

**23rd Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
January 9th, 2019
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
John Strand, Fargo City Commission

Others Present:

Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health
Megan Myrdal, NDSU Extension
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Margie Bailly, Cass Clay Food Partners
Deb Haugen, Cass Clay Food Partners
Hali Durand, Clay County Planning
Luke Champa, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

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

Chair Thorstad welcomed and introduced new Commission member Vern Bennett, Cass County Commission, and new steering committee member Tim Hiller.

Ms. Pridmore arrived at 10:31 AM.

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda

Chair Thorstad added a sub-item to Item 8, which would be a presentation from Ms. Lipetzky. A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Ms. Grant and seconded by Ms. Johnson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

Ms. Carriveau arrived at 10:32 AM.

Ms. Mongeau arrived at 10:32 AM.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from November 7, 2018

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Carriveau and seconded by Ms. Grant. 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. Harden welcomed new commission members and wished everyone a happy new year.

Ms. Myrdal informed the Commission that she is taking a new position with the Northharvest Bean Growers Association and will no longer be a member of the Cass Clay Food Partners but plans to be active in the community as it relates to food systems.

Mr. Beil arrived at 10:35 AM.

Ms. Bailly talked about the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society (NPSAS) conference in January and will be screening the film 'Wasted'. The film screens January 13th at 2:00 PM, with doors opening at 1:30 PM at the Fargo Theater. She said there will be a panel discussion after the film which is about food waste. Ms. Bailly also passed around information about the NPSAS conference and encouraged interested people to sign up.

Ms. Pridmore added that there is one day left to get 'early bird' registration for the NPSAS conference.

Ms. Grant informed the Commission that she works with new and beginning farmers. She said that on February 6, 2019 there is a Farmer Panel at Concordia College to talk about farming for the future and what our local farmers are doing right now amidst climate change and varying weather conditions.

Ms. Carriveau announced that she has changed positions at the Great Plains Food Bank from Food Resource Manager, to Program Director and that her replacement had just started today. She also informed the Commission of employment opportunities at the food bank including, Regional Service Manager.

Ms. Watson Curry arrived at 10:38 AM.

Ms. Lipetsky explained to the Commission that with the new year, there were several goals for related to food systems. She informed the commission that it is her goals are to focus on Glean ND and expand the program as well as implement the healthy corner store initiative.

Ms. Watson Curry explained that she was able to participate in the ripple mapping exercise this week for the First Fridays event and hopes the information can be presented to the Commission, as some great conversations came out of the exercise.

3. Appointments of At-Large Members

Mr. Champa explained the make-up of the commission and how the process of seeking at-large members is conducted. He said the steering committee recommended one new appointment of Jeremiah Utecht, and the reappointment of Mindy Grant and Kayla Pridmore to the Food Commission as at-large members. A motion to approve the above mentioned at-large members to serve a two-year term on the commission was made by Ms. Watson Curry and seconded by Ms. Carriveau. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

4. Hunger in Cass and Clay Counties

Chair Thorstad welcomed Melissa Sobolik of the Great Plains Food Bank. Ms. Sobolik started by giving a brief summary about what the Great Plains Food Bank does in the State of North Dakota, including Clay County, Minnesota. Ms. Sobolik presented the Ending Hunger 2.0 study which is the first of its kind in the region and surveyed emergency food distributors and clients across the entire State, including Clay County. She explained how the survey was conducted and then summarized the study and what the Great Plains Food Bank found as a result of the study. Ms. Sobolik wrapped up the presentation and stated the study has pushed them to better understand the root causes of hunger, therefore helping the food bank understand how to better serve their partner agencies and clients.

Chair Thorstad thanked Ms. Sobolik for the powerful presentation and asked about where the food pantries get their food from and if it always comes from the Great Plains Food Bank. Ms. Sobolik answered that about 75% of a pantry's food comes from the food bank and 25% comes from the local community (e.g. charitable food drives). She added that it comes down to demand, but also the food pantry's size, as each location may differ from the size of a closet, to an entire basement, etc. Chair Thorstad asked about perishable food and if there was a program in place to help food pantries refrigerate food items that need to be refrigerated. Ms. Sobolik explained that there is no program in place, however they are trying to get a system in place for pantries without refrigeration, and even then the pantry may be in an old building not wired for refrigeration or may lack the space to house a refrigerator. Ms. Carriveau explained that they have used grant opportunities in the past to distribute refrigerators to pantries across the state.

There was a general conversation between the Commission and Ms. Sobolik regarding Great Plains Food Bank, the Ending Hunger 2.0 study, and how our community can move forward to end hunger. The Commission thanked Ms. Sobolik for the work she does and the information.

5. Stock Healthy, Shop Healthy: Implementation of the Healthy Corner Store Initiative Blueprint

Ms. Myrdal gave a presentation about the healthy corner store initiative that helps small food retailers increase healthier food options within their store. She shared that there is a store willing to participate in the Healthy Corner Store Initiative located in Fargo's Jefferson neighborhood which has been identified as a food desert by the USDA. There are many partners that will be working with the small food retailer including, NDSU Extension, Cass County, Fargo Cass Public Health, Jefferson Area Neighborhood Association, Charism, and the City of Fargo. She went on to explain the logistics of the store they will be collaborating with, Community Food Market. Ms. Myrdal said that they are in the beginning phases of implementing the Healthy Corner Store Initiative and are excited to be working with the community on this project.

Ms. Bakare arrived at 11:15 AM.

Ms. Durand asked if the Food Partners logo could be used as a way to promote the efforts the partners as she went on to explain that it could be a great way spread awareness across the community regarding the initiative and other efforts undertaken by the Cass Clay Food Partners.

Ms. Harden asked about the motivation of the business owners to take on this initiative at their store. Ms. Myrdal explained that they have a strong interest in having a positive impact on the community and really see this as a way to do right by their existing customers as well as attracting new customers.

There was a general discussion between the Commission, audience, and Ms. Myrdal regarding the Corner Store Initiative.

6. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Thorstad informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. There was one question for Ms. Sobolik from the audience asking if the Great Plains Food Bank screens donated food, or if they turn any donations away. Ms. Sobolik said that they accept all donations, however they have been prioritizing nutrition and healthier product.

7. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable

Ms. Myrdal gave some more details on the First Fridays event scheduled for 8:00 Friday, February 1, 2019 where they will be talking about the food service worker shortage in Cass and Clay County. She said that it will be an interesting discussion and reminded the Commission of the change in location at the Dakota Medical Foundation.

Ms. Haugen announced that Growing Together Gardens is having a gathering event at 5:00 PM on Thursday, February 21, 2019. She said if anyone wants to volunteer during the upcoming growing season and people are free to attend, and they only ask for 16 hours to help grow produce during the summer months.

8. Commission Action Steps

Mr. Thorstad informed the commission of the next First Fridays event on February 1, 2019.

Mr. Thorstad stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on March 13, 2019.

Ms. Lipetzky congratulated and thanked Ms. Myrdal for her service on the steering committee and being so active in the Cass Clay Food Partners. She wished Ms. Myrdal the best of luck on her new position at the Northarvest Bean Growers Association. Lipetzky explained how Ms. Myrdal was instrumental in getting the Cass Clay Food Commission established, started the First Fridays events, and has been a very active member of the Cass Clay Food Partners from its inception. The Commission thanked her for her service.

Chair Thorstad adjourned the meeting at 11:53 AM.