

Attachment 1

**29th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
March 6th, 2020
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commission, Interim Chair
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Steve Lindaas, Moorhead City Council (alternate for Sara Watson Curry)
Chelsey Johnson, Horace City Council
Beth McConnon, At-Large Member
Kayla Pridmore, At-Large Member
Janice Tweet, At-Large Member
Jeremiah Utecht, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commission
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member

Others Present:

Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health
Emma Notermann, Clay County Planning
Deb Haugen, Cass Clay Food Partners
Whitney Oxendahl, Cass Clay Food Partners
Stan Wolf, Cass County Weed Control
Gabriel Foltz, Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

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

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

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

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from January 8, 2020

A motion to approve the minutes for January was made by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Lindaas. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

Ms. Oxendahl arrived at 10:36 AM.

1c. Welcome to Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commission

Interim Chair Thorstad noted that Commissioner Ken Pawluk had been appointed to represent Cass County on the Food Commission.

2. Commission Check-In

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

Ms. Johnson stated that Horace would be including information on pollinator habitats in the city's next newsletter.

Mr. Beil arrived at 10:45 AM.

3. Certificate of Appreciation for Mindy Grant

Ms. Lipetzky informed the Commission that Mindy Grant, an at-large member since July 2016, would be stepping down.

Ms. Lipetzky thanked Ms. Grant for her service on the Food Commission. She stated that the steering committee would be sending her a certificate of appreciation for her work on the Commission.

4. Approve Appointment of New At-Large Members – Beth McConnon and Jeffrey Miller

Interim Chair Thorstad stated that the steering committee was seeking two new applicants to serve on the Commission, one for the opening left by Ms. Grant and one for a prior opening from January. He explained that the steering committee reviewed and recommended the appointment of Beth McConnon and Jeffrey Miller as two new at-large members.

A motion to approve the appointment of Beth McConnon and Jeffrey Miller to the Commission was made by Mr. Lindaas and seconded by Mr. Strand. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

5. Five Year Anniversary of the Cass Clay Food Commission

Ms. Lipetzky provided a brief overview of the activities and accomplishments of the Cass Clay Food Commission since its first meeting in March 2015.

Ms. Lipetzky began with a brief overview of food systems and the different activities they encompass including production, processing, transportation, and consumption, as well as how they impact nutrition, health, community economic growth, and agriculture. She explained that the Cass Clay Food Partners began as the Cass Clay Food Systems Initiative back in 2010 as a response to the good food movement. She noted that in 2013, Metro COG assisted in the development of the Metropolitan Food Systems Plan, the first effort of its kind in the metropolitan area. She explained that the plan's initial recommendation was the formation of a food council to discuss food systems issues at a regional level. She further described how the Commission and steering committee were reorganized in 2017, with the Food Action Network being formed in early 2018.

Ms. Lipetzky provide information on the work of the Commission over the years in three focus areas: urban agriculture, food access, and sustainability. She noted that the Commission had discussed and approved 17 different blueprints, issue briefs, and snapshots on a variety of issues and that language to promote food systems had been integrated into area comprehensive plans for Dilworth, Horace, Casselton, and Cass County. She also noted specific topic areas such as backyard chickens in Fargo, GleaNND, and the Stock Health Shop Healthy corner store initiative. She concluded with opportunities for moving forward to further bring the education and research of the Commission into action.

6. Cass County Weed Control

Stan Wolf, Weed Control Officer for Cass County, presented the Commission information regarding Cass County's weed control program

Mr. Wolf explained that Cass County Weed Control is responsible for the control of noxious weeds within Cass County on both public and private land. He stated that a major responsibility of the program is controlling noxious weeds in right-of-ways and monitoring public lands owned by water resource districts, the county park, flood buy-out lots, and some city properties. He explained that the program does not conduct weed control activities within city limits unless under express agreement by a city.

Mr. Wolf stated that most weed control efforts involve herbicide application, but other methods include mowing, tillage, or hand pulling depending on a host of different factors. He noted that the program also utilizes bio-control agents, namely insects that natural attack and destroy a specific weed. He stated that there are 13 noxious weeds varieties as identified by the North Dakota Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Wolf explained that the weed control program cooperates with different agencies and civic groups on weed control issues. He also stated that the program announces any weed control activities via social media through the county communication officer to ensure that the public is aware of control efforts in the area.

7. Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District

Gabriel Foltz, District Technician and County Ag Inspector for the Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District, addressed the Commission to explain Clay County's noxious weed spraying program.

Mr. Foltz explained that, according to Minnesota's noxious weed law, noxious weeds are plants that are a threat to public health, the environment, public roads, crops, livestock, or other property. He stated that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture puts out a noxious weed list every year.

Mr. Foltz stated that the district meets with the highway department and contractors in early spring to determine timing and schedules for weed spraying on planned roadways. He explained that the district monitors other roadways throughout the summer and sprays as needed while funding is available. He noted that the district plans for some fall spraying, including for thistles as well as road ditches that border sensitive crops such as soybeans and sugar beets.

Mr. Foltz informed the Commission that locations targeted for weed spraying include county right-of-ways and a number of roadways in the eastern half of the county. He also noted that the district will spot spray where noxious weeds are present and will spray flood buy-out properties if needed. He stated that weed control along township roads are the responsibility of the township.

Mr. Foltz stated that the district provides a general notice for landowners to control noxious weeds in newspapers in mid-May. He noted that there is no specific notification for when spraying begins and that times vary year to year based on weather. He concluded with information on Minnesota's buffer law, which requires a 50' buffer of perennial vegetation along public waters, designated streams, rivers, wetlands, and lakes; and a 16.5' buffer along public drainage ditches. He noted that these buffers do not directly relate to road ditch spraying but that they do assist in weed control efforts.

8. Pesticide Use on Public Land Issue Brief and Snapshot

Ms. Oxendahl presented a draft issue brief and community snapshot regarding pesticide use on public land. She stated that the issue brief explains issues associated with synthetic chemical pesticides including: negative impacts to pollinators, ground and surface water contamination, pesticide drift which can occur during sprayed applications, and neurotoxicity to humans. She provided further examples of how cities and states are addressing certain pesticides including: implementing integrated pest management (IPM) plans to reduce pesticide use, creating no-spray buffer zones, banning glyphosate on public lands, and adopting rules to restrict pesticide use to protect local pollinators.

Ms. Oxendahl presented the Commission information included in the draft community snapshot highlighting weed and insect control for the following: Cass County Vector Control, Cass County Weed Control, the City of Fargo, Fargo Parks District, West Fargo Parks Department, Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District, the City of Moorhead, the City of Dilworth, and the City of Horace. She briefly iterated how local non-profits including Audubon Dakota, Longspur Prairie, Pheasants Forever, and River Keepers reduce pesticide use by planting prairie grasses, certain trees, and pollinator habitats. She also explained a short list of community actions that jurisdictions and organizations could consider including: communication and education strategies, working with non-profits, IPM plans, recruiting volunteers to hand-weed certain areas, and creating no-spray buffer zones around playgrounds and other sensitive areas.

A motion to approve the issue brief and snapshot was made by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Lindaas. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

9. Public Comment Opportunity

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

Jen Walla, former AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer for the Prairie Roots Community Fund, expressed her gratitude to the Commission for continuing the conversation regarding pesticide spraying in the community. She stated that she would like to see more visible signage in parks and public areas where chemical spraying may have occurred. She also iterated that knowing what is sprayed and how often is beneficial for people who may want to pick certain plants for various uses.

Sam Wagner, Ag and Food Field Organizer for the Dakota Resource Council, provided information on the member-driven Dakota Resource Council and its promotion of sustainable agriculture and soil practices. He explained that he wanted to extend his organization's resources and technical expertise to future Commission activities.

Julie Brummond, Fargo resident, provided further comments and concerns on chemical use in the area. She noted that these sometimes including "forever chemicals" that don't break down once they are in the environment. She stated that she hoped area jurisdictions would strive to keep chemical use down to the bear minimum needed. She also explained that there should be better notification or information prior to spraying in parks and public areas so that residents aren't breathing in different chemicals.

10. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable

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

11. Commission Action Steps

Interim Chair Thorstad stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on May 13. He also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held on April 13, 8:00 AM at Theatre B in Moorhead.

Interim Chair Thorstad adjourned the meeting at 11:54 AM.