

Minutes – CEC Meeting @ Cotton Town Hall/Community Center (and via Zoom) – October 19, 2023

Present: Jim Takala, Mark Baumann, Doug Hoffbauer, Rick Pierce, Mary Shaw (virtual)

Others: Keri Cavitt, Jim Gottschald, Mary Tennis, David Abazs (virtual), Heather Snedrud (virtual), Nicole Baxton

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order at 9:05 am. Roll call was taken and pledge of allegiance at 9:05 am. Agenda was approved. Minutes from September 21, 2023 were approved.

Feature Program: David Abazs, UMN Extension Northeast Regional and Sustainable Development

Partnerships (dwabazs@umn.edu)

One additional staff and four Corp team members

Principles – community-university partnership, community leadership, sustainability

4 focus areas: sustainable agriculture and food systems, resilient communities, natural resources, clean energy

Discussion on funding distribution.

5 projects:

Crystal Bay Affordable Housing Project, Net Zero Affordable Housing, Green New Deal Housing Train the Trainers, St. Mark's Giving Garden Community Project, Biochar (soil amendment), Hydrometallurgy Biological E-waste Recovery

MN Biochar Initiative (MNBI) – new non-profit – biochar networking throughout the state

Deep winter greenhouse project – five communities for farm scale greenhouses

Zero waste feasibility study + pilot projects (Lake County, Cook County, and Grand Portage)

Forest Assisted Migration Project – discussion on decline in boreal species. www.climatesmarttrees.com

Discussion about compost and commercial market to sell it.

Program Update: Troy Salzer

Jim Takala and Mark Baumann give an update for Troy's events: Fall feeder calf roundup and NE MN Forage and Grassland Council bus tour. Bus tour visited several places over two days – Potlatch, beef cattle farm, Digikey, sugar beet facility in Crookston, and a beef farm. 27 on the bus tour. Discussion about sugar beets.

County Commissioner Update: Keith Nelson and Annie Harala

No commissioners present. Jim Gottschald gives an update. Discussion on funding for NLX and tentative plans for the build out of the Depot to support the store front for the train operation. Levy has been set for 2024. Discussion about current status of funding for the new Extension position – will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Extension Director Update: Mary Tennis

Youth in Action Make a Difference (MAD) Conference: November 9, 2023

Featured presenter: Emily Ford.

Discussion about the schedule of the day, invitation to homeschool students, and sustainability experts to talk and/or equipment to display.

Regional Director Update: Keri Cavitt

Discussion about new legislation and funding for Extension that's allowing for the hire of new educators in programming about climate adaptation, clean energy, cannabis, and tourism/transportation. Two new educators hired at the Cloquet Regional Office.

Word around the county

No discussion

Business Items

Discussion about future meeting dates.

Motion to adjourn: 10:49 am

Next meeting: November 16th, 9 – 11 am, Virginia GSC (Yellow Birch room)

Respectfully submitted by,

Nicole Baxton