

**41<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the  
Cass Clay Food Commission  
November 9, 2022  
Virtual Meeting**

**Members Present:**

Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council, Chair  
Arlette Preston, Fargo City Commission  
Mandy George, West Fargo City Commission  
Jeff York, At-Large Member  
Anna Johnson, At-Large Member  
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member

**Members Absent:**

Deb White, City of Moorhead  
Duane Breitling, Cass County Commission  
Jenna Kahly, Clay County Commission  
Jeremiah Utecht, At-Large Member  
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member

**Others Present:**

Michelle Draxten, Fargo Cass Public Health  
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health  
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension  
Janice Tweet, Great Plains Food Bank  
Erika Franck, Clay County Planning and Zoning  
Deb Haugen, Cass Clay Food Partners  
Kayla Cook, Public Citizen  
Dean Hulse, Public Citizen  
Don B., Public Citizen  
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

A quorum was not present at the meeting. Non-actionable items were presented as information to the Commission and no action was taken on any items.

**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. George and seconded by Mr. York. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**1b. Review and Action on Minutes from September 14, 2022**

No action was taken.

**2. Commission Introductions**

Chair Aasness lead Commission and steering committee members in a brief round of introductions.

**3. At-Large Commissioner Spotlight**

Mr. York provided the meeting's commissioner spotlight and offered insights during his time as an at-large member of the Commission.

#### **4. Steering Committee Updates**

Ms. Draxten provided information to the Commission regarding best practices from other food policy councils as well as an update on the Food Partners video project. She noted that the first of five informational videos had been finalized and was available to preview on the City of Fargo's YouTube channel, highlighting the work of the Cass Clay Food Partners and local food systems.

#### **5. Report from Hunger and Health Summit**

Ms. Tweet shared information from the Hunger and Health Summit which occurred on October 20 and was organized by the Cass Clay Hunger Coalition. Of the summit's conference sessions, she highlighted one of the breakout sessions which included a panel discussion regarding the advocacy and policy work of the Cass Clay Food Partners.

#### **6. Review of Mission and Recent Work**

Ms. Harden provided the Commission with a brief review of the Commission's mission and recent work. She noted that priorities addressed in 2020 and 2021 included integrating food systems into comprehensive planning efforts in Moorhead and Clay County, continuing the Food Partner's Covid response efforts including by participating in the national food resilience community of practice toolkit and elevating frontline organizations such as FirstLink, and forming stronger connections with the Cass Clay Hunger Coalition.

#### **7. Conversation and Shape of Future Work**

Ms. Harden let the Commission and steering committee members in a Jamboard exercise to discuss several different areas including: topics to address in 2023, what Commissioners want to learn from or support, individuals or organizations to reach out to, and future community engagement needs. She noted that results from the conversations would be discussed at the Commission meeting in January 2023.

#### **8. Food Commission Meetings in 2023**

Ms. Harden spoke briefly about a discussion at the Commission meeting in September regarding the future meeting schedule. She had asked for opinions on whether to go to quarterly meetings or to keep the current schedule and go to in-person meetings beginning in January 2023. She stated that, based on feedback from Commissioners and discussions with the steering committee, the Commission would continue with bi-monthly meetings.

#### **9. Kudos and Community Recognition**

Ms. Draxten highlighted several people and organizations for their work in the community including:

- Growing Together Community Gardens saw fantastic growth at its six community garden sites in 2022, doubling what it produced the year prior. Volunteers at the communal gardens produced and shared a combined total of 50,568 pounds of fresh produce in 2022, compared to 25,139 pounds of produce in 2021.
- West Fargo Eats, a mobile food pantry and the first food share alliance program in the community, celebrated its first anniversary on October 27. West Fargo Eats is a collaboration between Lutheran Church of the Cross, Gate City Bank, YWCA Cass Clay, and Great Plains Food Bank. Food available through the mobile food pantry includes fresh fruits and vegetables, baked goods, dairy, meat, and shelf-stable items. In August, West Fargo Eats shared 12,616 pounds of food with more than 358 families.

- The Emergency Food Pantry celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in September. The Emergency Food Pantry provides a week's worth of nutritional food every other month, up to six times a year. Food baskets include bread, meat, eggs, dairy, and a variety of non-perishables: cereal, canned soup, canned fruit and vegetables, sugar, pasta, and peanut butter. In 2021, the pantry connected with 4,800 families and provided over 9,300 food baskets.
- In 2022, Veggies for the Pantry donated nearly 19,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to area food pantries in Fargo and Moorhead.
- The steering committee thanked Chair Jim Aasness and Commissioner Jeremiah Utecht for their time, commitment, and service to the Commission. Chair Aasness has served on the Commission since its inception in March 2015. Commissioner Utecht has served as an at-large member since January 2019.

#### **10. Public Comment Opportunity**

Chair Aasness informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. He noted that members of the community can submit comments via a comment link when Commission packets are emailed out.

Dean Hulse, a retired educator with the NDSU College of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Natural Resources, asked the Commission whether there would be any possibility to explore an urban gleaning program. He offered several suggestions on how such a program might work to glean produce from fruit-bearing trees in the Fargo-Moorhead area. The Commission and steering committee informed him that they would look to see if there were examples in other regions in the United States.

#### **11. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates and Meeting Reflections**

Chair Aasness asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share any additional updates or meeting reflections.

#### **12. Commission Action Steps**

Chair Aasness stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on January 11, 2023. He also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held at 701 Eateries in Fargo on December 2 at 8:00 AM.

Chair Aasness adjourned the meeting at 11:54 AM.