

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
AGRICULTURE & RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (Ag) COMMITTEE

MINUTES

April 18, 2019

Christianson PLLP, Willmar

Present: Rollie Boll, Ian Graue, Kevin Halvorson, Dustin Kotrba, Kim Larson, Dan Lippert and Dan Tepfer

Excused: Larry Konsterlie and Keith Poier

Absent: Bruce Reuss

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist

Secretarial: Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Dan Tepfer called the meeting to order at approximately 7:33 a.m. and declared a quorum was not present.

AGENDA—Chair Tepfer presented the April 18, 2019 agenda.

IT WAS MOVED BY Kim Larson, SECONDED BY Kevin Halvorson, to approve the Agenda. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES—Chair Tepfer presented the March 21, 2019 Minutes.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Boll, SECONDED BY Dustin Kotrba, to approve the Minutes of the March 21, 2019 meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Soybeans Update. Connie Schmoll reported she sent a thank you to Mike Youngerberg for the excellent presentation at the March 21st meeting. Committee members provided the following comments regarding the presentation:

- Chair Tepfer inquired of the reason the new plant is located in Crookston. Kim Larson shared although most of the crushing plants are located in Iowa and Illinois, it may be due to margins, transportation costs, uses and growing areas.
- Dustin Kotrba commented a good percentage of planting in northern Minnesota and North Dakota is soybeans. In addition, the facility in Crookston is near the college which is an added benefit. It is important to continue searching for opportunities for uses of soybeans. Schmoll suggested to continue ongoing contact with Youngerberg.

AURI New Uses Form Update. Laura Arne, Keith Poier, Kim Larson and Schmoll attended the AURI New Uses Forum on March 28 and 29th. Schmoll shared highlights of the forum and speakers and reported it was an excellent conference. One of the speakers may give a presentation at a future Ag Committee meeting.

Larson recently visited Time Zone, a new store in Willmar that sells CBD oil products. An open house will be held this evening.

REPORTS

Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee. Schmoll shared information from the industrial hemp Exploratory Subcommittee meeting held on April 8th. Attendees included subcommittee members and representatives from other counties. Nate Hultgren shared his experience in growing Industrial Hemp last summer. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for May 13th with the agenda focusing on narrowing down the subcommittee's focus and determining a vision. Schmoll welcomed Ag Committee members to attend. Discussion held regarding concerns of farmers, i.e., growing process, risk factors, testing location(s) and contracting classes. Halvorson inquired of the process for farmers to become organic certified and if an organization of hemp farmers should be formed. Schmoll shared that Charles Levine has conveyed an organization has been formed. Kotrba suggested to contact Ron Fagen regarding land options. Schmoll reported that the group that visited Fargo also visited with Minnesota Department of Agriculture and an CEO of an industrial hemp business to seek a hemp facility to be built in Minnesota. Larson suggested contacting companies for interest in building a hemp facility in the Willmar area. Chair Tepfer shared Lettuce Abound in New London uses 3-D printing for its business and suggested the Ag Committee make a visit to Lettuce Abound in New London and DI Labs in Spicer.

Ag Marketing and Event Planning Subcommittee. Kotrba gave an update of the subcommittee's meeting on April 4th. Most keynote speakers have been secured; the next phase is to continue work on sponsorships. He shared the sponsors that have committed. The total sponsorship target is \$30,000. Committee members are contacting possible sponsors. Sponsorship efforts are split between EDC and MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC). The Partners in Ag Innovation Conference is scheduled for August 1st, 7:40 a.m.-2:00 p.m., at MWTC. Kotrba shared details of the draft agenda. Schmoll will send the draft agenda to Ag Committee members. The next Ag Marketing and Event Planning Subcommittee will be held at 10 a.m., April 25th.

NEW BUSINESS—

Ian Graue talked with Sherman Schueler regarding his experience in growing organic industrial hemp. The Ag committee felt it would be interesting and beneficial to invite Schueler to an upcoming meeting. Schmoll will contact Schuler and invite him to the June meeting. Boll suggested inviting additional attendees as well.

Graue inquired if committee members receive the *Biodiesel* magazine and shared once a person registers for a hard copy, the electronic version will become available.

Graue shared there is a small group in the Willmar area working on climate change. They meet the third Monday of the month at the Willmar Public Library. He highlighted a recent speaker who shared information on electric cars and charging stations. Chair Tepfer mentioned Kandiyohi Power Cooperative installed electric car chargers at the Little Crow Resort. There is also a charger located at Good Will. Discussion held regarding charging station locations. One location suggestion for a fast car charger was Sunray Square Café & Deli north of Willmar. Larson mentioned gas may have to reach \$8/gallon before the public will become serious about climate change resources. Graue will encourage the climate change group to be more visible in the community.

Larson provided highlights of the AURI New Uses Forum and felt the keynote speech by Tom Vilsack, former Secretary of Agriculture, entitled “Everyone Should Focus on Vision” was excellent. He suggested exploring the idea to form a vision committee comprised of visionary ag leaders and a cross section of individuals to narrow the scope/focus/goals of the Ag Committee. The committee concurred and suggested a meeting be scheduled the last of November or the first part of December. Schmoll will place this idea on the June agenda.

Ag/Renewable Energy Community Events/Projects. Chair Tepfer shared CERTS will offer a workshop entitled Energy Savings Opportunities for Businesses on April 24th, 8:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m., at the University of Minnesota Extension, Mid Central Research & Outreach Center (MCROC) on the MinnWest Technology Campus. Schmoll will send out the flyer.

Schmoll highlighted the presentations at the CVN Conference including an insect growing facility that makes fish seed. Paul Damhof of Simply Shrimp has shrimp feed shipped from Pennsylvania and Tepfer felt this would be a niche for this area. Chair Tepfer mentioned he was part of a group that recently visited Simply Shrimp and Lettuce Abound. Schmoll mentioned the Simply Shrimp 4th quarter grant report was submitted.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:25 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **7:30 a.m., June 20, 2019** at Christianson PLLP, Willmar.