Land Access and Opportunity Board: Shelter for All

October 24, 2025, 2:00PM-3:00PM

Meeting Facilitator: Ornella Matta Figueroa

Notetaker: Arealles Ortiz

Attendance: Mary Gerisch Staff: Tay Margison

Guests: None

Agenda:

Co-design agenda in every meeting

Previous Meetings Minutes Review 10.17

Will review 10.17 & 10.24 minutes on 10.31 Shelter for All Meeting

Minutes:

2:00PM

Mary will send budget for Ten Degrees or Colder. Discussed policy barriers to shelter development.

LEMPs, local emergency management plan for comparisons

I would like to explore the possibility of shelters being exempt from town zoning regulations around residential property. Because technically these shelters are not permanent. Then we could look at spaces in commercial zones that are bigger and centrally located. If shelters were exempt, we would have more possibilities

Any other thoughts?

There is a building called Thatcher House. The Bennington coalition for the homeless was renting it, and it needed all kinds of remediation. We didn't have money to remediate, and the landlord didn't want to pay. The building ended up getting sold. Now we have the opportunity to buy the building back. We don't have 300k to do the remediation.

We have a drastic need for shelters that can suit larger families.

Originally VHCB was supposed to fund it. But the partnership bought the building; a limiting partner was on VCCH board.

We are trying to find out where the remediation funds are going to come from before the contract closes.

What remediation is required?

Insulation, Lead Pipes, but would have to check the budget. Most are health risk remediations. Can the State Department of Health be a part of that?

Theres another building in town that used to be a school. On the turning point board, we were going to make housing for rehabilitation of substance misuse. There was a problem. Local entity said they would fund it but then didn't have the funding. Then we had to default on the purchase contract. Similar remediation to current opportunity.

Wondering if we could talk to VHCB for funding again. Get an MOU with them. As long as our director isn't benefiting in any way, then maybe they would be open to it.

VHCB has many programs to get it funded. Appreciation.

Next Steps:

Obtain Paperwork from Mary's Executive Directors as to why they couldn't get funding to buy Thatcher House with fiscal support from VHCB.

Contact VHCB to see if there was a communication error. Clarify the current hurdle, is there another avenue? How can they support Mary.

Wrap up Question: What are we looking forward to?

Meeting Adjourned: 2:50PM

Submitted by: Arealles Ortiz