

Attachment 1

**35th Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
September 8, 2021
Virtual Meeting**

Members Present:

Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission, Chair
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Arlette Preston, Fargo City Commission
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
Jeff York, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Deb White, City of Moorhead
Chelsey Johnson, Horace City Council

Others Present:

Jenna Kahly, Clay County Commission
Kim Lipetzky, 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
Malachi Petersen, City of West Fargo
LesleyAnne Buegel, Red River Market
Leola Daul, Heart-n-Soul Community Café
Bjorn Solberg, Red River Harvest Cooperative
Candace Anderson, Red River Harvest Cooperative
Quinn Renfandt, Red River Harvest Cooperative
Trevor Magnuson, City of Moorhead Parks and Recreation
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 Mr. Breitling and seconded by Mr. Miller. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

Mr. Aasness arrived at 10:33 AM.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from May 12, 2021

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

Ms. Preston arrived at 10:36 AM.

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. Lipetzky informed the Commission that Fargo's Boulevard Garden Ordinance passed in July and was now part of the Fargo Municipal Code. She noted that this would allow for plantings adjacent to residential properties with certain stipulations. She explained that more information on the Boulevard Garden Program can be found on the Let's Eat Local website.

Ms. Harden explained that Resilient Moorhead, a nonprofit organization run by the Moorhead Community Resilience Task Force, and the Cass Clay Food partners were hosting the Pollinator Power Walk on September 22 beginning at 5:15 PM. She stated that the walk would begin at Woodlawn Park and would cover four stops over the course of a mile-long route.

Ms. Tweet informed the Commission that the U.S. Department of Agriculture would permanently increase SNAP benefits by 21 percent over pre-pandemic levels beginning October 1. She noted that SNAP provides monthly funds to assist low-income households with purchasing groceries. She also stated that the Great Plains Food Bank has a number of positions open and that more information could be found on their website.

Chair Mongeau noted that the Veggies for the Pantry Program was now accepting donations at locations throughout the Fargo-Moorhead area. She explained that gardeners could drop off their extra produce each Monday from 6:30 to 7:30 PM at different locations, including The Village on 8th Street in Moorhead. She noted that all fruit and vegetable donations go to Fargo's Emergency Food Pantry and Moorhead's Dorothy Day House.

3. Incorporating Food Systems Language into Planning Documents Issue Brief and Snapshot

Ms. Lipetzky noted that the draft issue brief and snapshot regarding the incorporation of food systems language into planning documents had been presented at the Food Commission meeting in May. She stated that the steering committee had not received any additional comments, input, or changes, and that the documents were unchanged from the prior meeting.

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

4a. Red River Market

LesleyAnne Buegel provided an overview of some of the successes of the Red River Market over the past season. She noted that the most prominent accomplishment was the market's move to its new venue at Broadway Square, where it hopes to remain in the future. She also highlighted the market's purchase of its new imagination playground.

Ms. Buegel explained that the Red River Market hosted a Fill the Truck Food Drive on August 7 and that it received over 500 lbs. of nonperishable food, 260 lbs. of produce and other perishable food, and over \$550 in venmo and cash donations. She also highlighted the market's efforts and providing marketing posters in different languages and distributing those to local food markets and halals in the community. She further highlighted that Red River Market

vendors accept SNAP/EBT on eligible products and that the market matches purchases up to \$10 per person per visit. She noted that from July 10 to August 21, the market had provided over \$1,370 in SNAP matches.

Ms. Buegel provided a listing of 11 new vendors, noting that there were a total of 78 vendors during the 2021 market season, and highlighted a cooking demonstration during one market. She concluded with a TikTok video showcasing additional market highlights.

4b. Heart-n-Soul Community Café

Leola Daul provided an update on Heart-n-Soul Community Café's activities over the past year. She explained that when the pandemic started in March 2020, Heart-n-Soul transitioned to handing out sack lunches to people in the community and is continuing to do that through partnerships with First Lutheran Church in Fargo and Faith+Journey Lutheran Church in West Fargo. She noted that they produce about 130 lunches each month and that they are able to utilize fresh produce from Growing Together's community gardens. She also highlighted that Heart-n-Soul had purchased a food trailer in May, which had helped in its outreach to new members in the community.

4c. Red River Harvest Cooperative

Bjorn Solberg, Quinn Renfandt, and Candace Anderson provided the Commission information on the Red River Harvest Cooperative headquartered in Moorhead.

Mr. Solberg explained that the Red River Harvest Cooperative currently involves seven local producers that sell directly to consumers in the region. He explained that the cooperative is based in part from his experience working with the Prairie Roots Co-op, which closed in early 2020. He identified current systemic issues for why cooperatives are important, including that farmers typically receive \$0.15 on the dollar for goods they sell as well as supply chain inefficiencies.

Mr. Renfandt informed the Commission that the Red River Harvest Cooperative is producer-controlled with its mission aimed at increasing food access in the area. He explained that people may put in weekly orders online for Wednesday pick-up or \$5 delivery, and that producers are able to make \$0.80 for every dollar sold.

Ms. Anderson showed the Commission the Red River Harvest Cooperative website, what goods were for sale, and how people may place orders. She also explained that responses from customers have been overwhelmingly positive and that there is an informational page about each producer if people want to learn more about where their goods come from.

4d. Moorhead Farmers Market

Trevor Magnuson presented information on the Moorhead Farmers Market.

Mr. Magnuson explained that the Moorhead Parks and Recreation Department manages the Moorhead Farmers Market and that 2021 was the market's eighth year in operation, with 18 vendors for the season. He stated that the location of the market moved from the Moorhead Center Mall to Ace Hardware on Main Avenue. He highlighted the Power of Produce Club, a program for children in collaboration with U of M Extension and Essentia Health.

Mr. Magnuson noted two challenges that the market faces: branding and working with cottage food laws between North Dakota and Minnesota.

5. Continued Discussion on Selling Local Food in Our Region

Ms. Harden provided a brief follow-up on the discussion of selling local food in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area. She explained that this was a continuation of the discussion from the Commission meeting in May and that she has reached out to area farmers markets and others who have had questions about cottage food laws and selling across state lines.

6. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Mongeau informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. She noted that there is now a new way for members of the community to submit comments via a link when Commission packets are emailed out.

There were no online comments and 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.

Chair Mongeau noted that this would be Kim Lipetzky's last meeting as she was retiring from Fargo Cass Public Health. Members of the Commission and steering committee thanked Ms. Lipetzky for her years of work and dedication to promoting public health and healthy food access.

8. Commission Action Steps

Chair Mongeau stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on November 10. She also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held at a new location at 701 Eateries in Fargo on September 10 at 8:00 AM.

Chair Mongeau adjourned the meeting at 11:49 AM.