

Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting

March 4, 2024, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Meeting Facilitator: Ornella Matta-Figueroa & Jean Hamilton, LAOB Staff

Attendee	Present	Not Present
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Samantha Langevin, VT RELEAF Collective ● Dan Coutu, VT Commission on Native American Affairs ● Susan Aranoff, Vermont DDC ● Ana Mejia, Vermont Every Town Project ● Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity ● Britaney Watson, NAACP ● Brian Cina, National Association of Social Workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pacifique Nsengiyumva, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) ● ● ● Arnold Thomas, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance ● Raheemah Madany, Pride Center of Vermont ● <i>Vermont Psychiatric Survivors (no active board member)</i>
Board Alternates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Jennifer Morton-Dow, VT Releaf Collective ● Mark Hughes, VRJA, ● Kirsten Murphy, Vermont DDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shingai Kagunda, Vermont Every Town Project ● Rich Holschuh, VCNAA ● Ashley Devereaux, NASW
Guests & Public	<u>Public</u> : <u>Guests</u> : Wynston Longmore outreach director from VRJA,	

Agenda

1. **Convene the March 4, 2024 virtual meeting of the LAOB at 5:32pm** (5 mins) - Ornella
 - a. Welcome, Facilitator Team Introductions, and overview of meeting
 - b. Touchstones
 - i. Listen generously. Speak your truth from your heart & mind.
 - ii. Make the way we work together an example of what’s possible.
 - iii. Trust that we all hold a piece of the puzzle & we need each other’s pieces to understand the whole picture
 - c. LAOB Board Member & Staff Introductions: Name, Identifiers, Board seat and two words of how you are landing today

<p>2. Review & Approve Meeting Notes from Feb 20, 2024 meeting (5 mins) - Jean https://vhcb.org/sites/default/files/meeting-agendas/2024/LAOB/2-20-24%20LAOB%20Minutes.pdf - Update Earnest Caswell's name in the notes to reflect his full name not just his nickname</p>	
<p>3. Public Comment & Board Responses - 15 mins - Ornella</p>	
<p>4. LAOB Legislative Update – 10 mins - Jean</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriations update - Co-working: advocating for signers on the Seeding Power letter of support <p>https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2feepurl.us7.list-manage.com%2ftrack%2fclick%3fu%3d0e42979136aa618fef9f48e04%26id%3d3dea54f4c2%26e%3d9f1f60e433&c=E,1,uJd5iXNbor7VdGzO-SJieKNnd2QEC11_4IfH_a0WctnWKhrUJju7icoKMZ-3XVvb1tOL1z5RUBzQvSJach_NeatxrjzKpg0ZbSiIc9CVDxdHngN2YCIZ04cBro.&typo=1</p> <p>Jean gave update on LAOB's appropriation of \$1.97M being in House General budget memo and named in House Ag. Had excellent testimony in the House/Senate Appropriations public budget hearings. Celebrating those successes and preparing for all the many next steps. Welcome ideas and advice on next steps with this appropriation process. And who else should we invite to sign the letter of support?</p> <p>Brian - cool to see LAOB at Progressive Caucus meeting. Great to see reactions of other orgs and caucus members, especially those wanting to connect with LAOB and make efforts to be more inclusive. They saw this as the beginning of a relationship and conversation.</p> <p>Ana - recommend staff ask organizations who have presented in the learning journey to sign on to the letter</p>
<p>5. Legislative Round Up – 25 mins - Ornella</p>	<p>What's being discussed in the Statehouse related to LAOB? Board members requested to share updates:</p> <p>Ornella - What is a priority for the Board to talk about today? Jean - How can we share information about legislative initiatives that we can be working on in a collaborative way, not in a competitive way.</p>

- Property taxes
- Act 250 reform
- Refugee temporary housing
- Developmental Disability Council Housing planning grants
- Health Equity
- Cannabis Equity
- Chattel Slavery Reparations Task Force - H.432
- Economic Justice - H.448
- Equal Protection Constitutional Amendment - PR.4
- Wholesale Criminal Justice Reform (Regression)
- Mental Health Care and Access Equity
- Statewide Prevention Equity
- What else?

Susan: Nearly ½ the comments in the public budget hearings has been from advocates and self-advocates talking about the critical needs for housing for people with developmental disabilities. HEAR OUR VOICES This housing was written into the corrective action plan, but unfunded. DDC asked for \$10M. Got a high recommendation in House General's Budget Memo. With airbnb and other competition for housing, it is really hard to find housing for people with developmental disability.

Kirsten - the housing we are talking about is not home ownership. I support people with developmental disability being supported so they can achieve home ownership. The phrase we focus on is 'stable housing'. The current programming is very unstable and there is really limited permanency.

Susan - There are hundreds of people waiting for placements in home shares. This housing could be peer living, group homes, etc. the housing people are looking for is service supportive housing, through their disability they are allowed services. They are called home and community based services, which is funded through medicaid, but not really being delivered. Workforce shortage is leading to lack of services being delivered, housing shortage is limiting availability of peer living.

Ana, does Sash model support people with developmental disability?

Kirsten - we would love if SASH housing was extended to people with intellectual and developmental disability.

Ana - Windham and Windsor Housing Trust is working on a SASH for all program. And received funding from M&T bank to expand the Sash for All model. In Southern VT. please connect with us if thats of interest.

Susan - Housing and General committee's housing bill includes a change to the VHIP to include renovations for accessibility

Kirsten - Mark and Kirsten are co-chairs of the Health Equity Advisory Commission. Looking for \$450k to stand up a health equity office. Cross-government focused. Work collaboratively with the remainder of what is left from the Health Equity Grant from CDC that VDH got. The CDC money was short term and not renewed. What happened with the VDH Health Equity Grant? What is left of it is becoming the Office of Health Equity Integration →focus on helping VT dept of health public health equity practices.

The office of health equity that we are trying to stand up is intended to work more collaboratively and work on the whole of government.

Mark - There had been community advocacy for office of health equity. The \$26M CDC grant took some of the energy away from the work towards the office of health equity. They used this funding to create a bunch of short term positions. In May the money runs out and that office will largely be laid off. Meanwhile HEAC is still focused on launching the Office of Health Equity. Policy focus of looking at social determinants of health across all offices of state government.

Mark -

H432 Chattel Slavery Reparations Bill - first introduced in 2019. Third biennium that a chattel slavery reparations bill is being introduced. It will not make cross over. We will pick it back up next biennium.

H448 Economic Justice - conceived at the same time as the Housing and Land Bill, and the same time as the Office of Health Equity/HEAC was introduced.

Constitutional Amendment - equal protection clause. The goal is to allow some of our judiciary to take a different path with state work so that 14th amendment is not being used against civil rights initiatives that are intended to uplift disadvantaged/marginalized protected classes.

Now that we are at cross over: we have underway an unprecedented walking back in much of the progress we have made in criminal justice reform. Dog whistles and rhetoric are impacting legislators and they are walking back reforms.

Act 250 - there is little discussion or exploration of understanding how Act 250 has led to racial disparities or economic disparities. Tried to get testimony in on the senate side of things.

Cannabis Equity - they are doing the same thing over again and expecting different results. Last year cannabis equity was underfunded. That is happening again. The hope is that we can get an equity lens on the 30% of the excise tax that is intended for prevention.

Dan - want to talk about property taxes. Tribal elders are concerned and one of the elders said that he is planning to move to Maine because he can no longer afford to live here.

Samantha - Give appreciation for having this space in the meeting. I am not interested in participating in legislation, so its helpful to have an update from others who can help us understand what is going on.

Jennifer - Acknowledge Dan's comment. I was on city council in Montpelier for 2 years and property taxes was the number 1 topic we discussed. How were we going to raise the taxes without making people homeless. Does sharing this news at town meeting/city council make a difference? Our communities need to know when people are forced to leave because living here is unaffordable.

Samantha - I also think it would be good for us to reference these conversations in the "off" season, to help us set priorities for the board/staff. It sounds like we already sort of know several issues that will be up for discussion and support again

Brian - Going to share my town meeting report which outlines a lot of things that I am working on in the statehouse now. My big message about equity in legislation is that if people don't want to spend money on equity, now is the time to spend money on equity. Lets make ourselves obsolete by grabbing this moment in time. We invest in systemic change, we strengthen participatory democracy, and then we don't need to have so many little equity boards.

Look up [FreeHer](#) - we have an opportunity to end incarceration and put them in houses instead.

Ornella - another idea we talked about is starting a new committee to discuss legislative platform.

No break today, decided to finish up instead

6. Board Governance -
10 mins Ornella

- Moving to monthly Board meetings in April
- Co-working: complete survey about availability and scheduling preference
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc0zx6Xp-e4NDCSdYCWZcUvEU-TMwmjT6oqE-VPtP_u_f83Qg/viewform
- March 18th is scheduled.
- April 15th is the next scheduled meeting, this is when we will move to a monthly meeting. We may start with a different schedule in May depending on what the survey says.

7. Board Announcements - 10 mins - Jean

- Next Board meeting is 3/18, VHCB will be presenting in our learning journey
 - March 22, LAOB is hosting a breakfast meet and greet at the statehouse, 8:30-10:30 we will model our community engagement activity of asking “what do you need to feel safe in a home or on land? Please come!
- Brian - can music be part of it? Something live? Or dj? Something soft in the background. Show them what community engagement can be. Show that it doesnt have to be extractive. Happy to talk more about help with that.
- Ana - exciting announcement: In December we were awarded a grant for a BIPOC Financial Empowerment program. In partnership with Root Social Justice Center, Rutland NAACP, and others. Monthly workshops, available to anyone who lives in Vermont, but not chittenden county because VRJA and Kemp Center are working on something for Chittenden County. We have outreach materials and would love to work with you on outreach. Happy to add your logos to our website as partners.
- Samantha - Did training for Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond. Highly recommend this organization especially if you are looking to develop resources that communicate about racism and what brought us to where we are now. Excellent training.
- Mark - Give Ana a shout out. Lift up your work. Thank you for lifting up Christine’s work at Richard Kemp Center. Called “Growing Homes”
Second annual trip being planned to Washington DC, called Sankofa, and adrinka phrase that means looking back and getting something to move forward. Fundraising effort underway to raise \$25k to send folks to DC. If you can share with your networks, thank yoU!
- Ornella - thank you for all of your hard work and the love and care you pour into our communities.

8. Meeting Adjourned 7:30pm

ZOOM LINK - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84633679177>