy of being given to someone else.

Why did the Town of Banff change its procedure after 8 years of a great working relationship and communication without letting me know? Why was I not contacted by the Town of Banff after the end of the 2018 season (like in all previous years) to see about the next season?

Why has a person that does not even live in Banff been awarded the management of this beloved weekly event? How can the Town of Banff, after seeing my efforts over 8 years, after I have complied with all the Town's requests over the years, allow someone else to walk in and benefit from all my hard work? Why are the applications not adjudicated and the winning party chosen based on experience and merit, rather than a random lottery? Surely there is a difference between successfully completing an application form and *actually* running the market? According to your policy, anyone who completes an application is a worthy candidate. I have to disagree.

I am shocked by the way the Town of Banff has conducted itself. Is this how the Town of Banff treats all young entrepreneurs with families, working hard to find their place in a very expensive and competitive town? I am ok with the high cost of living here in Banff because I truly feel like this is the best town in the world. I am a passionate local and I want to make a living and raise a family here in town. Is the Town of Banff only for big business and people with a lot of money?

The market is a vehicle for young local entrepreneurs to make their goods available to the public without having to pay hefty rents that otherwise would make their fledgling business impossible. This is the reason the market was created and also was my chief motivation in running the best market possible. I personally feel amazing when I get to help locals make a go of it and provide them an opportunity to thrive both creatively and personally. In some cases, the market may offer them their first business opportunity and allow them to stay in the town they love.

I have made my intention to organize the market for the 2020 season clear and have filled the special event application for the 2020 season. I feel like in the very least I should have the right to win the market back and potentially enter into a multi year contract much like the Town has done with the canoe docks.

I hope Council will ensure that I have a fair chance for the 2020 market season and that if there is a multi year contract or MOU up for grabs, that I have a fair chance to win that.

Respectfully,

Rene Geber