

Prosecutor considering charges after incident at farmers' market

*By Laura Lane
The Herald-Times*

The Monroe County Prosecutor's Office is reviewing citations issued to five people at the Bloomington Community Farmers' Market on Saturday to determine if the charges will be pursued.

According to a report filed by Bloomington Police Department Capt. Scott Oldham, the five were issued citations preliminarily charging them with trespass and disorderly conduct after being asked to "desist with yelling and singing in a disruptive manner."

A citation is a summons, much like a traffic ticket, that is sometimes issued in lieu of arrest, according to deputy prosecutor Jeff Kehr.

"The case is still under review at this time," Kehr said in an email response to questions. "We do not have the police reports or citations yet. If we were to file the charges, they would be issued a summons to appear at a specified date in the future."

He explained that if a charge is not filed, the citation has no legal effect and the person who received it does not have to appear in court. "Essentially, the citation is the mechanism for accusing the person of a crime and sending them to court in lieu of a custodial arrest," Kehr said.

The citations were issued to: Thomas Westgard, 49; Lisa Marie Hacker, 51; Charles Bonds, 38; Ashley Pirani, 40; and Ian Gilmore, 48, who was wearing a giant inflatable unicorn costume.

Another protester wore a plush unicorn outfit, and a man had on a Viking helmet.

The five people ticketed were the ones that did not leave the market space when asked to do so by parks department staff, who said the protesters were blocking market customers, police said.

Some wore shirts that said "Boycott Schooner Creek," a market vendor the protesters want thrown out because of alleged ties to white supremacy.

A video posted on The Bloomingtonian website shows Oldham attempting to reason with the protesters, telling them they were disrupting the market in violation of set rules. "We don't want to be involved with you guys in a negative fashion," he told them.