



44th Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

May 10, 2023 10:30 am – 12:00 pm
Location: Fargo City Commission Chambers

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| 10:30 am | 1. Welcome |
| | a. Approve Order & Contents of the Overall Agenda |
| | b. Review & Action on Minutes from January 11 & March 8, 2023
(Attachment 1a & 1b) |
| 10:35 am | 2. Commission Introductions – Chair Preston |
| 10:40 am | 3. Social Determinants of Health – Chandler Esslinger, Essentia Health |
| 11:00 am | 4. LIRS Garden Initiative – Eric Hegg, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service |
| 11:15 am | 5. Cass Clay Food Partners Resource Review – Adam Altenburg
(Attachment 2) |
| 11:25 am | 6. Steering Committee Updates – Michelle Draxten |
| | a. Community of Practice for Regional Food Policy Councils |
| | b. New Cass Clay Food Partners Video |
| | i. The Impact of Gleaning on Reducing Food Insecurity |
| | c. Coffee with the Commission Update |
| 11:40 am | 7. Kudos & Community Recognition – Michelle Draxten (Attachment 3) |
| 11:45 am | 8. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Preston (Attachment 4) |
| 11:50 am | 9. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable: Community Updates & Meeting Reflections – Chair Preston |
| 11:55 am | 10. Future Meetings & Commission Action Steps |
| | a. Next First Fridays – June 2, 2023 |
| | b. Next Coffee with the Commission Event – TBD |
| | c. Reminder – No July Commission Meeting |
| | d. Next Commission Meeting – September 13, 2023 |
| 12:00 pm | 11. Adjournment |

Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are taped and rebroadcast on cable channel TV Fargo 56 each Friday at 11:00 am. People with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and need special accommodations should contact Savanna Leach at Metro COG at 701.532.5100. Please contact us at least 48 hours before the meeting to give our staff adequate time to make arrangements. Meeting minutes are available on the Cass Clay Food Partners website at www.cassclayfoodpartners.org and Metro COG's website at www.fmmetrocog.org.

Attachment 1a

**42nd Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
January 11, 2023
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Arlette Preston, Fargo City Commission, Chair
Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council
Jace Hellman, Horace City Council (proxy)
Anna Johnson, At-Large Member
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member
Jeffrey Miller, At-Large Member
Carin Engler, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Tony Grindberg, Cass County Commission
Mandy George, West Fargo City Commission
Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission
Dave Steichen, Dilworth City Council
Jeff York, At-Large Member

Others Present:

Michelle Draxten, Fargo Cass Public Health
Lisa Meader, Fargo Cass Public Health
Rory Beil, Clay County Public Health
Rita Ussatis, NDSU Extension
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension
Janice Tweet, Great Plains Food Bank
Zoe Absey, Great Plains Food bank
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Chair Preston noted that a meeting had been scheduled in the Fargo Commission Chambers for 12:00 and that the Food Commission would need to adjourn several minutes early.

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. Nesemeier and seconded by Ms. Kopperud. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from September 14, 2022 and November 9, 2022.

A motion to approve the minutes for September and November 2022 was made by Ms. Nesemeier and seconded by Ms. Kopperud. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1c. Welcome to New Food Commission Members

Chair Preston noted that Moorhead City Councilmember Heather Nesemeier, Dilworth City Councilmember Dave Steichen, Horace Community Development Director Jace Hellman, Cass County Commissioner Tony Grindberg, and Clay County Commissioner Paul Krabbenhoft had been appointed to serve on the Food Commission.

2. Approve Appointments of At-Large Members

Mr. Altenburg explained that the steering committee had sought applicants for one new at-large member to replace the opening left by Mr. Utecht. He stated that the steering committee reviewed and recommended the appointment of Carin Engler as a new at-large member. He further noted that current at-large member Jeff York had agreed to serve an additional two-year term.

A motion to approve the appointment of Carin Engler and the reappointment of Jeff York to the Commission was made by Ms. Kopperud and seconded by Ms. Nese-meier. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

3. Cass Clay Food Commission Onboarding and Orientation

Mr. Altenburg provided new Commission members with a brief onboarding and orientation presentation that included a definition and overview of food systems, the beginnings and timeline of the Cass Clay Food Partners initiated in 2010, and the history, purpose, and work of the Cass Clay Food Commission since its formation in March 2015.

4. At-Large Commissioner Spotlight

Mr. Miller provided the meeting's commissioner spotlight and offered insights from his work as Director for the Cass County Soil Conservation District including habitat restoration, working with farmers and ranchers, and the urban conservation program which helps to establish pocket prairies, community gardens, and includes other cost share opportunities for residents and organizations in the area.

5. Steering Committee Updates

Ms. Draxten provided information to the Commission regarding the Regional Food Policy Council Community of Practice program as well as an update on the Food Partners video project. She noted that three additional informational videos had been finalized and were available to preview on the City of Fargo's YouTube channel, each highlighting the work of the Cass Clay Food Partners and local food systems. The videos include: The Impact of Pollinators on our Food System, Eating Fresh and Local on a Budget, and Backyard Chicken Keeping.

6. Great Plains Food Bank Pop-Ups Presentation

Zoe Absey, Community Initiatives Manager for the Great Plains Food Bank, provided information to the Commission regarding its pop-up pantries program that started in September 2022.

Ms. Absey noted that there are recognized challenges in New American, immigrant, and refugee community leaders reaching out and connecting with food assistance resources for their communities in the Fargo-Moorhead area. She explained that to address these challenges, the Great Plains Food Bank put together a program to create low-barrier pop-up distributions with culturally relevant and medically tailored foods. She described the program as including a task force with key individuals from multiple communities that helped to create a program framework including: purchasing products from local international stores, a food voucher system with local markets, and distribution logistics.

Ms. Absey noted that a total of 2,527 households were served between September and November and that 300 food vouchers were distributed through community partners in December. She stated that, while pop-ups were efficient, they are not sustainable and that the next steps included working with existing partners in the community to help spread resources and culturally and medically relevant foods.

7. Letter of Support for Multicultural Urban Food and Ecology Initiative

Ms. Harden informed the Commission about the Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Urban Agriculture Grant Program, a program designed to promote urban youth agricultural education and urban agriculture community development within urban or areas adjacent to urban areas in Minnesota. She noted that the program funds projects that help non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, schools, Native American Tribal communities, and local government entities obtain the materials and services necessary to successfully promote urban youth agricultural education and urban agriculture community development.

Ms. Harden stated that in early January 2023, the steering committee was asked to develop a letter of support for the Multicultural Urban Food and Ecology Initiative by the Prairie Rose Agricultural Institute for Research, Innovation, and Education (PRAIRIE). She explained that PRAIRIE is a non-profit that demonstrates regenerative and organic agricultural practices with hands-on education in Clay County. The initiative brought forth by PRAIRIE would work to provide increased access to fresh food in the area, promote efforts that better enable young people and members of the BIPOC community entry into farming, develop demonstration gardens and test sites that utilize season extenders and other best practices, and create pathways for food and ecology careers in the community.

Ms. Harden explained that the initiative would support the Commission's mission and core values and that the steering committee developed a letter of support for the Commission's review and approval.

A motion to sign the letter of support for the Multicultural Urban Food and Ecology Initiative as part of its application for the Minnesota AGRI Urban Grant Program was made by Ms. Nesemeier and seconded by Mr. Miller. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

8. Commission Priorities and Processes in 2023

Ms. Harden explained that at the Commission meeting in November 2022, members took time to discuss priorities and processes for the upcoming year. She stated that after that meeting, the steering committee conferred and reviewed ideas and proposed three priorities for the Commission in 2023:

- Address food needs and opportunities with New American community members
- Understand social determinants of health and actions that may strengthen the local food system
- Examine strategies for community food system development in underserved neighborhoods, in alignment with the FM Wellness Coalition

In addition to these priorities, she stated that the steering committee recommended the implementation of new group processes to strengthen its work and connection with the broader community:

- Host "Coffee with the Food Commission" in each of the five cities in 2023
- Invite commissioners to attend monthly steering committee meetings held the fourth Monday of each month from 1:00 to 2:30 PM at Fargo Cass Public Health
- Host one or more additional community events using the stipend from the Regional Food Policy Council Community of Practice.

A motion to approve the steering committee's recommendations for priorities and group processes in 2023 was made by Mr. Hellman and seconded by Ms. Johnson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

9. Kudos and Community Recognition

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

- Rick Hall and Verna Kragnes were the recipients of the 2022 Moorhead Human Rights Award in the Education and Non-Profit category. The award recognizes significant contributions to human rights in the community and was presented by the Moorhead Human Rights Commission on December 12, 2022. Rick and Verna started the New Roots organization to help new farmers become successful and independent in the region.
- Fourteen-year-old Gowri Pillai hosted her 10th annual food drive in Grand Forks. Over the years, she has collected 5,227 pounds of food and \$4,387 for the Great Plains Food Bank. She was named one of the 2021 Hunger Relief Champions of North Dakota by the Great Plains Food Bank.

10. Public Comment Opportunity

Chair Preston informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. She noted that members of the community may also submit comments via a comment link when Commission packets are emailed out.

Verna Kragnes mentioned that there would be a community discussion on the book *Reinventing Food Banks and Pantries* on March 22 at the Indigenous Association in Fargo. She also noted that First Congregational UCC in Moorhead had received two grants in its work with the Multicultural Food and Ecology Initiative, one through the FM Area Foundation and one through West Central Initiative. She noted that grant funds were being used to purchase additional copies of the mentioned book as well as for pollinator plant and education resources.

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

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

12. Commission Action Steps

Chair Preston stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on March 8 and noted the schedule for the remainder of 2023. She also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held at 701 Eateries in Fargo on February 3 at 8:00 AM.

Chair Preston adjourned the meeting at 11:38 AM.

Attachment 1b

**43rd Meeting of the
Cass Clay Food Commission
March 8, 2023
Fargo Commission Chambers**

Members Present:

Heather Nesemeier, Moorhead City Council, Interim Chair
Dave Steichen, Dilworth City Council
Joan Kopperud, At-Large Member
Carin Engler, At-Large Member
Jeff York, At-Large Member

Members Absent:

Arlette Preston, Fargo City Commission
Jace Hellman, Horace City Council (proxy)
Tony Grindberg, Cass County Commission
Mandy George, West Fargo City Commission
Paul Krabbenhoft, Clay County Commission
Anna Johnson, 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
Ben Lien, Northwest and Central Minnesota Office of Senator Klobuchar
Emily Reno, Creating Community Consulting/Mezclada
Mike Zastoupil, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
Don Kinzler, NDSU Extension, Cass County
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. Kopperud and seconded by Ms. Engler. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from January 11, 2023.

No action was taken.

2. Commission Introductions

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

3. 2023 Farm Bill Update

Ben Lien, with the Northwest and Central Minnesota Office of Senator Klobuchar, provided Commissioner members with a brief update on the 2023 Farm Bill process.

Mr. Lien explained that Senator Hoeven, Senator Smith, and Senator Klobuchar are each on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry which oversees the farm bill process. He noted the biggest portion of the bill is the nutrition title, which makes up about 80 percent of the bill's spending and helps manage federal nutrition assistance programs. Other key points of negotiation include crop insurance, rural development, research, and conservation.

4. West Central Minnesota Regional Food Systems Plan Update

Emily Reno, project lead with Creating Community Consulting/Mezclada, and Mike Zastoupil, Agricultural and Food Systems Planner with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, provided an update on the West Central Minnesota Regional Food Systems Plan.

Mr. Zastoupil explained that the project kicked off in November 2022 and that plan's purpose is to engage community stakeholders in improving their local food system, supply chains, economies, food producer capacity, and provide best practices for environmental sustainability. He noted that the plan covers six counties: Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin in Minnesota; and additional outreach to Cass and Richland counties in North Dakota.

Ms. Reno stated that as part of the plan's initial outreach, the project team held three community asset mapping input meetings in November and December to better understand projects, resources, and existing food infrastructure in the region. These sessions included meetings with farmers and local food producers, distributors, co-ops, food shelves, farmers markets, food advocates, and other members of the public. She explained that the project team was working on the next phases of the plan which include a 15-question survey and preparations for online and in-person community engagement events in the spring and summer. She noted that the plan's expected completion date was August 2023.

5. North Dakota and Minnesota Legislative Updates

Ms. Tweet provided the Commission updates on the current legislative sessions in both North Dakota and Minnesota. She noted details and the status of two house bills in North Dakota on school lunch appropriation and school lunch policy, and two Minnesota house/senate files regarding free school lunch and breakfast and food shelf appropriation.

6. Great Plains Food Bank Statistics Update

Ms. Tweet provided information on 2023 statistics from the Great Plains Food Bank. She explained that the food bank has 193 partner agencies across 100 communities, 52 of which are in Cass and Clay counties. She noted that 138,439 individuals were served in 2023, 34 percent were children, and 15 percent were seniors. She further noted that a total of 11,895,254 pounds of food was distributed in 2023, and that need increased by 14 percent compared to the year prior while food distribution decreased by 21 percent. She also provided statistics on network changes which saw food sources from donations decrease from 70 percent in 2019 to 56 percent in 2023, with food purchases increasing from 5 percent to 16 percent during the same period.

Ms. Tweet also provided the Commission information regarding Hunger on the Plains 2023, a hunger study that is conducted every four years to capture neighbor experience and partner agency capacity. One of the keynotes from the study is transportation as a barrier to accessing food, with one in three respondents noting that they did not have access to a vehicle that runs and 45 percent of respondents having trouble accessing free meals and groceries because they didn't have access to a car or public transit or had difficulty in paying for gasoline.

Ms. Tweet noted that there would be a community meeting on the hunger study on March 14 at 2:00 PM and that a registration link could be found online at the United Way of Cass-Clay.

7. Cass Clay Food Partners Resource Review

Mr. Altenburg explained that in the past eight years, the Cass Clay Food Partners had developed nearly two dozen resource documents highlighting urban agriculture, food access, sustainability, and other food systems topic areas relevant to the Fargo-Moorhead area. He noted that these documents have included blueprints, which look at food systems from a land development code perspective; and issue briefs and snapshots, which provide more of an overview of an issue the community may have seen locally.

Mr. Altenburg provided a brief overview of two original blueprints, Backyard Chickens and Community Gardens, and noted how they had been utilized or implemented. He noted that the steering committee would likely be reviewing additional resources at future Commission meetings.

8. Steering Committee Updates

Ms. Draxten provided information regarding the Food Partners video project, with a new video on gleaning and food insecurity available in the coming days. She noted that this was the fifth and final video in addition to previous videos for The Impact of Pollinators on our Food System, Eating Fresh and Local on a Budget, Backyard Chicken Keeping, and a general informational video on the Cass Clay Food Partners and food systems. She also provided a recap on the Food Partner's first Coffee with the Commission event that was held at Twenty Below Coffee on February 28.

9. Kudos and Community Recognition

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

- The MHS Career Academy is offering culinary arts courses to educate students about the career possibilities in the food industry. The culinary arts program is intended as a sampler to allow students to try their hands at a profession they may not have previously considered. Students learn food safety and sanitation, knife skills, meal assembly, flavor profiles, and more. The program is pioneered by Culinary Instructor Johanna Heigaard and the Chair of the Family and Consumer Science Department Cheryl Adams.
- NDSU Extension horticulturist Don Kinzler and The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead reporter John Lamb began Growing Together: A Gardening Podcast in late February. The podcast is intended to give novice and experienced gardeners throughout the Midwest insight into making successful gardens grow through conversation, audience questions, and a shared curiosity for plants. Mr. Kinzler provided additional information to the Commission on the podcast.

10. Public Comment Opportunity

Interim Chair Nesemeier informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments. She noted that members of the community may also submit comments via a comment link when Commission packets are emailed out.

No comments were made.

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

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

12. Commission Action Steps

Interim Chair Nesemeier stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on May 10, 2023. She also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held at 701 Eateries in Fargo on April 7 at 8:00 AM and that the next Coffee with the Commission event would be held at Roasted Rail Coffee House in Dilworth on April 12 at 4:00 PM.

Interim Chair Nesemeier adjourned the meeting at 11:58 AM.



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Adam Altenburg, Metro COG
Date: May 5, 2023
Re: *Cass Clay Food Partners Resource Review*

Since March 2015, the Cass Clay Food Partners has developed nearly two dozen resource documents highlighting urban agriculture, food access, sustainability, and other food systems topic areas relevant to the Fargo-Moorhead area. These documents have included blueprints, which look at food systems from a land development code perspective; and issue briefs and snapshots, which provide more of an overview of an issue the community may have seen locally.

In March 2023, the steering committee provided a brief overview of two original blueprints; [Backyard Chicken Keeping](#) and [Community Gardens](#). This month, the steering committee will present information from blueprints for [Backyard Composting](#) and [Farmers Markets & Produce Stands](#).

All blueprints, snapshots, and issue briefs can be found at the link below:

<https://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/fargo-cass-public-health/health-promotion/cass-clay-food-partners/blueprints>

Requested Action:
None



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Michelle Draxten, Fargo Cass Public Health
Date: May 3, 2023
Re: *Kudos and Community Recognition*

Since May 2022, the Cass Clay Food Commission has highlighted individuals and organizations for their work in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area and the broader community. This includes awards and recognitions as well as state and local initiatives that support food systems and the values of the Commission.

In May 2023, the Steering Committee would like to recognize the following:

1. Pastor Megan Tee of West Fargo Eats and Lutheran Church of the Cross nominated for YWCA Women of the Year
YWCA Women of the Year shines a spotlight on exceptional women in the community. Nominees are leaders, mentors, visionaries, and more. The 50th annual Women of the Year event, which was held on April 24, included nominees with passion, service, and significant achievements.

Pastor Megan Tee is with Lutheran Church of the Cross and West Fargo Eats. West Fargo Eats is a food share alliance between Lutheran Church of the Cross, Gate City Bank, YWCA Cass Clay, and Great Plains Food Bank, which offers a shopping-style experience bringing empowerment, respect, and dignity to individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. In-person shopping and grocery pick-up options are available with specific information listed on their website <https://lcc-wf.com/west-fargo-eats/>

In 2023 alone, West Fargo Eats has served over 2,500 individuals, 800 households, and 950 children, and additionally provided over 53,000 meals and 34,000 pounds of food.

<https://www.ywacassclay.org/events/women-of-the-year/>

Requested Action:
None.



To: Cass Clay Food Commission
From: Arlette Preston, Chair
Date: May 5, 2023
Re: *Public Comment Opportunity*

The public comment opportunity is an open forum for the public to provide comments about specific items on this meeting's agenda, as well as any other issues that may pertain to food systems policies or programs. Members of the public may also submit comments online through the comment form link sent out with the meeting's agenda and packet. People may sign up to receive notices about the Cass Clay Food Commission at <http://fmmetrocog.org/get-involved>.

Comments to the Cass Clay Food Commission will be limited to one minute per individual or at the discretion of the Commission Chair.

Requested Action:
None