



MEMORANDUM

DATE:	February 12, 2018
TO:	EDA President Krant, EDA Board Members, and Interim Administrator Meyer
FROM:	Cynthia Smith Strack, Community Development Director
RE:	Item 5.4 Discussion: Mobile Food Units (Food Trucks)

GENERAL INFORMATION

The presence of food trucks in cities often sparks discussion pertaining to licensing and business opportunity. At this time Belle Plaine requires mobile food units obtain a transient merchant license, however, operational parameters are not clearly defined. For example, situations where food trucks are catering events on private property or asked to provide lunch alternatives to private establishments on their private property. A second example is use of public street/parking/park for set-up.

As a means of proactively addressing anticipated requests, staff is requesting initiation of conversation regarding the presence of food trucks, especially within the Downtown. Initial discussion before the EDA would appear prudent given business and entrepreneurial interests. Staff has invited Kerry Dos to attend the meeting to share her experience operating Russell's Traveling Kitchen which is based in Belle Plaine but operates in numerous communities.

Community (business) engagement and input from other elected and appointed officials is expected to follow initial discussion.

Staff notes area cities have taken a variety of approaches to encouraging or discouraging the presence of food trucks.

- Some cities do not allow food trucks to operate unless they are catering a special event on private property.
- Some cities do not allow food trucks at all as a means of protecting local restaurateurs.
- Some cities allow food trucks only during special events (e.g. in conjunction with large assembly permit), while catering an event on private property, or if invited by the City.
- Some cities simply categorize them as peddlers/solicitors/transient merchants and require a license under existing regulations.
- Some cities have placed specific regulations into effect which require licenses, insurance, restrict food truck operational proximity to existing brick and mortar restaurant establishments (e.g. not within 200 to 300 feet), limit use of public parking, sidewalks, parks, etc., and specify gray water, garbage, and noise standards.
- Some cities have also updated zoning use standards to allow in certain zones (staff does not recommend this approach).

The Mn. Department of Health licenses mobile food units to promote food safety. The MDH specifically limits food trucks from being parked in one area for more than 21 days.

REQUEST

Discussion regarding:

1. Perceived role of food trucks in Belle Plaine: Downtown, Highway Commercial, public parks, private property, and residential areas.
2. How to balance business interests: brick/mortar establishments with larger start-up and operational costs (taxes), potential avenue to storefront location (entrepreneurship), and use of public property.
3. Suggested approach.
4. How to engage businesses and residents to gain input/insight.