# *Land Access and Opportunity Board:* Hearth Tending Committee
## November 12, 2025 9:30AM – 10:30AM

Meeting Facilitator: Ornella Matta-Figueroa, Jean Hamilton

Notetaker: Arealles Ortiz

| **Attendees:** | **Not Present:** |
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| **Board:**<br>● Samantha Langevin, Vermont Liberation Ecosystem<br>● Kirsten Murphy (VT DDC)<br>● Mark Hughes (VRJA)<br>● Dan Coutu, VT Commission on Native American Affairs (VCNAA)<br>● Susan Aranoff (Vermont DDC)<br><br>**Staff:** Ornella Matta-Figueroa, Jean Hamilton, Arealles Ortiz | ● Brian Cina, (VASW – VT Chapter) |
| **Guests & Public:** Grey Berreda | |

| Meeting Convened by Facilitator at 9:30AM | |
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| **1. Introductions & Check-in** | Name, Nominating Organization, Check-in: How are you?<br><br><u>Agenda:</u><br>Review 11.5.25 Minutes<br>Public Comment<br>Responses to Public Comment<br>Update on advisory Powers process |

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| **2.Discussion/ Updates** | Reviewing 11.5.25 Minutes<br>Mark Hughes makes a Motion to Approve Minutes Presented<br>Kirsten Murphy Seconds<br>All in Favor<br>Samantha Langevin Abstains<br><br>Amendments: Page 5: I want to add- with the best intentions-at the beginning.<br>LAOB Statute typo<br><br>9:41AM: Clarifying advisory powers discussion from previous meeting. Wanted to make sure we use justice principles in the methodology itself. How would we create a repeatable process of engagement.<br><br><u>Public Comment:</u> Appreciation of what I'm reading in the minutes and this work. Will print off and sit with it more.<br><br><u>Response to Public Comment:</u> Appreciation of someone from the public in attendance.<br><br>Reminder that committee members should bring in more people from the public to our meetings.<br><br>10 Minute update on advisory power conversation we had last week.<br><br>It was a nice dialogue. Discussed how some language means something to some people. And then things we can do with shaping up an organizational culture for things that have never existed before.<br><br>What does it look like right now? Decided to take that dialogue into a co-created board process. Then spend time working together creating this policy. A group of people would create a living document, adapt, and update.<br><br>We realized this is an important step to institutionalize what the process is going to look like. What do advisory powers look like long-term? Plan, strategy, and process.<br><br>Any other additions?<br><br>How do we go about setting up our own internal structures and policies in a way that is not colonial. Does what we're thinking of align with our culture? This can be our guiding star. |

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| | **Ornellas notes that come to mind**: Story shaping different parts of how we communicate with the systems; stories as medicine. Also looking at long time. What are the kinds of share out, work together, share in processes that are a part of the communication? What are the spaces we set up as we are communicating information? As we create restorative, working together community environment? Such as native or traditional processes. Circles and having different ways of working together.<br><br>I want to get what you said. I heard of what you speak to was frameworks and practices. Long time & circle. That these are tools of how to do the practice of advisory powers. That call from our indigenous way opposed to colonizer frameworks such as hierarchy and bottleneck frame working.<br><br>Yes, and as it relates to our advisory powers process, it would be, how do we shape up a process that incorporates these elements as our tools, strategies, and approaches.<br><br>Additional comments: I'm noticing this kind of language we are using, and it's the language we understand in this room. Wanted to note that is not going to be the case with other folks we are using these advisory powers with.<br><br>An important piece about new ways of presenting information. We're going to want to engage strategically because that is how we are going to build the bridge. Caution from moving too far away. We might have to use language others will understand to engage.<br><br>Advisory powers have to start with us. Be willing to do as we say. Agree that we have to use language everyone understands.<br><br>Revisited previous meetings notes about a tour directors did touching base with stakeholders. I don't remember that happening but that's a great idea & we should do that. We would want to start with all of our board representative organizations.<br><br>Update: We have established Primary and Alternate representatives from Migrant Justice to join our board.<br><br>Next Steps to Advisory Powers process are planning our case study meetings.<br><br>Mark could create a high-level draft on organization transformation, what it looks like, based on experience. Or hold off and wait for this process.<br><br>Feel this is going to be a good process for us. |

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| | Evaluation Committee Items we'll need to tackle:<br>• Debrief as a group & report out to the board on the overall process<br>• Schedule a co-worker-to-co-worker conversation<br>• Send Francis any of the materials that he needed after our process is wrapped up.<br><br>Do all feel clear with Marks' initiative to create a process for the board to be self-reflective and create a process?<br><br>10:14 AM Public Comment from the Chat: I don't feel it's an either/or situation. We are also always in ceremony when we assemble and while that might be confusing and uncomfortable for people, inspiring curiosity that this is offering an opportunity to deepen our solidarity. Starting our meetings with more recognition of being in ceremony with our indigenous relatives.<br><br>Samantha discussed the 'Board speaks with one voice' example. What is our role vs. theirs (Directors/Staff/Board)? Stay consistent on directives. How do we get to that place? Internal board development.<br><br>Idea of creating self-evaluations that we can work on throughout the year. Every board meeting we could incorporate this into our work that is structured and not overwhelming.<br><br>LAOB passed a policy on advocacy. That could be aligned with how does the board speak.<br><br>Samantha has been posting board meetings on Liberation Ecosystem newsletter. We can post subcommittees too. Just would need someone to send me occurrence and description.<br><br>In Closing: It's not an easy thing to do what we do. Sitting in what it means to advocate and have lived experience to do this work embodied and what it means to feel empowered, self-accountable. |
| **3. Process Check-in, Next Steps** | • Reflections<br>• **Next Steps:** Arealles check in about Doodle Form, see how many folks have responded to Case Studies.<br>**Next Steps:** List of To-do Items from Evaluation Committee<br>**Next Time** Make time in upcoming hearth tending meetings to plan for Evaluation Committee & December Board Meeting Items.<br>**Next Steps:** Design December Board meeting on staff evaluation process and internal reflections. |

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| | **Next Step:** How does the board manage collective decision making and unified voice?<br><br>● Gratitudes |
| **Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 AM** | |

***Submitted by: Arealles Ortiz***