

Minutes – CEC Meeting – Via Zoom and Cotton Town Hall March 28, 2022

Present: Jim Takala, Mark Baumann, Doug Hoffbauer, Keith Nelson, Nancy Nilsen (virtual), Rick Pierce (virtual), Gary Rantala (virtual)

Others: Mary Tennis, Keri Cavitt, Troy Salzer, Shirley Lantz, David Abazs (virtual)

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. Roll call was taken. Agenda was approved. Motion made by Keith and second by Doug to approve minutes from January 28 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

Welcome and Introductions

Feature Program

David Abazs, Executive Director, Northeast RSDP (Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships)

- Farm and homestead are 1.5 miles from Lake Superior
- Focus is to draw university into the communities
- Our Northeast region spans a large, geographically diverse area that spans the North Shore, Iron Range and beyond. The Northeast RSDP serves Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine and St. Louis counties and the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa and Grand Portage Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa sovereign Native nations.
- We support projects in the areas of agriculture and food systems, resilient communities, clean energy and natural resources across the region. All projects we support are connected to University of Minnesota resources.

Project Highlights

- Affordable Housing – Green New Deal Housing
- Farm and Forest Growers – 15 farms in 5 counties
- Tree Seedlings – assisted migration
- Farm Interns – Future farmers research – St. Louis County had 779 new farms in 2017 – they are smaller farms – more niche farms with the same amount of land
- Land Access Alliance – creating access
- Bio Char project – Carlton County offers through SWCD
- St. Marks Growing Garden – Duluth
- Wool market – breeds of sheep
- Zero waste composting project – East Lake County
- Troy did a webinar on wool value and wool research – will share with Dave
- Jim T is interested in internships – he could use some help at his farm. Jim asked Dave to please get his name on the list for interns.
- Keri inquired how Dave wants to be contacted. Dave would like people to reach out directly to him.
- Lots of farm transitioning from his age group to younger generation
- Keith brought up there will be a fully integrated waste management system in Canyon. Virginia and Canyon landfills will have commercial opportunities – grow 200,000 trees instead of 10,000 – there was an interruption gap during COVID – It will be state of the art – solar array for wastewater – will be pure
- Food digester – 14% of waste – 50-to-70-million-dollar project
- AIS – limit waste product being produced in fish cleaning houses – collects waste products into a grinder

Administrative Update: Mary Tennis

Hailey E – new position – is getting set up with the University. Hailey is from Climax, MN – outside of Fargo/Moorhead. She was a 4-H'er with a rural background. She is a very engaging and curious person and a self-proclaiming nerd.

Regional Director Update: Keri Cavitt

CERTS Seed Grant Awards

Listening Sessions – her and Mary – had a chance to talk to members individually – there are still some members they want to meet with.

What we heard:

- Community issues are vast, varied and diverse
- Extension's community educational events are helpful & word about work could be shared more broadly
- St. Louis County's geographic region presents as both an opportunity and a challenge
- Diversity is of importance
- Shared accountability and brainstorming on good use of resources is beneficial
- Clarification of committee member's role and how value can be added would be helpful

Meetings:

2022 meeting dates

Doug prefers 9:00-11:00, afternoons are not a good time

Gary said mornings work for him

Nancy – mornings are bad for her as a whole

Keri will send out a doodle poll to look at best meeting times.

It was decided that the next meeting would be Monday, April 25, 10:00 – 1130. Mary is going to check on the availability of having the meeting at Camp Esquagama – followed by a lunch.

Business Items**Farm Family of the Year**

Troy had some possible names as the suggestion was for more of a niche type operation.

Mark and Gina Larva – Floodwood

Bill O'Brien

Phil Smith – sheep and cattle

Joan Weyendt – Duluth

Ed Nelson and Gail Goff

Keith commented he would like to see more of a production ag operation recognized. He suggested the Helstrom Farm – Mark Helstrom and his son Jason – in the Little Swan area.

Doug motioned and Mark second to nominate Helstrom Farm for the St. Louis County Farm Family for 2022. All approved. Motion carried.

Troy will contact the Helstroms to see if they will accept the nomination and to get the necessary information for the required paperwork.

Keith reminded the group that he will donate a centennial flag to the Helstrom Farm. It is a flag that was formerly flown over the capitol.

Next meeting - Monday, April 25, 10:00-11:30 a.m. – checking on availability for Camp Esquagama – followed by lunch at the camp.

Meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Shirley Lantz