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 Moving Target

## P.G. Council opts to change farmers market place—and, surprisingly, time.

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By Kera Abraham



The location of the P.G. farmers market bolstered attendance at the March 4 City Council meeting.

There was plenty of buzz about moving the location of the Pacific Grove farmers market. But the curveball came at last night's City Council meeting, when councilmembers voted to look into changing not only the place, but also the time.

The council voted 4-3 to direct staff to work with Everyone's Harvest, the market organizer, on moving the market from its current downtown digs, on Lighthouse Avenue between Forest Avenue and 17th Street, to a city-owned parking lot just south of Lighthouse between 16th and 17th streets. And to change the time from 4-8pm Mondays to Saturday morning.

Although the room was packed with people who support leaving the market where it is, many were shocked to learn that the time-and-place swap came as the result of a closed-door compromise negotiated between market organizers and local merchants—represented by the P.G. Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Business Improvement District—that had been agitating for a location change.

"People have said all along that no one wants the market to go away; they just don't want it in the middle of town," Mayor Carmelita Garcia said last week. "I think there's so much support for the market that if you put it anywhere, they'll keep going to it."

Garcia said she was paying attention to the market's effect on local merchants: "If something like this in the middle of town is impacting our ability to sell, I have to listen to that because it means maybe less sales tax."

But Everyone's Harvest Executive Director Iris Peppard countered that moving the market would be hard on vendors. "There are many cities that welcome markets to bring people downtown," she says. "We've done that, and it's confusing to me why they see it as the opposite."

At the March 4 meeting, Councilmembers Lisa Bennett, Deborah Lindsay and Bill Kampe voted against the majority, noting the current market location came about after a series of public hearings, in contrast to the behind-the-scenes compromise.

The council will revisit the proposal April 7.

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