



Back to Farmers' markets to get special permit

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The city is developing special farmers' markets event permits so that community organizers don't get stuck with thousands of dollars in unexpected parking fees.

For years, five community farmers' markets in Toronto were able to pay a one-time street event fee of \$81.33, which would cover parking expenses for the season. But recently, city staff noticed the bylaw was being misread and contacted the Toronto Farmers' Market Network with some bad news: The fee would need to start being applied each day.

For the Trinity-Bellwoods farmers market, which runs 25 days, this would mean parking alone would cost the community-run event more than \$2,000.

On Wednesday, Councillor Mike Layton began the process at public works committee to give farmers' markets an exemption.

"I think what happened is that the city noticed it was an oversight, that they weren't charging farmers' markets to the letter of the bylaw. And that's their job right, to implement our bylaw," he said. "So we got a motion together which essentially recommended that city council approve an annual one-time fee, (creating) a farmers' market event parking permit."

The city's transportation department helped Layton put together the motion.

"When I talked to Transportation they were aware of the problem and they were looking for avenues to fix it," he said.

The issue has been referred to the transportation department and will probably be sorted out by May.



Some community-run farmers' markets faced a huge potential increase in the fees paid to the city after officials discovered they had been misinterpreting a bylaw.

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