

**53rd Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
March 12, 2025
Metro COG Conference Room**

Members Present:

Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council, Chair
Tim Flakoll, Cass County Commission
Amy Zundel, West Fargo City Commission
Paul Hankel, Horace City Council (proxy)
Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council
Anna Johnson, At-Large Member
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member
Carin Engler, At-Large Member
Jeff York, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member

Others Present:

Cheryl Stetz, Fargo Cass Public Health
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Janice Tweet, Great Plains Food Bank
Erika Franck, Clay County Planning and Zoning
Deb Haugen, Cass Clay Food Partners
Candace Kraft, Citizen
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments
Paul Bervik, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments
Karissa Pavsek, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

1a. Welcome to New Food Commission Member Amber Borah, City of Dilworth

Chair Nesemeier noted that Dilworth City Councilmember Amber Borah was newly appointed to serve on the Food Commission.

1b. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Mr. Hankel and seconded by Ms. Johnson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1c. Review and Action on Minutes from January 8, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes for January 2025 was made by Ms. Zundel and seconded by Ms. Engler. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Commission Introductions

Chair Nesemeier led the Commission and steering committee members in a brief round of introductions.

3. Steering Committee Updates

Ms. Stetz provided an informational update to the Commission regarding the steering committee's recent activities, including upcoming funding opportunities and items related to the 2025 work plan.

4. Action Network Updates

Ms. Harden provided a brief informational update on the food action network and monthly newsletters.

5. Backyard Chickens Update

Mr. Altenburg explained that in January 2025, the Cass Clay Food Commission directed the steering committee to review and revise the Backyard Chickens blueprint developed in 2015 and last amended in 2020. He noted that this was in response to earlier public comments received by the Fargo City Commission in August 2024 on whether the city would consider raising the number of permitted chickens from four to six. He also noted that questions about avian flu were asked at the previous Commission meeting, along with the impacts H5 influenza may pose to residents with backyard chickens.

Mr. Altenburg stated that a new amended blueprint was being completed which included: a new summary chart where chicken keeping has been approved in local jurisdictions, information specific to Fargo about issues and considerations should Fargo move to allow up to six chickens, expanded information about H5 influenza, and revised appendices including examples ordinances and additional resources. He also noted that other jurisdictions may be looking to or potentially looking to develop backyard chicken ordinances.

Mr. Altenburg concluded with a pre-recorded video developed by Dr. Abby Schuft from U of M Extension about H5 influenza and key insights for the Commission.

6. Cass Clay Food Commission 10 Year Celebration and Discussion

Ms. Harden shared a number of highlights from the Cass Clay Food Commission over the years since its first meeting in March 2015. Highlights included recognition of different food systems champions in the community, partnerships with GleanND and First Fridays, materials and resources developed during COVID-19, documents such as blueprints and snapshots, ways in which food system resilience has been incorporated into area comprehensive plans, and other noteworthy community events. She also acknowledged the contributions of Gina Nolte, one of the original members of the Cass Clay Food Systems Initiative and a guiding member of the steering committee until 2018. She also asked Commissioners for their thoughts on what would help the Cass Clay Food Commission be successful for another 10 years.

7. Kudos and Community Recognition

Mr. Altenburg recognized Deb Haugen for her years of service with the Cass Clay Food Partners. He noted that Ms. White had been a member of the Cass Clay Food Commission since its inception as the Cass Clay Food Systems Initiative in 2010 and, for the past 16 years, provided dietitian consulting services to the community. He also noted her work with CassClayAlive!, in which she assessed and promoted stronger school wellness policies and provided continuing education for school food service directors in the area. He concluded by noting that she is an active member of Growing Together Community Garden, a group comprised of over 300 volunteers that work at nine different community garden locations throughout the area.

8. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Nesemeier informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. She noted that members of the community may also submit comments via a comment link when Commission packets are emailed out.

Candace Kraft expressed her desire for the Commission to address food insecurity within the Fargo-Moorhead area's marginalized communities. She expressed her concern that not enough was being done to address the cycle of hardship caused by homelessness and food insecurity, especially for those with physical or mental health needs. She also noted other barriers such as limited means of transportation and the absence of affordable housing options in the area, and the impacts food insecurity has on health, learning, and employment.

9. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates and Meeting Reflections

Chair Nesemeier asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share any additional updates or meeting reflections.

10. Future Meetings and Commission Action Steps

Chair Nesemeier stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on May 14 and would be held back in the Fargo City Commission Chambers. She noted that the next steering committee meeting would be March 24 at Metro COG and that Commissioners and others were welcome to attend. She also noted that the next Food Action Network monthly newsletter would be emailed on April 4 and that people could visit the Cass Clay Food Partners Facebook page to sign up to receive those.

Chair Nesemeier adjourned the meeting at 12:14 PM.