

**Healthy Roots Collaborative Advisory Committee Meeting**

**May 18, 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/87640341868?pwd=VCtZOHdrMmFySUUpDVVkc08yUWdhUT09>

**Meeting ID: 876 4034 1868**

**Passcode: 932011**

**One tap mobile**

**+13092053325,,87640341868# US**

**Attendance:** Emily Alger, Peter Jenkins, Christine Porcaro, Bethany Remmers, Tim Smith, Jess Graff, Lauren Weston

**Goals:**

- Discuss past HRC Strategic Planning Documents and how it relates to HRC's current and future work. Create actionable steps for evaluating indicators, understanding HRC goals and leverage points.
- Update on HRC on EDA purchasing of truck and refrigerated trailer as well as infrastructure updates related to Blue Sky Packing.

Times	Agenda Item	Action
1:00 to 1:30	<b>Partner Organization Presentation and Discussion</b>	
Bethany gave an overview of Northwest Regional Planning Commission. She shared that Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) are not non-profits but sub-divisions of the state and NRPC is 1 of 11 that are in VT. Bethany added that there are a lot of similarities but a lot of differences between RPCs, because they reflect the communities and their needs. NRPC has a Board of Commissioners which is comprised of 23 member municipalities which each get 2 representatives on the Board. Bethany shared information on NRPC core programming which includes, but is not limited to, working with municipalities, water quality, transportation planning, and emergency response with core funding coming from ACCD. Bethany added that NRPC also has annual contracts with emergency management and the Agency of Transportation. NRPC has regional partner programs, which includes Healthy Roots. Another regional partner program is the Working Community Challenge Group which is focused on housing, in particular, expanding housing opportunities in our region. Bethany shared that NRPC administers the Northern Vermont Economic District which is an Economic Development Administration (EDA) designation. Bethany added that NRPC also has Brownsfields programming which manages a		

revolving loan fund. Bethany spoke about NRPC's role in the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail, the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail and the Northwest Rail Trail Council.

Jess asked if there has been coordination between the rail trail, farms along the rail trail and Healthy Roots. Bethany mentioned that there had been funding for marketing for the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail which allowed NRPC to create a trail friendly business guide.

Bethany shared that there is the Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation which was a non-profit created to support fundraising efforts for both NRPC and other regional partners. Emily added that she might know a partner that could benefit from the Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation as a fiscal sponsor. Bethany added that the partner does not have to do work exclusively in the region but they would want to see the organization's tie to the Northwest Region.

Bethany added that NRPC currently has 16 employees and 2 AmeriCorps members.

Emily shared that she likes NRPC being the backbone organization because it has a relationship with all of the municipalities in the region. Emily asked if there are ways to share information more regularly about municipalities in order to figure out their priorities. Peter added that at the NRPC in-person staff meetings there is a regular update on what is happening in each municipality.

Jess shared that she appreciates that NRPC has diverse understanding of infrastructure in our community as there is a lot that goes into the human infrastructure in the community.

Lauren asked if it would be possible for community partners to attend an NRPC staff meeting. Bethany shared that NRPC has been talking about inviting community partners to NRPC staff meetings to share more about their organization and for them to learn a little more about NRPC.

1:30 to 2:00

**Blue Sky Packing Update & Truck/Refrigerated Trailer purchasing update.**

Christine gave an updated on the purchasing on a F-150 Powerboost and 6'x'8' refrigerated trailer for the Healthy Roots gleaning and food access programming. Christine shared that the purchasing would be happening before June 1<sup>st</sup> with the delivery of the trailer occurring by the end of June and the truck delivery still to be determined. The refrigerated trailer will stay at the NRPC office to begin with and will serve as storage location for gleaning as well as the Northwest Farmacy CSA drop-off. Christine also shared that HRC was given the greenlight to start construction at the Blue Sky Packing location. Christine added that a preliminary floorplan has been developed in partnership with CVOEO and that an MOU is being looked over by the NRPC lawyer.

2:00 to 2:45

**HRC Strategic Plan Review Discussion**

Emily started the conversation asking for feedback on the strategic planning. Lauren questioned about whether HRC being the convenor or offering direct service for programming. Emily shared that she did not have feedback on exact activities but was unsure about the strategic/organizational map and how to use that information. Emily shared that it would be good to have a map that more accurately identified key activities/indicators that are going to move the needle and have broad impact and also work to identify opportunities and activities that HRC is not currently doing. Bethany acknowledged that this strategic plan was also done in pre-pandemic times and also at a time when HRC needed a diversification of funding and HRC is now in this transition period where the diversification of funding is in better share. Bethany encouraged HRC to continue to look at needs and see where there is funding that can support those needs. Emily shared the importance of seeing the gaps and also other funding opportunities that meet those needs that HRC is not currently taking advantage of. Bethany shared that NRPC is at the end of EDA funding which included HRC work and that they are currently looking for the next big funding opportunity.

Jess shared that she did not think that there needs to be any major strategic changes but perhaps the document just needs to be updated. Jess reiterated that the foundation of HRC programming does not need to change.

Christine gave a review of the FY24 budget and answered questions about holes in current budgets and concerns of where there might be weaknesses. Tim asked if Christine would be willing to share a presentation at FCIDC to share the work that HRC has been up to.

Bethany brought up the infrastructure that HRC is investing in and how that can have an effect on future HRC programming. Jess added that it is important to balance meeting current needs and also planning for future opportunities. Emily added that this new infrastructure gives HRC the space to dream about new opportunities that have not been possible before.

Peter added that the infrastructure is definitely at a larger capacity than HRC's current programming and shared that increased capacity would need additional staff time. Peter also shared that there are not a lot of farms left in our region that could significantly increase our gleaning poundage. Jess wondered about there being more outreach and education to farmers to see about increasing farms interested in being gleaning partners. Tim asked if HRC was planning to share cooler space with farmers and food producers, similar to the old HRC cooler. Christine shared that, at least initially, the cooler would just be used for HRC and CVOEO programming. Tim shared that it will be important to share the electrical loads for the space with the electrician.

Bethany shared that it would be worth reviewing the old strategic planning document to updated both new and existing partnerships and to see if there are any duplication of efforts. Tim shared that the hospital has a new CEO and that it might be worth sharing with him what HRC has been working on.

2:45 to 3:00

**Org Updates & Announcements**

**Bethany/NRPC-** Bethany shared that NRPC is working on their FY24 budget.

**Emily/ SHLT-** Emily shared that SHLT hired a new staff person, Jenna O'Donnell, as their Communications and Development Director.

**Jess/Franklin Grand Isle Community Action-** Jess shared that they will be purchasing 40 tents by June 1<sup>st</sup>. She mentioned that they currently have many requests for camping equipment. They have funding to purchase camping equipment and there is going to be a rush to purchase that equipment at the end of the month. They will be purchasing more than just tents- sleeping pads, bungee cords, sleeping bags.

**Lauren/FC NRCD-** Lauren shared that they had their largest tree sale ever and they are hosting a lot of events this summer. Lauren also shared that they have brought on a summer intern. Lauren reported that perhaps FC NRCD funding landscape could change this year.

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