

**52nd Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
January 8, 2025
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council, Chair
Tim Flakoll, Cass County Commission
Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission
Paul Hankel, Horace City Council (proxy)
Dave Steichen, Dilworth City Council
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Carin Engler, At-Large Member
Jeff York, At-Large Member
Anna Johnson, At-Large Member
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Amy Zundel, West Fargo City Commission

Others Present:

Cheryl Stetz, Fargo Cass Public Health
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health
Rita Ussatis, NDSU Extension
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
Dylan Kallman, Great Plains Greens
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

1a. Welcome to New Food Commission Member Tim Flakoll, Cass County

Chair Nesemeier noted that Cass County Commissioner Tim Flakoll 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 Ms. Kopperud and seconded by Mr. Krabbenhoft. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1c. Review and Action on Minutes from November 13, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes for November 2024 was made by Mr. Hankel and seconded by Ms. Engler. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1d. Approve Appointments of At-Large Members

A motion to approve the reappointments of Carin Engler and Jeff York to the Commission was made by Ms. Kopperud and seconded by Mr. Flakoll. 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. Tweet provided an informational update to the Commission regarding the steering committee's recent activities, including its new mission, vision, values, and items related to the 2025 work plan.

4. Urban Agriculture Framework

Anna Johnson presented the urban agriculture framework, based in part on the draft blueprint on urban agriculture presented to the Commission in November 2024. She explained that the framework is based on one of the five new pillars developed for the Cass Clay Food Partners to serve as a tool in evaluating existing document, with information related to local ordinances and their impact on the food system. She noted that, since zoning controls land use, many elements of the food system are impacted by zoning codes in one way or another. She also noted the importance of promoting equity and access in urban agriculture.

A motion to approve the urban agriculture framework was made by Mr. Krabbenhoft and seconded by Ms. Kopperud. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

5. Backyard Chickens Review

Mr. Altenburg began by explaining that, in August 2024, the Fargo City Commission received a public comment on whether the city would consider raising the number of permitted chickens from four to six. He stated that no official action was taken at that time, though city commission members asked that the idea be vetted through proper channels and that a request to change the ordinance had been received by the City Auditor's Office.

Mr. Altenburg noted that in recent years, Moorhead and West Fargo had both adopted ordinances allowing urban chickens. Both cities allow up to six chickens per permit holder, and Moorhead allows up to 12 on lot sizes of one acre or more. He also noted that Horace currently allows chickens with a conditional use permit in its SR-1 Suburban Residential zoning district. He stated that there were approximately 50 active permit holders in Fargo, Moorhead, and West Fargo, and that complaints had been minimal in all three cities.

Mr. Altenburg concluded by explaining potential issues should Fargo amend its current ordinance to allow up to six chickens, including the potential need for existing coops to be expanded so as to meet the requirements that each chicken has four square feet within coops and 10 square feet in fenced-in chicken run, and the need for coops to be reinspected upon expansion. He noted that these issues were all relatively minor.

After discussion by the Commission, a motion for the steering committee to review and revise the Backyard Chickens blueprint last amended in 2020 was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Mr. Miller. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

6. Great Plains Greens Presentation

Dylan Kallman, founder of Great Plains Greens, presented information on Great Plains Greens. He explained that, since 2023, he and his team have been producing leafy greens in a retrofitted shipping container using hydroponic practices. He noted that this helps grow produce with 99 percent less water and that their team delivers between 20 and 40 pounds of lettuce and herbs a week to area venues. In addition to providing produce to multiple restaurants, Great Plains Greens has also participated in local farmers markets.

7. Kudos and Community Recognition

Ms. Franck noted the Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton school's "share cart" program which helps reduce food waste by allowing students to share unwanted or unfinished food with others. She explained that the initiative is part of a broader effort to combat food waste in Minnesota, where public schools generate nearly 500,000 pounds of waste daily. Students can place unopened, shelf-stable items like granola bars and crackers on the cart, as well as fruits with intact skins and temperature-controlled items like milk and string cheese. The program not only helps reduce waste but also provides food for students who may need it.

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.

Paul Bervik, a Fargo resident with backyard chickens, expressed his appreciation to the Food Commission and the discussion regarding urban chickens.

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 March 12, 2025. She noted that this meeting would be held at a new location at Metro COG. She noted that the next steering committee meeting would be January 27 and that Commissioners and others were welcome to attend. She also noted that the next Food Action Network monthly newsletter would be emailed on January 10 and that people could visit the Cass Clay Food Partners Facebook page to sign up to receive those.

Chair Nesemeier adjourned the meeting at 11:54 AM.