

# Attachment 1

**34<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Cass Clay Food Commission  
May 12, 2021  
Virtual Meeting**

**Members Present:**

Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission, Chair  
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council  
Arlette Preston, Fargo City Commission  
Deb White, City of Moorhead  
Duane Breitling, Cass County Commission  
Mandy George, West Fargo City Commission  
Beth McConnon, At-Large Member  
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member  
Janice Tweet, At-Large Member  
Jeremiah Utecht, At-Large Member

**Members Absent:**

Chelsey Johnson, Horace City Council  
Jeff York, At-Large Member

**Others Present:**

Jenna Kahly, Clay County Commission  
Genesis Pierre, Fargo Cass Public Health  
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health  
Rita Ussatis, NDSU Extension  
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension  
Mary Larson, NDSU – Community Health Sciences Specialization  
Taylor Syvertson, Great Plains Food Bank  
Erika Franck Clay County Planning  
Deb Haugen, Cass Clay Food Partners  
Dana Rieth, West Fargo Public Schools  
Cindy, Public Citizen  
Don B., Public Citizen  
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Chair Mongeau 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. White and seconded by Mr. Breitling. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**1b. Review and Action on Minutes from March 10, 2021**

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

**2. Commission Check-In**

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

Ms. White provided an update on changes to Moorhead's mosquito spraying policy. She noted that the city changed its threshold which triggers aerial spraying and that it also changed the composition of its spraying mix to a formula that is less detrimental to pollinators.

Ms. Ussatis explained that a number of urban youth gardening spots were still available in north Fargo. She noted that several master gardeners serve as mentors and that the fee is \$10. Chair Mongeau asked if they were available to area youth in both North Dakota and Minnesota. Ms. Ussatis responded that gardening spots were open to all area youth.

Mr. Breitling noted that the City of Moorhead contracts with Cass County Vector Control to provide aerial spraying services and asked to acknowledge that.

Ms. Preston informed the Commission that Fargo's Sustainability and Resiliency Committee met for a second time in April and that the City of Fargo had also had a lengthy discussion about its mosquito control agreement with Cass County Vector Control.

Mr. Utecht stated that, with the rollback in Covid-19 restrictions, he and others had seen a surge in food and services spending and that initial indicators for area farmers markets look to be exceptionally strong.

Ms. Harden explained that she and the Food Partners have been working with Cass County Weed Control for the past year and noted that there is now more communication when spraying for weeds is happening. She noted that Cass County Weed Control sent out a press release about spraying that was going to occur in south Fargo and that the Food Partners will continue to share information releases on its Facebook page.

Chair Mongeau stated that Clay County was continuing to work on its comprehensive plan with the assistance of Metro COG. She explained that they are trying to be deliberate in its outreach with community members and striving to ensure that important issues, including food access, are addressed as part of the planning process.

### **3. Jurisdiction Spotlight: City of West Fargo**

Dana Rieth, Food Service Director for West Fargo Public Schools, provided information on two community initiatives in West Fargo. She explained that the school district had begun a school lunch repack pilot project, which repurposes unserved, over-produced foods from school kitchens and distributes it through the school food pantry system. She stated that food products were placed into containers with clear lids, frozen overnight, and then distributed by school counselors and social workers to students in need. Information that was collected between April and May showed that 177 containers were filled with leftovers and that 159 were distributed to students during the two-month pilot project.

Ms. Rieth also spoke about the summer meals program that would be beginning. She noted that the USDA had granted waivers to continue serving free meals to students in any area that West Fargo Public Schools would provide free meals at school sites to both enrolled students and the community. She also explained that West Fargo Public Schools would be providing weekly grocery boxes at two locations throughout June and July and that parents would be able to pick up meals for those 18 and younger. She stated that more detailed information would be available on the district website.

#### **4. Incorporating Food Systems Language into Planning Documents Issue Brief and Snapshot**

Genesis Pierre, Fargo Cass Public Health Dietetic Intern, provided an overview of the draft issue brief and snapshot regarding incorporating food systems language into comprehensive planning documents.

Ms. Pierre explained that addressing food systems in local planning efforts can play an important role in improving the health and future of a community. She stated that food systems planning can help maintain and grow economic opportunities in food sector jobs and businesses in areas such as agriculture and food production, food processing, and food retail. She also mentioned that sustainable farming practices can reduce the amount of energy and resources needed for food production, increasing the availability and access to healthy, fresh food.

Ms. Pierre noted that the American Planning Association has identified five food systems-related areas commonly addressed in comprehensive plans: rural agriculture, food access and availability, urban agriculture, food retail, and food waste. She also talked about several considerations discussed in the issues brief including: each community has unique food systems issues, food systems issues can be addressed either specifically or generally along other topic areas, identifying partners is important in planning and implementation. She concluded issue brief with a list of resources available including the Minnesota Food Charter and American Planning Association.

Ms. Pierre stated that the snapshot was developed to show how information in the issues brief has been applied locally. She provided a review of eight comprehensive plans in Cass and Clay counties, as well as the recently completed FM Greenway Recreation Master Plan. She concluded with a list a community actions for both local governments and individuals including: utilizing data sets to identify food access issues, developing policies that support strong local food systems, working with community partners and city leaders, and participating in public input meetings when plans are being developed and provide ideas on how to address food systems issues.

Chair Mongeau stated that a final issue brief and snapshot would be brought before the Commission at the next meeting.

#### **5. Selling Local Food in Our Region**

Ms. Harden provided a brief presentation on the focus of selling local food in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. She provided an update on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guides for local residents interested in growing, harvesting, and selling food, resources for navigating cottage food laws and selling across state lines, and discussion points on additional food policy questions and topics coming up in local jurisdictions.

Ms. Harden explained that the FAQs were part of the Cass Clay Food Partner's response to Covid-19 to more readily answer questions from residents about local food policy. She also noted that they provided an opportunity to update previous blueprints and give clarification on a few different policy interpretations. The most common policy questions related to urban agriculture included gardens (vegetable, boulevard, and pollinator), composting and garden structures, and chickens and bees.

Ms. Harden stated that a second FAW is in progress to address topics related to selling and processing local food. Of note were the areas of: residential sales of produce and honey, processing game and small livestock, cottage foods, selling across state lines, and donating local food. She concluded by saying that selling local food is generally allowed but that there were opportunities to strengthen policy and network capacity.

## **6. Public Comment Opportunity**

Chair Mongeau informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. She noted that jurisdictions are still looking at ways to get information out to the public and to allow public participation that is safe and comfortable for everyone. She asked how the public is able to access current virtual meetings and how Commission meetings are currently being advertised.

Ms. Harden replied that the information is still sent out on the Food Partner's Facebook page and that anyone who has signed up to receive notifications through Metro COG still receive meeting agendas and packets. She also stated information is sometimes shared with other Facebook pages such as Moorhead=Fantastic, but said that there were likely ways to better engage the public or to solicit public comments.

Chair Mongeau said that the reason she brought up the question is that, during in-person meetings, there were a number of people who would regularly attend and provide comments or updates. She asked if there were a way to include another option for members of the public to submit comments, such as an additional link that is sent out with meeting materials.

No additional public comments were made.

## **7. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable**

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

Ms. Ussatis noted that one of her colleagues with NDSU Extension was working on a Little Free Food Pantry program for non-perishable foods. She stated that one would soon be constructed at NDSU and that the program was looking for additional funding and partners to continue building at other locations in the community.

Mr. Altenburg explained that Jeff York, At-Large Member, had informed him that RDO would likely be reinstating its volunteer program this summer, in which employees are given eight hours to volunteer their time in either departments or teams. He asked that if anyone had any volunteer opportunities that they were aware of, to share them with him.

Ms. Haugen stated that there were still spaces available to anyone looking to work in a community garden with Growing Together, especially at their new location at Gethsemane Episcopal Cathedral in Fargo. She noted that anyone who was interested could reach out to Jack Wood.

Ms. Kahly asked if there were any updates from Extension on creating a drop-off site for excess garden produce to be donated to area food pantries. Chair Mongeau and Ms. Harden replied that they hadn't seen anything but that Mindy Grant with the U of M-Clay County Extension Office may know more.

## **8. Commission Action Steps**

Chair Mongeau stated that there would not be a meeting in July and that the next Commission meeting would be held on September 8. She also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held online on June 4 at 8:00 AM.

Chair Mongeau adjourned the meeting at 11:55 AM.