

Healthy Roots Collaborative Advisory Committee Meeting
January 19, 2023 – 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm
NRPC Office 75 Fairfield St, St. Albans, VT 05478

Call-In Information:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83468213195?pwd=YnlYOVdjUnlUcXZkRXZ4cUxEaFBLZz09>

Meeting ID: 834 6821 3195

Passcode: 481727

Phone number: 1-305-224-1968

Attendance: Kyle Grenier, Lynn Douglas, Emily Alger, Cassie Fraser, Bethany Remmers, Peter Jenkins, Elisabeth Nance, Tim Smith

Goals:

- Confirm HRC Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule for 2023
- Share preliminary highlights of the 2022 Gleaning Season
- Receive feedback on work being done regarding the donated Blue Sky Packing building

HRC Projects:

- Gleaning (harvesting, delivery, food site relations, volunteer coordination, donation plot management, VGC membership)
- Gleaning field trips/Farm to School
- Migrant Household Food Boxes (gleaned and purchased produce) in partnership with NorthWest Family Food & Bridges to Health)
- Northwest Farmacy CSA (purchased produce) in partnership with NOTCH Richford Health Center
- Everyone Eats: prepared meal organization and delivery in partnership with 8 restaurants and 14 food sites.
- Farm & Food Business Support: working with farms to develop sales and marketing plans (website development, market access, storytelling, cost of production), provide grant support and connection to other farm viability resources.
- Infrastructure development: Developing storage and aggregation site in Sheldon at Blue Sky Packing's new location and working with SHLT and other partners on exploring the Isle La Motte School as a potential community kitchen location.

Times	Agenda Item	Action
1:00 to 1:20	Org updates	
Notes:		

SHLT- Emily shared that SHLT is going to hire a 3rd staff person that will provide SHLT to grow capacity for their programming over the next year.

NRPC Board of Commissioners: Lynn Douglas shared that Kyle Grenier was hired as the NRPC Transportation Planner.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission- Bethany shared her shifting role at NRPC and its focus on overall project management and some financial management.

Kyle Grenier- Kyle introduced himself as the new Transportation Planner at NRPC and shared about his first week at NRPC.

The Abbey Group- Cassie shared about all the work being done at Blue Sky Packing and also about their recent fieldtrip to Finn & Roots in Fairfield.

FCIDC- Elisabeth shared that someone would be reaching out to HRC about the new Civilian Conservation Corps that is being created in Northwest VT.

1:20 to 1:50

HRC Current Projects & 2022 Gleaning Highlights

Notes:

Peter gave a presentation on the 2022 Highlights of the Gleaning Season. Peter explained how the Vermont Gleaning Collaborative is discussing the different ways organizations are accounting for food that is aggregated and distributed (recovered vs gleaned vs purchased vs grown). Peter gave an example of a pallet of sweet potatoes that ended up at a farm for compost but they contacted HRC because they were still good. This food was categorized as “recovered”. The food that is “grown” is produce that was purposefully grown for donation for HRC. Peter shared that there was 47,343 lbs distributed, 27,647 lbs recovered, 7,952 lbs grown, 50,587 Everyone Eats meals, 41 CSA shares purchased (Migrant Household Food Boxes and the NW Farmacy CSA).

Peter reported that there were 20 farms and donors contributing to HRC gleaning program and that there were 5 new farms that contributed this year. He added that there were 37 recipient sites which was an increase from 2021 and 23 sites that received weekly or every other week deliveries. Peter added that 206 volunteers were engaged for a total of 592 volunteer hours.

Peter highlighted some of HRC’s Food Justice Collaborations. Peter shared that HRC provides food to the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi Food Shelf. Peter reported that HRC did its 2nd year of taking part in the Abenaki Land Link Project (which is a project of the Nulhegan band and NOFA-VT) and that HRC also planted seeds from the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi and shelled beans in the classroom with Donna Toneatti of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi. Peter explained further that because of the crop loss associated with seeds planted through the Abenaki Land Link Project, HRC donated other produce instead. Peter added that HRC also provided culturally preferred produce for migrant household food boxes in partnership with NWFF and Bridges to Health.

Peter shared that he will be sending out surveys to farmers and recipient sites and asked advisory members to let him know if there is any additional data that they would want to see.

Emily asked Peter if he felt the gleaning program is the right size. Peter responded that he thought the program is the right size but that he also said the same thing a couple of years ago when the program was much smaller. Peter shared that there is definitely high demand for local produce but the difficulty is having the right quantity of the high demand fruit and veggies. Emily asked Peter to perhaps flesh out opportunities for growth for the HRC gleaning program for the more in-depth presentation at the next meeting. Bethany shared that Peter gave an abbreviated version of this presentation at the NRPC staff meeting where they also shelled the beans and she said she could see how that would do well at a school!

Emily called attention to the current HRC Projects listed at the top of the agenda.

1:50 to 2:40

**Blue Sky Packing Building
Update**

Notes:

Christine gave presentation on donated space by the Abbey Group at their new Blue Sky Packing site. The presentation included the current funding landscape associated with the building, potential partnership opportunity with CVOEO, current activities that are moving that project forward and next steps.

Kyle shared that there might be opportunity to work with equipment vendors to purchase and hold equipment to help HRC spend the funds but delay moving into the space.

Lynn asked if based on the location whether it would be good for HRC to purchase a generator. Cassie shared that the Abbey Group office is right down the road and that they rarely experience power outages. Tim shared that if Blue Sky Packing has generators for their new building, it might be easy enough for HRC to hook up to their generators and have HRC use grant funding to pitch in for the cost of the generator.

Peter shared the importance of having a space that doesn't freeze for storage crops. Lynn asked if there is enough space at the warehouse to develop cold storage space. Peter shared that perhaps the cooler when not running in the winter could have enough insulation to store the storage crops depending on what the internal temperature will be.

Emily asked if Christine or Peter has any specific questions for the committee around the warehouse space. Christine shared that there isn't anything specific questions right now but as discussions move along with CVOEO, she would be looking to reach out as questions come up.

Peter added that there might still be a benefit to have storage on the Islands. This past year HRC stored crops at Pigasus Farm and he thinks that it would still be helpful to have storage in South Hero.

Cassie confirmed that the building electricity would be Green Mountain Power and that the new building will have a generator.

2:40 to 3:00

**Meeting schedule confirmation &
Individual Advisory Committee
Member Meetings**

Notes:

Christine asked the committee to confirm a regular meeting time which would be the 3rd Thursday from 1pm-3pm. All committee members present for the meeting confirmed. Emily asked for feedback on the Advisory Committee meeting bi-monthly or going to every month or quarterly. Cassie said she preferred bi-monthly. Tim shared concern about missed bi-monthly meetings creating too big of a gap between meetings. Lynn added that if there is a canceled meeting perhaps a fill-in meeting can be scheduled to eliminate long gaps. Tim added that on the off months it would be beneficial to have a one-pager sent out to the whole group to share updates on projects. Emily shared that at SHLT they have meetings every month and they reserve the right to cancel if there are no decisions that need to be made.

Lynn added that she appreciated presentations getting shared after the meetings. Bethany shared that if meetings are more frequent, perhaps the length of the meeting can change. Emily confirmed that the HRC Advisory Committee will stay bi-monthly on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 1pm-3pm with a one-page summary being sent out on the off months.

Emily shared that it is a priority to have some 1 on 1 meetings with Advisory Committee members and community partners to connect and give and get updates. Emily said that an email will be sent out to set up these in-person meetings.

Meeting end 2:25pm

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