Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting

August 5, 2024, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

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

Attendee	Present	Not Present
Board	• Samantha Langevin, VT RELEAF Collective • Dan Coutu, VT Commission on Native American Affairs • Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity • Mary Gerisch, NAACP • Brian Cina, National Association of Social Workers • Mark Hughes, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance	• Susan Aranoff, Vermont DDC • Ana Mejia, Vermont Every Town Project • Pacifique Nsengiyumva, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) • *No active board member*, Pride Center of Vermont • Walt Wade, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors
Board Alternates	• Kirsten Murphy, Vermont DDC	• Jennifer Morton-Dow, VT Releaf Collective • *No active alternate*, VRJA • *No active alternate*, Vermont Every Town Project • Rich Holschuh, VCNAA • Ashley Devereaux, NASW
Guests & Public	Public: Guests: Richarda Ericson, Ernest caswell Buster, Opeyemi 'Dr O', Marisol Galarza	

Agenda

1. **Convene the August 5, 2024 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)	
2. Review & Approve Meeting Notes from July 8, 2024 meeting (5 mins) https://vhcb.org/sites/default/files/meeting-minutes/2024/LAOB/7.8.24%20LAOB%20Minutes.docx	
3. LAOB Introduction – 15 mins - Ornella	**LAOB Presentation** and Welcome Board members LAOB Presentation Board.pptx.pdf - Story - orientation to the LAOB Brian - once upon a time Brian & Stefan from NAACP were meeting about how BIPOC/queer homeownership could be improved. We thought, what about some kind of board that could give out money. Then Mindy and Kenya reached out to Brian because they had ideas about BIPOC land stewardship. They all met. Then Beverly joined. Then Jess. Then Ashley. They started working together on a board that would be led by BIPOC who could increase opportunities for home, land and economics for BIPOC. Seeding Power formed as a coalition that worked together to move forward a bill that would create some structure of government that would examine policy and state practices around access to land and housing. So many twists and turns happened. The bill originally didn't pass. But Seeding Power stayed together as a coalition with constant advocacy, holding up their witnessing about why the process so far had been fraught with discrimination and the practices of marginalization. Ornella - In the 2022 Housing Omnibus Bill the LAOB was formed in a statute that awarded $200,000 in appropriation to explore, "is the LAOB necessary? What are its priorities?" The sunrise report was written. And submitted in 2023, in which 1.2M was appropriated. During the calendar year 2023, the board was developed, entered into an MOU with VHCB, hired the two staff, Jean and Ornella. In 2024, LAOB was awarded a budget of $1M to keep the work moving forward. Kirsten - it is remarkable that the LAOB is where it is. It is a model of community practice and advocacy. The LAOB has done a great job of keeping partners together who have not necessarily worked together before. Through this organizing, the LAOB has done an incredible job in its advocacy and keeping the state's focus on this important work. A lot of our strength comes from having very strong community presence on this board. Mark - Thinking about the work that Brian put into drafting this. Brian contributed a lot of expertise and relevant experience from other policy work. When you look across this group, there is very little

	representation from state agencies. In some other boards like the HEAC the predominance of state reps brings a lot of politics which is challenging to herd and coordinate. There is so much commitment and hard work that have gone into the board, including community members who come and contribute to our meetings. Mary - Congratulate everyone on the wonderful work. Ornella - so glad that you are joining us and welcome you to the Board.
4. Board member recruitment - 15 mins - Jean	- What authority do the appointing organizations have for nominating board members? - What do we do if we cannot make contact with appointing organizations? - What do you all think is the best practice for bringing in new board members Brian- From the perspective of the legislator- when we write the laws the way that this was written= member appointed by an organization. NASW put a call out to all members- then people expressed interest (not sure if the director made the decision) when he steps down he wants to have more of a process. Someone or a person they appoint. I don't think this board has an ability to appoint or fill an empty seat. Maybe we need to go to the legislature and amend the law. This is an ongoing discussion. Mary- Agrees with Brian- statute says bylaws allow us to change it? Organizations that have not really responded. Maybe if we can send around a list. Kirsten- Sua and I have been talking about this a fair amount. Sad that the VT psychiatric survivors hasn't been able to bring Radically different meeting format needed because of accessibility needs. To be able to include dd folks. Samantha: Maybe we need a one pager- What does it mean to be a board member? Feedback? What about this process works or doesn't work. Org has a lot of leeway of who they can send. Interpret broadly? This is a good place to emphasize flexibility. Who is able to speak for your community ? Who else is going to come? Who represents our community at these meetings? Jean Brian from chat: Did vermont psychiatric survivors just close down? I heard something like that

	Xusana from chat: I hadn't heard that, but maybe Brian - It may be they lost a contract with AHS and let people go Samantha - need process of what does it mean to be a board member? How do organizations send someone new? What feedback works or doesn't' work? What accessibility/accommodations should we be aware of. Mary - would like to see a board committee work on this. Brian - would trust staff to come forward with recommendations and have a committee work on that. Do you need our help? Leave the decision up to the staff. Jean- getting meeting on books- excited that there is excitement about this process. Getting clear: Committee could take the lead on thinking on some of those issues and then create some documentation on how the process works and how appointed entities can nominate folks to the laob. And how community members can participate. Mark- Is this Outreach? Is outreach a good summary? Appointed organizations are not asking people to participate? Samantha- To clarify All organizations have sent individuals at one point or another. Brian- I am excited that we will be meeting in committee because this needs deeper conversation. Jean- appreciates conversation and is excited that there is energy for a committee. Buster- Sometimes when there is a government official in the room people don't share. But I just keep volunteering. And I am here, And you can ask me- and I'm happy and having a good day. Brian, Mary, Xusana volunteered to be on this committee
BREAK - 5 mins from 6:30-6:35pm	

5. Public Comment & Board Responses - 15 mins - Ornella	Opeyemi 'Dr O' - excited to work with LAOB and be a facilitator during last week's mini-conference to work with embodiment to explore how personal trauma and traumas from systemic oppression empower all of us to go the long haul. Marisol - welcome the board to attend this week or at future workshops. Buster - how many people participated? Ornella - we kept the groups intentionally small, <15 at each event. Last week we had 8 people total. This coming week we have 13 people. Buster - affordable housing is a large increased problem. We need a strategic plan. We need to stay focused on the agendas, for what laob was formed. You need active participation and volunteers. You need wide participation from the public for whom you are supposed to serve. LAOB is supposed to serving the homeless, people of color, hispanics, people in the shadows. You need to have your first foot forward when Jan 1 comes and be prepared to advocate. Do not lobby. Be an activist. Be a volunteer. Thats how things get done. It takes a lot of courage. Lets continue making this a great day. Dan - Buster hits the nail on the head. Good reminder and absolutely agree with you. Xusana - something that I heard Buster say that I really appreciate is don't call it a crisis because a crisis is unsolvable. Thats where you get the performance, because people are just acting thinking they want to look good but without believing they can move the needle. Richarda - Want to share about a meeting we had with Jean and Ornella and the Vermont Conservation Leaders in Solidarity. Staff members from organizations that are involved in environment, land trusts, etc who are trying to do the deep work to move forward in solidarity. It was great to hear from Jean and Ornella about the history of the LAOB and the amount of work that has happened so far. Heard Jean say that the LAOB is all of ours, it belongs to all of us and is all of our work. Felt like a welcoming call in for these organizations to get more involved. Dan - good to hear the value being perceived. Thank you for sharing. Buster from chat: My organization, this has my name mentioned https://www.neighborworks.org/Media-Center/Blog/Home/2024/April-2024/Stuart-J-Mitchell-III-Fighting-for-fairness

6. Just Recovery letter sign on 5 mins - Jean	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qtdIAdi66P2FvweQ8RDEgjm_HovmD9ZasAU8uO8nXkc/edit Jean- Rev Hughes said yes via email . Samantha - For future advocacy letters, it would be helpful to have heads up. Communication please. Dan-Good with us signing on Xusana- Heads up can be good- generally aware would be nice. She doesn't object to this specific letter.
7. MOU Update 5 mins - Jean	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1npXjARtkmGOeR4zdssIMTX4UhpF2pMlU/view?usp=sharing https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZT84Oq04YfxpobLmOqhjkzJFZUBIjvWB1nQAQ3Gyy1A/edit?usp=sharing Review Committee is: Ana, Kirsten, Sue, Dan, Samantha Goals/Process - Carefully read each section of the MOU. - Describe in plain language what each section is for. - Identify our questions, concerns and clarifications of each section. Next meetings are - 8/14 9:30-10:30 - 8/15 2:30-4 pm Welcoming any questions we may have so far: Buster- No MOU review for him. He does like to study them. Mary- Hasn't had a chance to read it. Will read it and send comments by email.

	Jean- Clarified that we are reading during meeting time and that we want to make sure that we work together. Context: MOU between LAOB and VHCB. Jean will email it out to the whole board so link is readily available.
8. Budget Review 15 mins - jean	https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1C1Qx5YU3POUFnXXnBX-WrG4gdNRErPfo/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=101973395285110115197&rtpof=true&sd=true Jean- Went over document Mark- Questions about the overhead. Dan- This overhead looks high. Ask the question- what plan can be created to establish a reduction in this overhead expense overtime. Cue for next board meeting. Brian - add visuals and diagrams to make the budget more easy for different brains to understand
9. Board Announcements - 10 mins- Ornella	● September meeting —> move to Tuesday 3 to avoid labor day? Send poll to adjust to either tuesday 9/3 or 9/16. Maybe in person? Find accessibility resources to make sure as many board members as possible can come.
10. CONSENSUS ITEMS	
11. ACTION ITEMS	- Staff: circulate a board list with vacancies and request support on connecting with the other appointing agencies - Brian, Mary, Xusana volunteered to be on Board Member recruitment committee - Get important docs together and send to Mary
12. Meeting Adjourned 7:30pm	

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

DOCUMENTS

- **LAOB Outreach 2-pager** (PDF)- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1yr_1J-GKYl4n_5DUHMQCXqL-68rIjMej/view?usp=drive_link