Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting

January 13, 2025, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

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

Attendee	Present	Not Present
Board	● Samantha Langevin, Liberation Ecosystem ● Susan Aranoff, Vermont DDC ● Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity ● Brian Cina, National Association of Social Workers ● Mark Hughes, VRJA ● Dan Coutu, VT Commission on Native American Affairs ● Pacifique Nsengiyumva, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) ● Emily Carris-Duncan, Vermont Every Town Project	● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● Mary Gerisch, NAACP ● *No active board member*, Pride Center of Vermont ● *No active board member*, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors
Board Alternates	● Kirsten Murphy, Vermont DDC	● Jennifer Morton, Liberation Ecosystem ● ● Rich Holschuh, VCNAA ● Ashley Devereaux, NASW
Guests & Public	Public: Guests: Ernest Caswell Buster, Abel Luna	

Agenda

1. **Convene the January 13, 2025 virtual meeting of the LAOB at 5:30pm** (5 mins)
   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), in the depth of winter what are three words you are reflecting on? - I love snow. Serenity, peacefulness, community. Let there be light. Community, allyship, and self care. Colors, space heater. Cold, grace. Gratitude, grateful for the life I have, community. Patient for myself and others, easy in the fast world to lose the slow pace that lets us reflect and understand and maintain our health. Community, what is the community we have, what are their needs. Faith, family, friends. Survival, perseverance, dreaming. Healing, pacing, and patience. Patience, time, and breath.

2. Review & Approve Meeting Notes from December 16, 2024 meeting (5 mins)

https://vhcb.org/sites/default/files/meeting-minutes/2024/LAOB/12.16.24%20LAOB%20Minutes%20DRAFT.pdf
Samantha abstains. Minutes approved.

3. LAOB Legislative Strategies Staff Presentation	Staff and Board agree that all discussions are in full transparency, no need for executive session in the case of discussing legislative strategy. Executive session should only be used for discussing details of contracts or HR needs. Appropriations Discussion: overview on what we presented to Gov Office; Cannabis Excise opportunity; Backstop ask of appropriations Samantha - appreciate the level of detail and feel like this is all really consistent with what we have been talking about. It sounds like a great direction and appreciate everyone's work. Susan - want to make sure that we talk about other legislative issues including adding migrant justice, other disabilities orgs, etc. Concerned that we need to get a placeholder in a bill. Should that go to the policy committee. Ornella - we talked with Tom Stevens and heard him suggest that this is a routine type of change. A housekeeping bill. Mark - Mad Freedom Advocates

	Discussion - we have discussed and invited Migrant Justice to join the LAOB due to community advocacy. Brian - can make this change with any bill that includes LAOB, but it would make most sense for this to go to the House Gov Ops - Rep Matt Birong. Misc boards and commissions bill. Also - can you clarify if we are talking about a portion of the excise tax, or 100%? Mark in chat - 25% Jean - we feel that LAOB is well positioned to support other equity needs, for example like we did with Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this Board could and would likely make budget allocations to other important equity initiatives like Health Equity Advisory Council. Mark - look at language that was in last biennium cannabis bill, it may be helpful to get some of that language to Pepper. Have you been back in touch with Pepper? Jean - yes we've been in touch and have agreed to get language back to him. Lets circle up with Mark, Xusana, and get language over to Pepper. Susan - what kind of resistance might we see to this? Jean - normal debates over how to prioritize money. Ornella - conflict around who is the target population for this community reinvestment - is it BIPOC, is it marginalized communities? Mark - agree with all those. Sensing the backlash to equity initiatives that started in response to George Floyd's murder. Buster - any tax you can get out of the agriculture cannabis, and directed to the LAOB activities would be great. Leave the fed part out of it. But if you include the Fed part, include CBD. Cannabis is agriculture, should be agriculture, and since day 1 you should have been getting funding from cannabis to the LAOB. I have been wondering where my tax money has been going. I am glad that I was able to see this meeting happening today and participate. Some of that funding should be going to ensure that growers have support and that our agricultural work force has a home. The work that has been done so far from the

	funding from VHCB has been a drop in the bucket. CHT and all their partners took that little nickel they got and squeezed out $100+, had such a success that there are more people who are hoping for more. The other thing is agriculture in VT is supposed to have a heritage and history. States around the nation Maine, Wisconsin, NY, OR, MN, CA, FL, have built homes for farmworkers off the farm, just like senior housing, The farm to plate report says there are 61,000 working in agriculture. USDA says there are >8,000 people working directly on farms. I'm looking at the 61,000 farmworkers. Farm workers have been left out of the conversation. Farm workers bring us food, and not a non-profit or anyone has developed a way for farm workers to live off the farm so they can live in conditions that are not shit holes on the farms. The only report that came out commissioned by VHCB was about on-farm housing. Why haven't we developed a report for developing housing off farm for farmworkers. Our agricultural workers and farmworkers continue to be left out. I cant stress enough and I am running out of ideas, I am frustrated right now because I am frustrated what hasn't been done including your board. I hope you get funding, cannabis is agriculture, and they need land and affordable homes. ' Emily in chat - Mark and Buster I think it would have to be a community based housing solution Buster in chat - Example https://yakimahousing.org/services/farmworker-housing/ https://www.manomaine.org/housing My organization https://www.harvestparkapts.org/?rcstdid=MzI%3d-GJOvflXLv8M%3d&_yTrackUser=MjU5NDIwMTU4MyM3MTc4MjIwNjI%253d-s7MB1DEFyKU%253d&_yTrackVisit=NDM0MTQxNjY4MyM3ODc3NjU3Nw%253d%253d-2FRoYMFYFns%253d&_yTrackReqDT=12121520240101 .
4. LAOB Legislative Board Committee	Members – who wants to be on this committee: Xusana, mark, susan, Brian, dan Powers – what is this committee authorized to do:

	Brian - recommend that the committee work on various policy recommendations and come back to the board at the next meeting with recommendations on other policies to support. Things that I hear consensus on advocacy are 1. Cannabis excise tax 2. Board make up Recommend we use the office of racial equity assessment tool to assess the policies. Xusana in chat - Impact Assessment Tool and accompanying Webinar Brian - we can execute the policies that the board has already agreed on. For new ideas that emerge along the way we will use the policy impact assessment tool from ORE, discuss and then bring back to the board. Mark - if there is a priority on any policy, waiting a month may be too late/too long. Cautionary note that most organizations on this call have their own legislative agendas, there will be some angst and possibly some friction about how to navigate tensions between LAOB and other orgs. Jean - another timing question, how should staff address invitations to give testimony on issues that the board has not previously consensed around? Mark - possibility of convening this committee in short order and hashing the whole policy platform for the session. And recommend that we work out these details in the policy committee meeting. Pacifique - i feel the reason this board was formed was to advocate and talk on behalf of the people we serve on issues of land access and housing. I think we need to rethink this deeply because we need to always be engaged in different ways on these topics. , I really feel comfortable that Ornella and Jean can respond to anything that they are asked to testify on, and also want to invite the staff to bring the board in to the conversation on any issues that they feel extend beyond their clear parameters. Susan - really helpful for the DDC and could be really helpful for jean and ornella as staff, the things that are in our statute are clear guidance to staff. Then we have set up committees, eg. a policy committee who we work with when the statute isnt clear guidance. Then the policy committee can decide when we need to bring in the full board. I feel that the statute is clear guidance, and staff should feel comfortable within those lanes.

	Brian - I want the committee to create a process to review new policies, using the ORE tool to model good policy making. My concern is that the policy committee being able to do what they want without board oversight is that who shows up to the committee meetings may have unfair advantage. We want to be careful about running forward with new ideas, without the whole board hearing about it. ACTION STEPS: staff convene policy committee asap. Kirsten - another tool we find really useful is we do adopt very broad principled platform which gives us guidance as staff what we can talk about. Maybe not this year, but we may want to create and adopt a policy platform. The DDC only meets quarterly and we need their authority to as staff on how to speak on issues. Xusana - i appreciate rep cina's clarification, where there is clear consensus, lets move forward and speak up, advocate. For new ideas, lets send it through the committee then up to the board. I also agree with having a platform, if we do it right and do it early enough in the year, when session comes around we are well prepared. We want to avoid a conflict of interest and disagreement on issues that confuses our partners. It is important that we actively advocate for the committee to be conduits rather than owners of the policy platform, in recognition of who can easily participate in a policy committee.
BREAK - 5 mins from 6:30-6:35pm (cue 5 mins of music for break)	
5. Public Comment & Board Responses - 15 mins	
6. LAOB Joint Advocacy	Staff presentation – Lead strategy: welcome LAOB communities into the statehouse through weekly LAOB hosted "Open Statehouse" Would like every LAOB board organization to partner on at least one open statehouse day. Our North star- we are focusing this legislative session: demonstrate what it looks like to be led by love and care for one another. Finding Joy or creating moments of joy within the statehouse with our

	community members. Working on developing a booklet with one page dedicated to each of the LAOB communities: What does equitable housing and land access look like to your community? What policies should the Legislature enact to support your community's housing and land access needs? Fill out advocacy form – https://forms.gle/FXNFKjsVHp3m9enb7 Discussion of strategies – Kirsten - love the idea of a steady stream of people, not just a one day of advocacy. For example "every day is disabilities day". Handouts are gold. And DD Council is happy to support and partner on this work. Emily - I will be there! Happy to host and show people around. The cafeteria is where you meet most people. Dan - it makes sense. Part of the lack of clarity is that I am not a politician. The whole political world is new and I am learning. Jean - also we are happy to partner on joint advocacy days, if your organization has an advocacy day planned lets partner. And we want our non-politicians to show up, community is the heart, soul, and brains of the LAOB. Planning to host a legislative breakfast. Samantha - thinking about board development and how to use advocacy days and legislative breakfasts as a time for board development work, meeting and hosting new board prospects.
7. Open Q&A/Discussion	

2. Board Announcements - 10 mins	Kirsten - encourage Board members watch the film “Broken Promises”. We invite you to keep the momentum going by sharing the documentary with your networks. You can access the film here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dedtrzaFW0Q&t=19s Samantha in chat - perhaps the LAOB should host a showing as a community event? Buster - happy to see Migrant Justice being a part of this process. Also recommend The Underdog, Doug Butler. https://www.underdogfilm.org/ The end of March is always farmworker awareness week. Dan - VT Truth and Reconciliation Commissions is seeking 20 people to serve on a committee, a guiding hand for the commissioners. Committee members will help out with hearing peoples’ truth telling, taking notes, and providing the Commission with many eyes and ears. https://vtrc.vermont.gov/process-vermont-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-vtrc-committee-members Susan in chat - **Jan. 15: Rally for Our Health, Hospitals and Human Rights!** We refuse to carry the healthcare crisis on our shoulders any longer. "I'll be There" Mark - eventbrite invitation in chat https://www.eventbrite.com/e/just-love-tickets-1083108890849 MLK jr day gospel concert 3-5 pm in burlington. Pacifique - in celebration of Black History Month, we are hosting a lunch for lenders for small businesses. It will be February 8 at Winooski High School from 8 - 4 pm, lunch provided. Pacifique is the MC. Samantha - liberation ecosystem has a weekly newsletter that goes to our members. If you have events that are of interest to BIPOC Vermonters, we are always happy to include. Contact me.
3. CONSENT ITEMS	•

4. ACTION ITEMS	• staff convene policy committee asap. •
5. Meeting Adjourned 7:30pm	

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86991181856
Meeting ID: 869 9118 1856