

Attachment 1

**20th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
May 9th, 2018
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Arland Rasmussen, Cass County Commission, Chair
Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commission
Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Heidi Durand, Moorhead City Council
Mindy Grant, At-Large Member
Bukola Bakare, At-Large Member
Nancy Carriveau, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Sharon May, Horace City Council
Chris Olson, At-Large Member
Kayla Pridmore, At-Large Member

Others Present:

Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health
Hali Durand, Cass County Planning
Megan Myrdal, NDSU Extension
Rita Ussatis, NDSU Extension
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Nikki Johnson, U of M and NDSU Extension
Joleen Baker, Cass Clay Food Partners
Barb Witteman, Cass Clay Food Partners
Whitney Oxendahl, Cass Clay Food Partners
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Chair Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

1(a). Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

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

1(b). Review and Action on Minutes from March 14, 2018

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Carriveau and seconded by Mr. Aasness. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

Ms. Durand arrived at 11:35.

2. Commission Check-In

Chair Rasmussen stated that Commission members and the steering committee had an opportunity to provide updates on news or events happening in the community.

Ms. Grant provided the Commission a brief update on FAARMS and stated that they would be starting up tours for potential new growers. She also stated that Growing Together is planning a number of events throughout the summer to promote and highlight community gardening efforts in the area.

Ms. Bakare stated that she and Ms. Harden had given a presentation on systems destruction at the Health Equity Summit on April 9. She indicated that the summit dealt primarily with food access and focused on ways to empower people through food.

Ms. Oxendahl arrived at 10:37.

Ms. Carriveau informed the Commission that the Great Plains Food Bank would be hosting a pop-up perishable food pantry on May 10 at Moorhead High School. She also stated that her colleagues were currently in Washington D.C. meeting with Senator Heitkamp and Senator Hoeven to discuss SNAP and the upcoming Farm Bill.

Ms. Lipetzky stated that the next Heart-n- Soul Community Café would be held on May 13 from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Fargo Cass Public Health.

Ms. Durand stated that the Cass County Comprehensive Plan would be wrapping up in July and that there would be one additional public input opportunity on June 12.

Ms. Baker indicated that Prairie Roots Co-op has a new greenhouse with flowers and veggie starts for anyone interested. She also stated that the co-op will soon be adding additional local produce as the growing season ramps up.

Ms. Ussatis stated that NDSU Extension for Cass County is planning on providing a gardening assistance training class in cooperation with Growing Together.

Ms. Myrdal informed the Commission that the Little Free Garden program is now up to 179 gardens in 11 states and provinces. She also provided a brief update on the first season First Fridays @ B.

Ms. Harden stated that MPR had produced a good story on the Little Free Garden program and its impacts on the community. She also indicated that the northwest chapter of the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota would be hosting an event in mid-July highlighting several farms in the region. She further indicated that she is currently working on a research proposal on food waste in Minneapolis-St. Paul and the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area.

3a. Federal Nutrition Programs at Farmers Markets Education

Ms. Myrdal and Ms. Oxendahl provided the Commission information on the impacts of federal nutrition programs at farmers markets. Ms. Myrdal highlighted three main programs for food assistance: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP). She stated that nearly 454,000 residents in Minnesota (1 in 12 state residents) and 54,000 residents in North Dakota (1 in 14 state residents) participated in the SNAP program in 2017. She indicated that approximately 50 percent of SNAP beneficiaries are in working families and that the average monthly benefit for each household member was \$111 in Minnesota and \$121 in North Dakota. She stated that SNAP benefits are solely used to buy food items a household eats such as breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, meats, fish and poultry, and dairy products, as well as seeds and plants which produce food.

Ms. Myrdal indicated that farmers markets can apply to accept SNAP but that some markets lack the organizational structure to do so. She discussed several regional and national programs which support farmers markets including the Farmers Market Coalition, North Dakota Department of Human Services, the Minnesota Farmers Market Association, PartnerSHIP4Health, and Hunger Solutions. She also discussed double bucks programs, in which individuals may use EBT cards at farmers markets and receive a dollar-for-dollar match. She indicated that Minnesota currently offers a statewide Market Bucks program through Hunger Solutions.

Ms. Myrdal stated that, amongst the seven current farmers markets in the area, only three currently accept or partially accept SNAP: Great Plain Producer Association's Community Farmers Market, Hildebrant's Farmers Market, and the Red River Market.

Ms. Oxendahl stated that the WIC program is a federal nutrition program that services pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5. She indicated that there were 4,851 participants in Cass County and 2,472 participants in Clay County in 2017.

Ms. Oxendahl indicated that 21 states operate a WIC Cash Value Voucher (CVV) program, also known as WIC Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers. She stated that the program operates in Minnesota but does not extend to Clay County. She indicated that the voucher is \$6 for children and \$10 for mothers.

Ms. Oxendahl stated that another program, the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP), provides vouchers that can be used to purchase eligible items at authorized farmers markets, including nutrition education. She stated that the yearly benefit is between \$10 and \$30 and that the program operated in 36 states, including Minnesota, but does not extend to Clay County.

Ms. Oxendahl also highlighted the Senior FMNP, which was developed to assist seniors living on a limited income help increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables. She stated that participants receive coupons that can be used at farmers markets, produce stands and CSAs, and that participants must be at least 60 years old and have an income not exceeding 185 percent of federal poverty guidelines. She indicated that the yearly benefit is between \$20 and \$50 and that the program operates in 42 states, including Minnesota, but does not operate in Clay County.

Ms. Myrdal iterated several key points on why federal nutrition programs at farmers markets matter. She stated that, in addition to increasing access to fresh, nutritious produce for people with lower incomes, farmers markets often offer produce that is of higher nutritional value. She also indicated that nutrition program benefit local economies, and that \$1 in SNAP benefits generates \$1.70 in local economic activity. She also stated that farmers markets are also community gathering places and that nutrition programs create a bridge for all people to experience local food and build community together.

Ms. Oxendahl provided information on several city and state ordinances regarding federal nutrition programs and farmers markets including: Minneapolis, Hawaii, Los Angeles, Prince George's County in Maryland, and San Francisco.

Mr. Aasness left at 11:09.

Ms. Myrdal introduced Kim Wangler, Moorhead Parks and Recreation, and Mary Larson, Assistant Professor of NDSU and member of First Presbyterian Church in Moorhead to talk about their experience at setting up a SNAP program at the Moorhead Farmers Market. Ms. Wangler and Ms. Larson spoke about the partnership between First Presbyterian Church to help provide financial assistance for the Double Bucks program at the Moorhead Farmers Market. Ms. Wangler and Ms. Larson spoke about their efforts in setting up the program with the assistance of Ms. Myrdal.

3b. Federal Nutrition Programs at Farmers Markets Blueprint

Ms. Myrdal and Ms. Oxendahl informed the Commission that the Federal Nutrition Programs at Farmers Markets blueprint included in the packet materials would be discussed in more detail at the next Commission meeting.

4. Metropolitan Food Systems Plan Update

Mr. Altenburg and Ms. Harden provided the Commission a brief update on the Metropolitan Food Systems Plan update. Mr. Altenburg stated that Metro COG would be providing assistance with researching and developing the plan with funding through a portion of the North Dakota Chronic Disease Grant. He also indicated that Metro COG would be hosting a number of pop-up public input opportunities throughout the summer and that a schedule would be posted on the Cass Clay Food Partners Facebook page the coming weeks. He stated that the intended goal is to develop a plan that is easy to read and understand with a series of achievable recommendations for the Commission and local area jurisdictions.

Ms. Harden provided information on the proposed outline of the Metropolitan Food Systems Plan. She stated that, as currently envisioned, each chapter would be centered around the core values of the Cass Clay Food Partners and the Commission. She provided information on 20 to 30 health indicators that the plan hopes to research, as well as case studies highlighting local and regional food efforts. She concluded by asking the Commission about any potential food systems issues expected to come up in the next two to three years.

5. GleaND Update

Janice Tweet, GleaND Coordinator, provided the Commission with an update on GleaND. Ms. Tweet stated that the first growing season would be a pilot season and that four growers had been conformed in both Cass and Clay Counties. She indicated that volunteer outreach efforts have been focused at First Fridays @ B meetings, with upcoming meetings with Kiwanis and Rotary clubs.

Ms. Tweet stated that the organization now has a Facebook page, website at gleand.org, and email address at info@gleand.org. She indicated that the website has information for both growers and volunteers, including calendar and waiver of liability. She stated that GleaND will track crop types, amount collected, where produce is distributed, and number of volunteers. She concluded by stating that crops may be either organic or not, and that any pesticides used on crops would be documented.

6. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Rasmussen informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments.

No comments were made.

7. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable

Chair Rasmussen asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share any additional updates.

No additional comments were made.

8. Commission Action Steps

Chair Rasmussen stated that there would be no Commission meeting in July and that the next meeting would be held on September 12. He mentioned that a special First Friday meeting to discuss the Metropolitan Food Systems Plan update would be held on June 1 at the Moorhead Center Mall from 8:00 to 9:00 AM.

Chair Rasmussen informed the Commission that this would be Ms. Baker's last meeting as a member of the Steering Committee. He thanked her for all of her work throughout the years with the Commission.

Chair Rasmussen adjourned the meeting at 11:51 AM.