Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting
August 3rd, 2026 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Occurs Every 4th Monday

Meeting Facilitator: Ornella Matta-Figueroa & Jean Hamilton

Notetaker: Arealles Ortiz

Attendee	Present	Not Present
Board:	● Susan Aranoff, Vermont DDC ● Mark Hughes, VRJA ● Dan Coutu, VT Commission on Native American Affairs ● Emily Carris-Duncan, Vermont Every Town Project ● Alyssa Beauchamp, Liberation Ecosystem Inc. ● Brian Cina, National Association of Social Workers ● Andre Comandon, Office of Racial Equity ● Zack Hughes, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors	● Mary Gerisch, NAACP ● Sonali Samarasinghe, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) ● *No active board member*, Pride Center of Vermont ● Abel Luna, Migrant Justice
Board Alternates:	● Caitlin Scott, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors ● Kirsten Murphy, Vermont DDC ● Jaada Longmore, VRJA	● Samantha Langevin, Liberation Ecosystem Inc. ● Ashley Devereaux, NASW ● Rich Holschuh, VCNAA ● Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity ● Marita Canedo, Migrant Justice ● Kenneth Martel, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)

Staff:	Jean Hamilton, Tay Margison, Ornella Matta-Figueroa
Guests & Public:	Buster Caswell

Agenda

1. **Convene the August 3rd, 2026 virtual meeting of the LAOB at 5:30pm**
   a. Welcome, Overview
   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, Seat and Location (county)

2. Agenda Items:	- Check Ins & Prompt: How are you arriving? - Review 7.13.26 DRAFT Minutes - Public Comment - Break - LAOB Internal Work Update, Discussion, & Planning - Board Updates
3. Review 7.13.26 DRAFT Minutes:	Grammar Edit: 'lank banks' to 'land banks' Alyssa will send presentation made on 7.13.26 Board meeting regarding LAOB COI Policy. *Pin: Consider putting meeting materials with minutes on our website. Susan Aranoff makes a motion to approve the 7.13.26 minutes as presented with edits and suggestions. Mark Hughes seconds that motion. All were in favor.
4. Public Comment & Board Responses:	Things to work on: Farmer Housing and Farmworker Housing as well as demonstrating the needs.

	Links shared: https://abc30.com/post/new-54-unit-affordable-housing-complex-provide-homes-farmworker-families-southwest-fresno/19570194/ https://www.growinghomes.org/learning Would suggest finding a way for LAOB to be heard during the Farm to Plate Network Meetings. Another thing to think about is that every 2 years the State of Vermont has to work with HUD in developing its plan. It'd be good to get farm worker housing in there to get their necessary funding. Response to public comment: The link shared included an article about a new 54-unit affordable housing complex to provide homes for farm workers and their families in Fresno, California. We should figure out a repository to reference articles likes these for a later time. Thank you for your advocacy. Response to public comment: We hear your concern. We do need more housing solutions that are specialized and take in the needs of populations like farm workers. Vermont would really benefit from investing in sustainable agriculture such as farms and community-based agriculture built into the infrastructure of housing. Thank you for advocating for farm workers. Response to public comment: Wanted to highlight that Liberation Ecosystem staff sit on the Farm to Plate steering committee. If there are opportunities for overlap of advocacy around this issue, we would love to support that. Response from the chat: We also have a farm skills 101 programming series for BIPOC Vermonters. This program has been funded through VHCB in the past, but the institutions funding a lot of beginner farming programs have narrow definitions of what a "viable farm" is and won't expand that definition.
5. LAOB Internal Work Update, Discussion, & Planning:	Advisory Powers Toolkit Update: The toolkit is intended to provide practical guidance for community engagement, advisory activities,

	partnerships and collaborations, policy development, priority setting in policy and coalition contexts, and accountability and transparency. In the fall, the staff plan to bring 3 connected products for consideration: An advisory powers toolkit, policy framework, and legislative platform. Presentation on Programming, Grant, Contract, Budget, and Committee Priorities Update: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1CGLe80LNDR3Qmcva6LMleW7sQw1bnKHKK6hlVWypRLg/edit?usp=sharing Hiring Update: -We received 70 applications for our secure housing coach job opening. -Our Vista positions are still open and to be determined.
6. BREAK:	5 Mins
7. Board Discussion:	Alyssa Beauchamp makes a motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Mark seconds that motion. All were in favor. We had a rich conversation about personnel issues and the future of LAOB. Mark shared a draft of board development that we will share and post for community, board, and staff. We will use the next Hearth Tending Meeting to continue to discuss some of the personnel matters.
8. Board Updates & Announcements:	- Comment: Our advocates from Mad Freedom lost their grant and we've learned that Department of Mental Health is going to put it out for bid again. -First African Landing Day event: https://faldvt.eventbrite.com/ https://firstafricanlandingvt.org/ -Comment shared in the chat: Everyone is invited to join our tribe's annual gathering Aug 29th from 10-4 at the Scout Camp in Eden, VT. We provide free lunch. Come learn about Abenaki culture.
9. CONSENT ITEMS	•

10. ACTION ITEMS	*Pin: Consider putting meeting materials with minutes on our website.
11. Meeting Adjourned: 7:30PM	

Submitted by: Arealles Ortiz