

Minutes – CEC Meeting @ The Depot (and via Zoom) – September 21, 2023

Present: Jim Takala, Richard Pierce, Susan Sauls, Mary Shaw, Paul Fish (virtual), Gary Rantala (virtual)

Others: Keri Cavitt, Jim Gottschald, Mary Tennis, Nathan Winter, Troy Salzer, Xinyi Qian, Nicole Baxton, Heather Snesrud (virtual)

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order at 9:09 am. Roll call was taken and pledge of allegiance at 9:09 am. Agenda was approved. Minutes from June 15, 2023 were approved as printed.

County Commissioner Update: Keith Nelson and Annie Harala

No commissioners present.

Extension Director Update: Mary Tennis

Yielding time.

Regional Director Update: Keri Cavitt

There was a half-day workshop last month in Duluth that was co-sponsored by UMN Extension, UMD to discuss the future of downtown Duluth and its relationship to Interstate 35 and the intersection of economic development, transportation, and the built environment. A group continues to meet and discuss next steps, including a \$70 million dollar reconnecting communities planning grant.

Upcoming events:

November 9: Timber Management and Taxation School at Black Bear Casino Clubhouse Restaurant from 10 am – 3:30 pm

Word Around the County

Discussion on the Forage Field Day in Orr, MN. Solar power discussed, what grants are available, and grant writers. Minnesota Power has a division devoted to solar energy.

Discussion on wolves, livestock, and use of drones.

Discussion on the Check & Connect program.

Upcoming events:

October 17: Salsa Fest at Salem Lutheran Church (Hermantown), 6 – 8:30 pm

October 18th: 8th Annual Feeder Calf Round-Up at 10 am in Cook, MN

Financial & CEC Items

Board will approve the max tax levy at their next meeting - an increase of 2.93%. Most will see a reduction in property taxes.

Feature Program: Xinyi Qian, Director, Tourism Center

Additional staff: Ami Choi and DeeDee LeMier

Created in 1987. Key priority areas: outdoor recreation, workforce education, consumer intelligence, agritourism, mobility.

Collaborative projects:

Sea Grant proposal

Youth development w/ LCCMR

DEED pass-through grant to create an online customer service training program w/ Hospitality MN

Regional ATV Trail Economic Impact Study w/ Northeastern Regional ATV Joint Powers Board

Tourism Economic Impact Analysis Study w/ Cook County

Agritourism Statewide Workgroup w/ Department of Health, Department of Ag, Explore MN Tourism, and

Renewing the Countryside (working on USDA grant)

Future of I-35 (co-sponsored by Extension Center for Transportation Studies and UMD) w/ MN Department of Transportation

Open discussion about interns and the hospitality industry. Training is free to MN residents – a virtual program that is mobile device friendly. Link will be available in the spring.

Upcoming events:

October 27: Duluth Area Outdoor Alliance Conference: The Great Lakes Outdoor Summit at the Zeitgeist Arts Café (Duluth) from 9 am – 4 pm

Business Items

Proposed 2024 ANR position description – in addition to Bob and Troy's work – and grow the Agritourism component.

Proposed partnership for a Regional Educator position with secured funding for the next two years at a partial percent. Combination position - 75% still supported by St. Louis County Extension funding for a local educator position and 25% from State UMN funding for the Regional Educator.

Discussion about percentage focused on St. Louis County and work that goes toward the county and regional position. Position description subject to change. General discussion on Agritourism in St. Louis County.

Review and consider proposed 2024 meeting dates and time at the October meeting.

Motion to adjourn: 11:06 am

Next meeting: October 19th, 9 – 11 am, Cotton Town Hall

Respectfully submitted by,

Nicole Baxton