

Attachment 1

**25th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
May 8th, 2019
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commission, Chair
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Sara Watson Curry, Moorhead City Council
Chelsey Johnson, Horace City Council
Vern Bennett, Cass County Commission
Bukola Bakare, At-Large Member
Nancy Carriveau, At-Large Member
Mindy Grant, At-Large Member
Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission
Kayla Pridmore, At-Large Member
Jeremiah Utecht, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

John Strand, Fargo City Commission

Others Present:

Margie Bailly, Cass Clay Food Partners
Bob Bertsch, Graduate Student NDSU Extension
Luke Champa, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments
Abby Gold, NDSU Department of Public Health
Gary Goreham, NDSU Department of Anthropology and Sociology
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health
Paula Selzler, Sodexo
Hunter Tran, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

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

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

Chair Thorstad noted that the agenda had been revised. He noted that item 5 would be grouped with item 7, and that Ms. Harden and Lipetzky would discuss the Metro Food Plan in Mr. Altenburg's absence.

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Ms. Watson Curry and seconded by Ms. Carriveau. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from March 13, 2019

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

2. Commission Check-In

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 indicated that she is working with a resident in Horace to get a farmer's market started and will be trying it out a few times this summer, with the goal of having a more permanent location in the summer of 2020.

Ms. Carriveau stated that letter carriers in Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth would be picking up canned food items from homes on Saturday, May 11. She noted that the food would be going to the Great Plains Food Bank, Dorothy Day, and the Emergency Food Pantry. She stated that additional volunteers are welcome to help collect the food.

Ms. Carriveau added that with the end of school coming up, the food bank would be helping with the childhood hunger programs this summer. She explained that as kids will not be getting food provided at school through school breakfast and or lunch, the food bank and other partners would be holding a youth summer meals program. She said they will be set up at one location in Village West and one in West Fargo.

Mindy Grant arrived at 10:35 AM.

3. Single Use Packaging Materials Issue Brief and Snapshot

Ms. Oxendahl gave a presentation regarding single use materials. She informed the commission that many communities are taking efforts to reduce plastic waste by eliminating the harmful single use items.

Ms. Oxendahl went on to talk about a couple things happening in the region. First, she said there is the FM Plastic Bag Task Force, who is working in the metro to educate the public on what they can do with plastic bags. Prairie Roots Food Coop has eliminated plastic bags for customers to carry groceries out of the store. They have also started a take-a-jar leave-a-jar program which cleans and sanitizes different containers for more sustainable use. She said Natural Grocers has also eliminated plastic bags. The Red River Market has also become a landfill free event. She said that the market sees 7,000 to 10,000 people a day, and would like to see a commercial composting option in the region, as they need more room to compost any waste produced by the market or its vendors. She said that Concordia and MSUM have a green-to-go program for students to take any leftovers from meals in a reusable container that they can bring back to the cafeteria to be cleaned. She added that there are several businesses and restaurants in our community that are working to reduce plastic waste. She informed the commission of a 2019 ND bill (HB1200) which puts a ban on the ban of single use plastics, which she believes may be a step in the wrong direction.

Ms. Oxendahl concluded with actions that our community should consider such as a high-heat commercial composting site, providing resources to small businesses on how to reduce their use of single use plastic materials, and supporting those businesses that have reduced their use of single use materials. She then pointed commissioners to the final page of her presentation which offers examples of what people can do to reduce single use materials in their day-to-day lives.

Ms. Mongeau suggested that awareness is key and even simple signage may go a long way in helping people recycle and reduce waste.

Mr. Utecht asked if there had been any consideration in helping new businesses with reducing single use materials, and if there were any resources out there to help new businesses. Ms. Oxendahl said there were not many resources but it could be a great partnership for local government to assist the business community.

Ms. Watson Curry reiterated that plastic bags are not quite as visible, but stressed that the plastic bags cannot be recycled in commingled recycling bins. She then asked if there was any discussion with local recycling businesses. Ms. Oxendahl said no but she will be updating the snapshot. Ms. Watson Curry suggested we reach out to recycling businesses in the region to make sure the recycling stream is working from household to sorting bin to the recycling business as a useable product.

Ms. Gold said it is important to include a zero waste mindset into business models and especially through resources provided to new businesses. She said it could help save money throughout the community.

Mr. Bennett asked if anyone had an opinion about incinerating some waste products. Ms. Oxendahl said there is an air quality issue related to incinerating waste but the option could always be explored further by local governments. Ms. Gold added that composting is the most environmentally friendly and cost effective way to take things out of the landfill.

Mr. Thorstad asked if it would be worthwhile to engage the chamber of commerce on this topic. Ms. Oxendahl said yes it would be very worthwhile to spread this information throughout the community. Ms. Watson Curry said that there is a group from the chamber of commerce that is interested in being more environmentally friendly when handling waste in our communities.

4. Benefits for Businesses in Reducing Single Use Materials

Paula Selzler introduced herself and her employer Sodexo, which is an international company that provides facilities management and food service to MSUM, Essentia Health, and Noridian. Ms. Selzler currently works at Essentia Health Hospital in Fargo. The Hospital opened in 2000 and has grown, with a café and kitchen remodel in 2015. Ms. Selzler said currently they serve 250-400 trays of food in room service, and 750-1,000 meals in retail everyday.

Ms. Selzler said that room service is 75% reusable products however the café is 95% single use products. She shared some images and statistics of how much single use plastic pollutes the earth. She added that Sodexo has a commitment for 2025 or sooner to train employees to reduce carbon emissions and work on food waste targets as well. In the short-term she said they will eliminate single use plastic take out bags and plastic stirrers and reduce plastic straw use by adopting a 'by request' policy. Long-term goals will take place by 2025.

Ms. Selzler shared an example of success at Essentia Health. She said they were looking for ways to reduce departmental costs and identified an opportunity in spending of disposable materials. She said staff would often use disposable 32oz styrofoam cups to fill with water however, they would often double them up for better insulation and add a plastic lid and straw. The costs were not recouped as this was for employees, and it resulted in more plastic waste. Ms. Selzler said that she offered Essentia Health mugs that could be purchased by employees and café customers. The stainless steel mugs were on sale for \$20 however, Ms. Selzler did not care about the cost of the mugs as much as the potential reduction in waste. She offered incentives for people to purchase them such as a free fill of coffee or soda and discounts when using any reusable mug. Ms. Selzler also said they began charging \$0.25 for each styrofoam cup without a beverage purchase. She said that they sold 125 of the 150 mugs they purchased.

Ms. Selzler then shared some results from the Essentia Health mug program. She said they reduced their spending on the styrofoam cups by \$1,000 a month. Since charging for the styrofoam cups without a beverage purchase, they earn \$75 a month. She went on to say that

in three months time, it reduced the usage of disposable cups by 23,000, which is a substantial number.

Ms. Selzler said their future goals include reducing straw use all around, and reducing single use plastic waste in the café. She shared that if they use a stainless steel fork five times, they break even on the cost of five disposable forks.

Ms. Selzler shared some other things that the community could look at including proper disposal of compostable single use items, community education, and strategies for reducing single use items such as charging for shopping bags. She shared an example of Davies High School in Fargo, explaining that they implemented reusable forks in the cafeteria; however, students were throwing them in the trash in hopes that the school would switch to disposables because reusable forks are seen as less clean. She shared this example because it is important to educate children and adults alike about this information.

Mr. Thorstad said that what Ms. Selzler shared is very important. He agreed with her that education is very important at every level, including what can and cannot be recycled.

Ms. Johnson said she was struck by the quantity of cups reduced in three months and what a difference that was.

6. Social Network Analysis

Bob Bertsch explained what the social network analysis for the Cass Clay Food Commission is about, and how it will help guide food policy in the region. The analysis will also map the relationships between decision makers in Cass and Clay counties. Mr. Bertsch said that this will help shape food policy in the region by showing what relationships are strongest and who has the most interactions on the commission. He said the analysis will also help show where stronger connections can be made to improve decision making across the region. He added that it will be interesting to see how local government decision makers are connected with food policy.

Mr. Bertsch asked the Commission to please fill out the survey, whether online or with the envelope provided.

Ms. Bakare asked who would be taking the survey. Mr. Bertsch responded that the Cass Clay Food Commission, City Commissions, County Commissions, Cass Clay Food Commission Steering Committee, and some city staff such as administrators, community developers, and planners. She asked if there would be an interest in also seeing how the community engages with the policy makers. Mr. Bertsch said that yes, he would be really interested in that however it is a serious undertaking to get the response rate required to show informative results.

Ms. Harden said that names can be added to the survey too if they are not on the original list of 68.

Mr. Thorstad asked if they were required to select a single category that describes the relationship to other decision makers, or if multiple categories may apply. Mr. Bertsch said select the one category that best describes the relationship as it relates to food policy.

Ms. Watson Curry asked if there was an encouraged deadline for survey completion. Mr. Bertsch said that by the end of June they would like to have all the responses and dive into analysis mode.

Ms. Mongeau left at 11:23 AM.

7. Commission Update on Previous & Future Activities

Ms. Harden gave a brief update on the Metro Food Systems Plan. She said that she, Ms. Lipetzky, and Metro COG would be coming to decision making bodies sometime in the summer to provide an update on the plan. Ms. Harden added that the Cass Clay Food Partners has developed several blueprints, which provide helpful information regarding key food related topics that impact the metropolitan area.

Ms. Lipetzky gave a recap about food systems topics that have been covered by the Cass Clay Food Partners. She added that the documents used to be called blueprints, however lately have been called issue briefs and community snapshots. She explained that the City of Fargo used the Backyard Chicken Keeping blueprint to help develop the city's ordinance on chicken keeping. She reminded the commission that these documents are at their disposal for any food system related issues that may come up in their communities.

Mr. Thorstad said it might be helpful to give municipalities printed copies of the food system blue prints and make it easier to get in their hands.

Ms. Harden asked each commissioner to share any food policy issues that are on their radar. Ms. Watson Curry highlighted that the Metro Food Plan is referenced in the City of Moorhead's Strategic planning document. Ms. Watson Curry then said some issues have come up regarding rain gardens, pollinator habitat, composting, community gardens, backyard bee keeping, and backyard chicken keeping.

8. Public Comment Opportunity

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

Barb Villella, Prairie Roots Community Fund, gave an update about what the Prairie Roots Community Fund is working on including the spring garden, double SNAP bucks program, and classes at Madison School. She added that she was also working on a double SNAP bucks program at the West Acres Farmers Market as well.

Ms. Villella also noted one issue she had come across in the metro is the limit of the amount of grocery bags that can be carried onto the bus. She said currently the limit is four, and that many people do not know there is a limit. Ms. Bakare asked why the limit would be four. Ms. Villella said that it is most likely a local level decision. Ms. Harden said that she would look into it more closely.

Ms. Harden said that there would be a University of Minnesota Extension workshop on backyard chicken keeping in Moorhead on Saturday, May 11. The reason the workshop is happening is because of demand of the local community. She said the workshop would be at the Courtyard Marriott from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM, and would include a discussion about the current policies regarding chickens.

9. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable

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

No additional comments were made.

10. Commission Action Steps

Chair Thorstad stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on September 11. He also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held on May 10 at 8:00 AM located at Theatre B in Moorhead.

Mr. Thorstad informed the commission that the Red River Market is moving to the Forum parking lot for a couple years due to construction downtown.

Chair Thorstad adjourned the meeting at 11:45 AM.