

**46th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
November 8, 2023
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Arlette Preston, Fargo City Commission, Chair
Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council
Jace Hellman, Horace City Council (proxy)
Tony Grindberg, Cass County Commission
Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission
Dave Steichen, 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:

Mandy George, West Fargo City Commission
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member

Others Present:

Michelle Draxten, 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
Cheryal Hills, Region Five Development Commission
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

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. Kopperud and seconded by Ms. Nesemeier. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from September 13, 2023

A motion to approve the minutes for September 2023 was made by Mr. Steichen and seconded by Ms. Kopperud. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Commission Introductions

Chair Preston lead Commission and steering committee members in a brief round of introductions.

3. Cass Clay Food Partners Resource Review

Mr. Altenburg explained that in the past eight years, the Cass Clay Food Partners had developed nearly two dozen resource documents highlighting urban agriculture, food access, sustainability, and other food systems topic areas relevant to the Fargo-Moorhead area.

He noted that these documents have included blueprints, which look at food systems from a land development code perspective; and issue briefs and snapshots, which provide more of an overview of an issue the community may have seen locally.

Mr. Altenburg provided a brief overview of the Incorporating Food Systems Language into Comprehensive issue brief developed in May 2021. Ms. Franck then discussed how Clay County has been using their recently adopted comprehensive plan to guide policy decisions regarding land use and zoning to develop regulations. She noted that the county was soliciting input from residents on a brief survey regarding land use and development.

4. North Central USDA Regional Food Business Center Update

Cheryal Hills, Executive Director of the Region Five Development Commission based in Staples, Minnesota, discussed the new North Central USDA Regional Food Business Center. She noted that the center is one of 12 new food business centers in the U.S. and serves North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

Ms. Hills stated that the purpose of the USDA Regional Food Business Center is to spur economic opportunities across the region and create a more diversified and resilient food system. She said that the new food business centers are designed to create opportunities for targeted, region-specific solutions, maximize the impact of locally driven investment, complement and support other USDA programs, and ensure ongoing, regionally appropriate support and coordination.

Ms. Hills explained that the three responsibilities of the North Central USDA Regional Food Business Center included coordination, technical assistance, and capacity building. She stated that its technical assistance would provide direct assistance to small- and mid-sized food and farm businesses (producers, processors, distributors, and other businesses within the food supply chain, and food value and supply chain coordination. She further stated that the center would provide financial assistance through business builder sub awards up to \$100,000 to support projects focused on emerging regional needs and businesses working towards expansion.

5. Asset Inventory Activity

Ms. Tweet led the Commission through an asset inventory activity. She asked Commission and steering committee members to form groups and comment on assets they saw in the community, whether assets were regional or specific to certain communities, and what assets groups agreed on collectively.

6. Steering Committee Updates

Ms. Draxten provided an informational update to the Commission regarding the steering committee's recent activities.

7. Kudos and Community Recognition

Ms. Draxten highlighted several people and organizations for their work in the community including:

- Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton (DGF) School is launching its first Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter. There are currently 20 FFA chapters within a 50-mile radius and DGF and CoBank announced a \$5,000 joint grant to assist in the startup of the new FFA chapter. CoBank is a cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. Future Farmers of America is a dynamic youth organization that prepares members for leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.

- Food of the North has served as the Cass Clay Food Action Network since 2017. During that time, Food of the North has hosted over 80 unique events, launched multiple community partnerships, and has been recognized as a driving force for change in the Fargo-Moorhead local food community. Food of the North's farewell celebration will be held Friday, December 1st, from 4:30 to 6:00 PM at Drekker's Brewhalla.

8. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Preston 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.

No additional public comments were made.

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

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

10. Commission Action Steps

Chair Preston stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on January 10, 2024. She also mentioned that the First Fridays Farewell Celebration event would be held at Drekker Brewhalla in Fargo on December 1 at 4:30 PM and that the next Coffee with the Commission event would be on a date to be determined.

Chair Preston adjourned the meeting at 11:59 AM.