

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

MINUTES

February 20, 2020

EDC Board Room, Willmar

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

Excused: Christy Kallevig, Michelle Marotzke, Keith Poier and Dan Tepfer

Absent: Larry Konsterlie and Dan Lippert

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Manager

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chair Kevin Halvorson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 a.m. and declared a quorum was not present.

AGENDA—The agenda was approved as presented.

MINUTES—As a quorum was not present, the January 16, 2020 Minutes were received for information only.

REPORTS

Industrial Hemp Subcommittee. Connie Schmoll reported on the February 10, 2020 Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee meeting. Grant Herfindahl, Congressman Collin Peterson’s Agricultural Assistant, attended and informed the subcommittee that a pilot hemp insurance program was just implemented, but the producer must prove a market is secured. He also spoke of the concern about the tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) threshold. Nate Hultgren reported Hultgren Farms will not be growing hemp this year. The subcommittee learned of a 1942 movie, [Hemp for Victory](#), that they will view. Subcommittee members were given assignments to research fiber markets for their next meeting.

Ag Marketing and Event Planning Subcommittee. Dustin Kotrba reported Jason Broadwater has been secured as the keynote speaker at an approximate cost of \$6,000 for the Partners In Ag Innovation conference. He will speak on economic development. Sponsors to date total \$14,000 out of a goal of \$30,000. They hope to secure all sponsors by March 15th. John Christianson will speak on biofuels, the Governor’s Council on Biofuels and low carbon fuel standard. Sam Ziegler of GreenSeam will speak on cutting-edge technology and participate in a panel on the founding of GreenSeam. The Agricultural Utilization Research Institute will provide research information and they are still looking for two speakers for story telling. There will be less speakers this year to allow more time for each session. The conference will be held July 30, 2020 at the MinnWest Technology Campus.

2020 Visionary Subcommittee. Kim Larson reported the Kandiyohi County Farm Bureau is doing a policy development survey and this committee could piggyback on its findings. An issue of interest is nitrate-tainted water consumed by the public and the need for farmers to recognize science and be a part of the solution, if farm practices are contributing to the problem. Kotrba stated Nexyst 360 (a supply chain management platform that allows grain and other crops to be linked to the farmland on which it was grown) would be an advantage. Ian Graue suggested the EDC be involved in the research and solutions. Larson stated this committee has gone to the legislature in the past and maybe it should do so again. It was questioned if all possible sources of nitrogen in water are being considered in addition to farm runoff, such as acid rain. Larson noted greenhouse gas emission standards have been introduced for new dairy operations. Larson stated a [Star Tribune article](#) reported renewable gas produced from cow manure becomes eligible for low-carbon credit that can be sold in California and Oregon and Riverview, LLP, intends to produce gas from cow manure for transportation fuel and low-carbon credits. Kotrba stated markets, along with reliable tax credits, are needed to increase such processes and continue environmental benefits.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Succession Planning Seminar partnership. Schmoll reported that after forwarding the flyer on the Farmland Legacy Seminar hosted by Fladeboe Land and Bremer Bank in Golden Valley, she received feedback and a request to have a farm succession planning seminar in Kandiyohi County. Melissa Knott of Christianson PLLP also inquired and offered to have Christianson staff present farm succession planning information. Schmoll inquired of other local groups that have done succession planning in the past and none were planning to do so in Kandiyohi County in 2020 so she decided to go ahead with an event. Schmoll secured partnerships with Bremer Bank, Heritage Bank, Christianson PLLP and Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. In addition, Ridgewater College and University of Minnesota Extension will help market the event. An ad was placed in the *West Central Tribune's* ag publication that will come out on March 6th. The event will be March 24, 2020 from 7:30-9:30 a.m. at the Willmar Conference Center. A \$10 fee will go toward a light breakfast.

NEW BUSINESS—There was no new business.

Ag/Renewable Energy Community Events/Projects. Graue reported a free farm stress seminar will be held at the Willmar Community Center. He will send the flyer to Schmoll.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **7:30 a.m., March 19, 2020** in the board room of the EDC, Willmar.