

# Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting

April 15, 2024, **5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

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

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

## Agenda

1. **Convene the April 15, 2024 virtual meeting of the LAOB at 5:45pm (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 location (county), and experiences of the eclipse  
Eclipse was humbling, things will keep going on, we are just a part of this whole human experience, friends came to see totality, we planned for no commute, feeling of otherworldliness, woah to the 360 degree sunset, enjoyed my backyard, love my friends, so lucky to just happen to have this here in VT, it was cool, felt like a pretty big deal, im a small speck in the universe, the sun is so powerful the energy and light so warm, shocked by how cold it was, happy to make the memory with my family, enjoyed the stillness, nice to witness other people witnessing grandness together, wanted to laugh and cry, felt the pull between private experience and shared experience. 750 billion years of earth and 100 years of life within that. Understand why people chase them. Peaceful, quiet, the slowing of energy. Our birds and animals reacting to the loss of light. I will always remember that sense of peace.

**2. Review & Approve Meeting Notes from March 18 2024 meeting**

<https://vhcb.org/sites/default/files/meeting-agendas/2024/LAOB/3.18.24%20LAOB%20Board%20Minutes.pdf>

Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with no changes.

**3. Public Comment & Board Responses - 15 mins - Ornella**

Ernest Caswell Buster - there is need to create a committee to understand the housing needs of farmworker. 61,000 people work on farms. 150,000 people work in food systems. Farmworkers and food workers do not necessarily know about the complexities of housing. See recent testimony from House committee on agriculture about ongoing needs for farmworker housing.

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2024/WorkGroups/House%20Agriculture/Topics%20in%20Agriculture/Farmworker%20Housing/W~Daniel%20Baker~Vermont%20Migrant%20Housing%20Presentation~4-10-2024.pdf>

**4. Legislative Updates - 10 mins - Ornella**

Community Event - photo

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1t\\_GZG8t0hQjPL\\_gZWLtU3JhNMfvCjhr/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1t_GZG8t0hQjPL_gZWLtU3JhNMfvCjhr/view?usp=drive_link)

Update on LAOB appropriation status and strategy

LAOB was not included in the House budget, but was included in H829 which is the House housing bill at \$1M. The Senate is now working on their budget and we striving to be included in their budget in combination with a new revenue stream as developed by new property transfer tax on high value properties.

Update on advocacy efforts of coalition partners

- VHFA first gen program

- DD Council

Sue - not exaggerating that this was the nicest looking, healthiest food ever seen at the Statehouse. Really interesting people to talk with, good things to read. Great energy. Got to meet the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which was really great.

Mark - please clarify what happened on the house side and what is now happening on the senate side.

Kirsten - getting pulled out of H829 and put into the senate budget is an attempt to protect the LAOB and get an appropriation because senate has indicated an unwillingness to work with 829.

Ana - esp if we do not get funding for our own grantmaking, we should look more carefully at how to have more advisory powers to ensure that our partners' grant programs are being managed as equitably as possible. For example: how do we help our partners affirmatively market their programs.

And, With our current FY24 grantmaking that includes hiring staff, lets focus group that with orgs we think might be involved with that to make sure that we don't set orgs up for unsustainable hiring situations.

Mark - How are we responding to requests for support for other orgs legislative initiatives? For example the VHFA programs. Are we applying a critical eye to the effectiveness of their programs. How are we supporting other organizations that we have been created to transform? Because we were created to be transformative, we almost have to assume that the status quo institutions are ineffective.

Brian - it is safer to have our money in the budget because there is a lot of contention in the house housing bill. It is likely that the state budget will survive a veto. Last year, 11 lawmakers held out to ensure that people who are sheltered were not evicted. Propose a strategy that we need to be creative about how we exert our expertise and voices. I see us having more decision making and power over bigger pots of funding that are housed at VHCB, VHFA. E.g. get the word out affirmatively marketing them when the units come online so our community members have a chance to get them. Assert our voices, enhance the spending of the government→may help prove the value for future funding for LAOB.

Community Event was one of the best ones ever. Everyone was talking about the food!

	<p>Ornella - how we have been making decisions so far. For example: VHFA came and presented to us and we saw through their information that they provided that they were serious and earnest in reflecting on their own data and ways that their programming can better serve BIPOC people. It has felt productive, connective, thoughtful, responsive, and open. We are having these same kinds of direct, honest dialogues with VHCB.</p> <p>Mark - lets look at criteria we can use to evaluate our partners. How do we look at the institutions: how do you collect/look at your data? Etc.</p>
<p><b>5. Program Updates</b> 15 mins - Jean</p>	<p>Share pdf of what we are working on  <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nnGmyEGGuVr5USI0Dx5R0mEJWUbxnhkP/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nnGmyEGGuVr5USI0Dx5R0mEJWUbxnhkP/view?usp=sharing</a></p> <p><b>Staff update on who we have been talking with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Truth and Reconciliation Commission</li> <li>- Regional Planning Commission Directors</li> <li>- Exploration of opportunities to bring “Thriving Communities” federal money into the state &amp; how to support community based orgs being resourced to work with federal money</li> <li>- VHFA: improving equity in VT’s housing systems; shared advocacy for legislative appropriations</li> <li>- Sanders office about CDS</li> <li>- BFRDP – link proposal</li> </ul> <p><b>Invitation for any comments or discussion on these proposals:</b></p> <p>Equity Assessment RFP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Releasing tomorrow</li> <li>● Who wants to join selection committee</li> </ul> <p>BIPOC Developer TA Program  Housing Coaches  Safety and security minigrants</p>
<p><b>BREAK - 5 mins from 6:30-6:35pm</b></p>	
<p><b>6. Board Development</b> 50 mins</p>	<p>Upcoming Board Committees &amp; Projects  <a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jvBouoapEz5Zo9X3IHvNLFU2uxTub2Hy/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jvBouoapEz5Zo9X3IHvNLFU2uxTub2Hy/view?usp=sharing</a></p>

- Hearth Tending

Manage and support staff. Oversee weekly operations. Meets weekly on Wed 9:30-10:30.

- MOU

Subcommittee of Hearth Tending. Aim to meet bi-weekly. Need to determine if we are renewing the MOU in May or want to recommend extending it to October. May would require us to start work immediately. Aiming for Oct MOU means we should start work in July.

Kirsten - as someone who worked on the MOU previously I recommend that it would be reasonable to extend it. And I am interested in serving on MOU committee moving forward.

- Board Development Committee

Subcommittee of Hearth Tending. Aim to meet monthly. Develop board governance tools, support onboarding of new board members, identify prospective board members.

Dan is interested

- Advisory Powers & Equity Assessment

Meet monthly on Thursdays 2-3:30pm, first meeting April 25. Help interpret equity assessments and direct Advisory Powers priorities. Help select the Equity Assessment consultant(s). Schedule more meetings as needed (ie selecting consultant).

Brian, Ana, Kirsten is interested.

- Advocacy and Policy Committee

Brian, Kirsten, Mark is interested

- Community Engagement Committee

Board Committees sign up – invite board members to raise hands now for the committees they want to participate in

Dan - to do this work effectively, we need document storage that is accessible to all things. Shared folders that are easy to navigate rather than searching for individual document links.

**ORNELLA** - Board development

- Discussion prompt 1: What is the role of board members in supporting the LAOB now that the LAOB has staff? – 10 mins, everyone speaks.

Sue - For DDC we find it important to understand the roles between council and staff. We are careful to keep council work in the staff lane, doing actual work is not a project for council members. Board can support on policy questions, vision, advice. But don't email or do work to coordinate program.

Kirsten - we use policy governance. Focused on hiring key personnel, setting policy and vision for the orgs. I am conscious of not wanting to step on staff toes.

Dan - the board is an immensely valuable resource to one another and the two staff. We each have different social connections, skills, and professional connections. To weave that together with a cohesive focus. Be coordinated and highly effective in working together.

Ana - because of our constituencies, board members have a role of reporting back to our appointing organizations and keeping ourselves accountable to our constituency.

Rev Hughes - before staff came the board was preparing the way for staff. Establish a foundation and structure. Now its time to switch gears. Agree with the strategic vision piece. Staff and board hold one another accountable. Advise the staff with anything we have to bring to the table. Understanding the issues we are challenged with and conduct the necessary research, bring forward resources to the directors.

Buster - establish your identify. Ensure effective planning, determine mission and purpose. Advocate. Ensure resources. Select executive staff. Enhance the organizations public standing. Provide oversight, mentor and strengthen programs. Protect asset. Ensure ethics and integrity. Care, pay attention to the orgs activities. Loyalty. Obedience. From Boardsource. Having lived experience on the board. Board members need to be the strongest advocates of their organizations.

- Discussion prompt 2: What skills and perspectives are missing from our board?

We really need a representative to fill the slot for folks with mental health disabilities. VTDDC is charged with representing folks with developmental disabilities by the federal definition, which his very broad. But we do not have constituents with later onset mental health issues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discussion prompt 3: How do we make the LAOB a board that is welcoming, inclusive, and empowering so that community members with diverse skills (especially those who have been marginalized by dominant systems) can contribute and lead fully?</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Board Announcements - 10 mins</b></p>	<p>Mark - equal protection clause of the 14th amendment can create barriers for equity programming intended to address policy disparities and their impacts, but the problem is the jurisprudence. There is a constitutional amendment that is moving through the statehouse, which provides us a statehouse level an opportunity to pursue protections. Needs to be voted out of the Senate by 2/3 to go back to the House where it needs majority vote. Reach out to your senators to ask them to pass this constitutional amendment.</p> <p>Ana - downpayment assistance grant called LiftUp Homeownership Grant for BIPOC. Through Fed Home Loan Bank of Boston. Up to \$50k for down payment and/or closing costs. Goal of reducing the racial homeownership grant. <a href="https://www.fhlbboston.com/fhlbank-boston/lift-up-homeownership">https://www.fhlbboston.com/fhlbank-boston/lift-up-homeownership</a></p> <p>Kirsten - Would like us to engage with the other committees that are using the levers of government to advance equity. Truth and Reconciliation Board, Health Equity Advisory Commission, Transportation. Its awkward to be using the systems that have been weaponized against equity to build equity. What are the shared challenges. What are the shared opportunities.</p> <p>Ornella - what kind of framework would be the most accessible for this kind of event?</p> <p>Gratitudes: grateful for all of you and what you bring to our communities. For people here that I engage with who are looking for a different world order, different way for decision making and power. Come to this with similar ethos and approach. For Buster for showing up. For Jean&amp;Ornella for including Buster as an equal to other members of our Board. It always feels good. Working with such an amazing collection of changemakers.</p>
<p><b>8. Meeting Adjourned 7:40pm</b></p>	

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

