

**14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Cass Clay Food Commission  
May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
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  
John Strand, Fargo City Commission  
Jon Evert, At-Large Member  
Mindy Grant, At-Large Member  
Chris Olson, At-Large Member  
Kayla Pridmore, At-Large Member  
Dana Rieth, At-Large Member

**Members Absent:**

Heidi Durand, Moorhead City Council

**Others Present:**

Megan Myrdal, Project Coordinator  
Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health  
Hali Durand, Cass County Planning  
Rita Ussatis, North Dakota State University Extension Agent – Cass County  
Abby Gold, Cass Clay Food Systems Initiative  
Joleen Baker, Cass Clay Food Systems Initiative  
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. Evert and seconded by Mr. Aasness. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**1(b). Review and Action on Minutes from March 8, 2017**

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

**1(c). Commission Check-In**

Chair Rasmussen informed the Commission that members would have an opportunity to give an update on any news or events happening in the community.

Ms. Lipetzky stated that the One Vegetable One Community (OVOC) program, a partnership between the University of Minnesota, Fargo Cass Public Health, Clay County Public Health, and the Cass Clay Healthy People Initiative, is now in its fifth year. She explained that OVOC uses the distribution of an annually selected vegetable to unite the Fargo-Moorhead community in a discussion about food and nutrition. She stated that kale has been selected for 2017 and that

starter packets include seeds, growing information, facts about cooking, and nutritional value. She explained that there is also a Facebook page where people can find more information.

Ms. Gold stated that all 115 plots had been rented out at Probstfield Farm and that 80 gardeners were involved in its community gardening operations.

Ms. Baker informed the Commission that she had recently been hired as the Produce Manager for the new Prairie Roots Co-op in downtown Fargo.

Mr. Olson stated that the next Heart-n-Soul Community Café would be on May 14 at Josie's Corner.

Mr. Strand provided the Commission information on the latest discussions on urban chickens following ordinance readings on the issue in Fargo.

Ms. Myrdal informed the Commission on recent events and happenings including Terra Madre at Trollwood Center for Performing Arts in April, which had over 1,000 attendees. She also indicated that Peter Schultz, who presented at the Commission in March, would be transforming his front yard into a community orchard and that people were encouraged to visit to learn more about best practices in front yard gardening.

## **2. Approve Appointment of New At-Large Member – Kayla Pridmore**

Mr. Altenburg explained that, in March, Stephanie Reynolds signaled she would be stepping down from the Commission to focus on Clay County Solid Waste's conversion to single-sort recycling. He explained that the Steering Committee reviewed at-large member applicants on-file and ranked each candidate according to expertise, how they would fill potential gaps as they relate to food systems issues, time commitment, and advocacy.

Mr. Altenburg stated that with the completion of this process, the Steering Committee recommends the appointment of Kayla Pridmore as new at-large member to the Commission.

A motion to approve the the appointment of Kayla Pridmore to the Commission was made by Ms. Mongeau and seconded by Mr. Aasness. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

## **3. Residential Gardening Blueprint Discussion & Vote for Approval**

Chair Rasmussen asked Ms. Baker if there were any updates or revisions made to the residential gardening blueprint. Ms. Baker informed the Commission that she included additional information on soil conservation districts in Cass and Clay Counties for residents interested in establishing pollinator habitats.

A motion to approve the residential gardening blueprint was made by Mr. Evert and seconded by Ms. Mongeau. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

## **4. Issue Brief: Food & Real Estate**

Ms. Myrdal informed the Commission that, based on discussions at the prior meeting involving residential growing, two issue briefs that had been prepared: one from a real estate and development perspective, and the other focusing on urban agriculture for apartment living. She stated that much of the Steering Committee's research came from the Urban Land Institute and its report *Cultivating Development – Trends and Opportunities at the Intersection of Food and Real Estate*.

Ms. Myrdal informed the Commission that there were several different types of food real estate developments. She explained that agrihoods are single-family, multifamily, or mixed-use communities built with a working farm as a focus. She stated that food-centric residential development are single-family or multifamily developments built around community gardens or restaurants that have a strong food identity. She explained that next-generation urban markets are food halls that employ innovative food sourcing concepts to encourage food entrepreneurship and support other components of mixed-use developments. She stated that food-centered retail and mixed-use developments are projects with restaurants and food stores as central development components. She explained that food hubs and culinary incubators serve as regional processing and distribution centers that give food-based entrepreneurs access to commercial kitchens and retail and institutional customers. She concluded by explaining that different types of innovations and innovators encompass policies, approaches, and investors that promote sustainability, healthy food access, and economic development.

Ms. Myrdal stated that benefits for food-related real estate developments include: opportunities to create a sense of attachment to development projects, establishing a unique community identity, and fostering stronger community social ties, as well as increasing access to healthy food options, incorporating amenities such as wellness clinics and food co-ops, and providing nutrition and cooking education programs. She explained that these types of developments may also help to attract and retain new residents to the Fargo-Moorhead area, which currently has a worker shortage and approximately 4,000 to 4,500 open jobs.

Ms. Myrdal further explained that food-related developments also help to preserve farmland, which increases food security and community resilience. She also stated that food-centric real estate projects create the ability to grow, produce and distribute, and dispose of foods in smaller geographic areas, which helps address issues such as food waste, climate change, and environment stresses.

Ms. Myrdal described several examples of food real estate projects in the United States including: Serenbe in Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia; Agritopia in Phoenix, Arizona; Oxbow Public Market in Napa, California; Via Verde in South Bronx, New York; and Summers Corner in Summerville, South Carolina.

Ms. Baker provided the Commission information on apartment living and urban agriculture in the Fargo-Moorhead area. She explained that there are over 42,000 renter households in the area, with over 24,000 in Fargo alone, and that these numbers represent a number of people without easy access to grow their own food if they were to choose to do so. She explained that there are ten community gardens in the area that do provide gardening outlets and that many promote shared space, partnership, and community.

Ms. Baker provided examples of urban residences and apartments designed around urban agriculture including Urby in Staten Island, New York; Stack House in Seattle, Washington; and The Plant in Toronto, Ontario.

Mr. Strand stated that these were intriguing concepts and that he would like to see someone approach developers to see what their initial thoughts would be on incorporating food-centric concepts in residential developments in the area.

Ms. Gold iterated that the soil in the Red River Valley is some of the most fertile in the world and that it would be good to take steps to preserve agriculturally-productive land in the metro area.

### **5a. Education: Gleaning**

Michelle Gleason and Anna Johnson provided the Commission information and education on gleaning practices.

Ms. Johnson stated that both the EPA and USDA have definitions for gleaning which include the collection of crops from fields that have already been mechanically harvested or the act of collecting excess fresh foods from farms, gardens, farmers markets, grocers, restaurants, and other sources. She explained that the general process for gleaning typically include donors providing information on estimated harvest times and yields, volunteers signing up and completing liability waivers, and transportation coordination.

Ms. Johnson explained that gleaning is important because it prevents food waste, in which up to 40 percent of food in the United States is uneaten; and food insecurity, which affects 9.6 percent of residents in Cass County and 15.4 percent of residents nation-wide. She stated that food recovery can come from field gleaning, wholesale produce salvage, perishable and prepared food rescue, and non-perishable food donations. She added that there are very few regulations that address gleaning in North Dakota.

Ms. Johnson stated that the benefits of gleaning include increased consumption of local foods, reduction of food waste, increased physical activity, reduction of greenhouse gases, and improved access to healthy foods. She explained that risks do include potential injuries to volunteers, damage to private property, and food safety violations.

Mr. Strand asked whether hunting could be considered as part of gleaning practices. Ms. Johnson replied that she was unsure whether other parts of the country have integrated excess field game in gleaning practices. Ms. Gleason responded that food safety would be the most important component of any potential field game gleaning. Ms. Lipetzky stated that field game is required to be processed in a licensed facility in North Dakota. Mr. Strand that very few licensed processors exist in rural areas, which would have an impact on facilitating distribution of field game to others. Ms. Myrdal stated that the North Dakota Game and Fish Department has a Sportsmen Against Hunger chapter that raises money for processing of donated deer and goose meat, and coordinates distribution to food pantries in the state. She further stated that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has information on what types of game meat can and cannot be donated and how that can be processed safely.

Ms. Gleason provided several examples of gleaning operations in the United States including: Harvest Sacramento in California, Second Harvest Heartland in St. Paul, and the Society of St. Andrew with locations in nine states throughout the south. She explained that produce in demand in North Dakota includes: beans, beets, carrots, cucumbers, onions, peas, peppers, tomatoes, and watermelon. She concluded with a list of food donation sites in Cass and Clay Counties, as well as barriers to success for gleaning operations such as: short harvest seasons, weather, reliance on volunteers and donors, funding for tools, transportation costs, and organization.

Mr. Evert asked how the gleaning barriers to success were determined. Ms. Gleason responded that it came from other gleaning operations' websites, along with considering factors that would be applicable to North Dakota and Minnesota.

### **5b. Gleaning Blueprint**

Ms. Baker informed the Commission that the Steering Committee had developed a new urban agriculture blueprint examining gleaning. She stated that gleaning networks have sprung up around the country in rural and urban areas to help increase food access and reduce the impact

of food deserts in communities. She explained that gleaning is one of the most efficient ways to reduce food waste, second only to source reduction. She stated that volunteers and donors involved in gleaning operations are protected by the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, which encourages food donation by protecting donors from liability when donating to a non-profit for distribution to individuals in need. She explained that, because of this act, there are currently not many regulations at the state or local level.

Ms. Baker explained that tax incentives such as the PATH Act exist for farms and businesses to encourage food donation. She stated that this includes enhanced tax donations, increased charitable contribution caps, and defining a fair market value for food. She explained that other food policy councils have begun to develop their own policies and incentives.

Ms. Baker explained the framework for evaluating gleaning including health, environment, social, and economic aspects. She explained several benefits of gleaning include greater access to locally produced foods, a reduction in greenhouse gasses produced in food transportation, a reduction in food waste, creating places for people to connect through an organized volunteer network, and tax incentives for farmers and businesses. She explained that concerns include the risk of foodborne illnesses, risk of injury to volunteers, potential for damage to private property, and potential loss of revenue for farms and businesses because of donations.

### **5c. Community Perspective**

Ms. Myrdal informed the Commission of three speakers were asked to comment on gleaning: Nancy Carriveau of the Great Plains Food Bank, Leola Daul of Heart-n-Soul Community Cafe, and Kayla Pridmore of Woodchuck Community Farm.

#### **5c(i). Great Plains Food Bank**

Nancy Carriveau, Food Resource Manager for the Great Plains Food Bank, provided the Commission information on its organization and its programs and partner network in North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota.

Ms. Carriveau stated that the Great Plains Food Bank is a member of Feeding America, the nation's leading hunger-relief charity, with over 200 food banks nationwide. She explained that the organization serves as a distribution center that can handle bulk food donations and can distribute it quickly and efficiently through use of its three refrigerated semi-trucks. She stated that Great Plains Food Bank also works with the Farm to Food Shelf program in Minnesota which reimburses growers and processors for produce that would otherwise go unharvested or be discarded.

Ms. Carriveau explained that the food bank mostly receives non-perishable items but is striving to increase the amount of fresh produce it takes in. She stated that in 2016, she worked with community service organizations such as the Boy Scouts to assist in gleaning efforts on area farms where growers had extra produce but limited amounts of time to harvest. She explained that a number of growers began expressing interest in gleaning efforts as word-of-mouth traveled about the Great Plains Food Bank's work. She stated that in 2017, she has worked to develop a strategic process that better matches volunteers with potential gleaning operations.

#### **5c(ii). Heart-n-Soul Community Cafe**

Leola Daul explained that the Heart-n-Soul Community Café became interested in gleaning as a way to help get excess food out of the field, foster community connections by going out to farms, and ultimately helping those who may be food insecure in the metro area. She stated that neighborhood associations could be looked at as a potential source for volunteers for

future gleaning projects. She explained that gleaning efforts could be tied into future cooking and basic food preparation education.

#### **5c(iii). Woodchuck Community Farm**

Kayla Pridmore stated that it has been a goal of Woodchuck Community Farm to not waste food but has faced barriers when they do not have time to harvest all of their produce. She explained that the partnership between the Great Plains Food Bank and Heart-n-Soul Community Café has helped reduce food waste and explained that she could envision future partnerships with other growers in the area.

#### **6. Fargo South DECA Students Food Waste Presentation**

Abbie Sherva and Drew Brown of Fargo South High provided the Commission information on their research on food waste.

Mr. Brown stated that 40 percent of food in the United States is wasted, and that food waste is apparent in every part of the food system from agriculture, processing and distribution, retail, food service, and households.

Ms. Sherva explained that food waste has impacts on economics, ethics, and the environment. She stated one in seven people in the United States is food secure, even as Americans throw away \$165 billion worth of food each year. She further explained that food waste has impacts on land effects, water consumption, energy consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Brown explained that they tracked student food waste during a one-week period and found that, on average, households wasted 9.2 lbs of food. He stated that this food waste represented approximately 6,226 calories.

Ms. Sherva informed the Commission that the USDA has a goal of reducing food waste by 50 percent by 2030, and that some communities are setting their own goals and targets. She explained that one method for reducing food waste could include a citywide education campaign through radio, digital, and print advertising. She stated that similar campaigns in Great Britain, including Love Food Hate Waste, reduced food waste by 35 percent. Mr. Brown also advocated for changes in schools including extended lunch periods, renaming foods, share tables, and increased student awareness. Ms. Sherva concluded that other solutions include city composting, rewards for businesses who use locally grown food, and incentives for farmers to harvest and sell 'ugly foods'.

Ms. Reith informed the Commission that the West Fargo School District has begun instituting share tables in cafeterias where students can donate unwanted or uneaten food to hungry classmates. She stated that four schools currently have share tables, with hopes of expanding to all 17 West Fargo schools during the 2017-2018 school year. She explained that efforts had been made to normalize share tables so that students don't feel self-consciousness about taking extra food if they need it. She stated that the program was approved by the county health inspector and that the district made a plan for how it would discard shared food after each school lunch period.

#### **7. Public Comment Opportunity**

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

Verna Kragnes, FARRMS and Growing Together, informed the Commission of additional local examples of food real estate developments including: Troy Gardens in Madison, Wisconsin; Fields of St. Croix in Stillwater, Minnesota; and Prairie Crossing in Grayslake, Illinois. She stated that any potential project should ensure that there is housing on-site for farmers and growers, as well as the infrastructure

needed for storage and preparation. She further stated that the Land Trust Alliance has additional educational resources.

#### **8. 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.

#### **9. Commission Action Steps**

Ms. Myrdal asked Commissioners to complete a brief survey regarding issues that have been discussed, the importance of food and agricultural issues, and readiness to address issues included in blueprint documents.

Chair Rasmussen clarified that the next meeting would be held on July 12, 2017.

Chair Rasmussen adjourned the meeting at 11:59 AM.