

**Healthy Roots Collaborative Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**October 15, 2020 – 1pm to 3pm**  
**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85027861274?pwd=NDNpZlp4MGYvZXFGMzk5bkNiaDUvZz09>

**Meeting ID: 850 2786 1274**  
**Passcode: 370781**

Attendance: Brad Docheff, Emily Alger, Tim Smith, Bethany Remmers, Koi Boynton, Christine Porcaro, Rachel Huff, Nina Hansen

Not in attendance: Robert Ostermeyer, Denise Smith

**Goals:**

- Come to agreement on FTS focus
- Engage Advisory Committee in Infrastructure planning process

Times	Agenda Item	Action
1:00-1:30	<b>Org updates</b>	
<p>Notes:</p> <p><b>Town of Fairfax:</b> Had a good farmers market season with good turn out. Looking forward to even more vendors and activity next year.</p> <p><b>FCIDC--</b>Full swing on ReStart VT TA (Assistance/consulting on bookkeeping, social media, marketing, etc). Businesses can receive a grant up to \$3,000 of work with a consultant. Half a dozen businesses from the islands have reached out (DC solar, Rural Tech). Money has to be out the door by December 4<sup>th</sup>. Go online through ACCD and register as a business or there are businesses who have registered as a vendor who would be providing the TA. The sign-up for ReStart VT is very easy and does not take a long time. There is substantial money to be had, but a limited amount of time for it to get used.</p> <p><b>Abbey Group-</b> Unfortunately did not get Farmers to Families food box program bid this time around. They are hoping a private venture will come together between them and the VT Food Bank to create a 100% Vermont Food Box. It is in the very early stages of development. The schools right now are in a tough slog. Making cold meals for the classroom is boring for everyone. Hot meals hopefully for end of October.</p>		
1:30 – 2:00	<b>Programmatic updates</b>	
<p>Notes:</p> <p><b>Rachel:</b> Things are starting again. Had an in-person meeting at St. Albans School Town Garden. This meeting is a bit of a sign that some people’s heads are getting above water. Had a meeting with all the coaches that coach Farm to School Institute teams. There were a lot of good strategies that came out of the meeting.</p>		

**Christine**-Continuing to work on Everyone Eats. Working to get restaurants registered to be in the program and work on marketing for consumers to get them connected to the voucher through the Localvore App. HRC is enrolled as a vendor for the ReStart VT grant through FCIDC.

**Koi:** A lot of grant work! FOOD BANK GRANT (\$5000) was provided for our role in supporting emergency food efforts in our community since the beginning of the pandemic. Working on High Meadows and Windham Foundation end of year reporting. Grand Isle Health Council gave \$2,000 (asked for \$1,000)  
Supporting Rachel, there is money coming in for infrastructure for schools to put in place because of COVID.

Meeting with Kathy LaVoie to go over Apprenticeship program. See what we learn and move forward from there!

2:00 to 2:15

**Farm to School**

**Koi, Rachel, Peter:** Share information on new grant with schools in Franklin & Grand Isle (Coronavirus Relief Fund Child Nutrition Equipment Grant Program and Farm to School Application)

Notes: **FARM TO SCHOOL**

We have been talking a lot about Farm to School through the 3 C lens. We are working towards focusing energy on where the interest lies, in the classroom and community pieces, and working on curriculum/student activities with educators. We will continue to do activities with classrooms in any capacity that we can this year. We are also creating videos and other virtual activities to interact with students.

The cafeteria/procurement piece is an ongoing challenge, and we will be stepping back the pressure on school food service programs for right now. The federal gov't has not changed the way they manage school meals. There hasn't been enough change on the state level. We can continue to create connections between the cafeteria and classroom, support food service staff, and help students, teachers, and staff see them as the educators they are. If things change at a federal, state, or regional level, we will revisit this area of work.

Where we have had wins is with the Abbey Group and connecting Pomykala to Burlington schools. We can continue to do that where the volume and opportunity exists.

2:15- 3:00

**Infrastructure Brainstorm & Discussion**

**Koi:** Reach out to community members (in both the commercial and charitable world) to create a focus group to see what needs, wants, and ideas that exist.

Notes:

VHCB connected us with Sam Smith (Intervale) and we are working with him to really think about what is needed in our region. Thinks that we should dream big, and then look at the options from there.

We are looking to see what the advisory board brainstorms and that will be compared to what the staff has come up with.

We are in the development stage of that process. We want to bring together both the charitable and commercial aspects of our work.

**What do we think and what is the overlap between staff and advisory committee?**

**Nina-** Storage and distribution is our weakest points. Likes the Salvation Farms model: an industrial space to store and pack produce that could easily ship out food across the state.

**Brad-** Worked with Theresa at Salvation Farms and is wondering about HRC's bigger vision of the growth capacity, more specifically, where does the gleaned produce go?

What other programs do you think HRC would want the capacity to run? A food prep and packaging site? Is that something that we would want to take on? One thing in Chittenden that was successful was converting a space into a food packaging space. They packaged meals with different preparation. Repurposing that food into meals that could be picked up or delivered. Prepackaged food is a good way to connect people around food.

**Koi-** HRC brings in 25,000 lbs. of food (40,000 lbs. this year with the Farmers to Families Food Boxes). It is stored at Health Hero and West Farm. And then it moves out to 15-16 charitable food sites (4 health clinics), through our shared food van.

We have experimented with cooking classes in the community (Rachel is the greatest teacher ever!). Those were very well received. There could be a subsidized model where people pay and then others could then come for free. Could this be a spot as a pick-up for a winter farmers' market? What about a Grange?

Salvation Farms had the commodity program for a while (wash and pack) and then put it out in pallets. Hard to support food shelves in VT because they can't take pallets. They did close the commodity program in Winnoski. They are opening a storage and packaging facility in Morrisville in a building owned by the United Way of Lamoille County.

**Tim-** In Swanton they tried to have a winter farmers market. From his take, the number were down and traffic was not as heavy as it was in the past (current FM). It was ok but not like past years.

The St Albans Bay Market saw good orders and even though less people there has seen an increase in individual orders.

**Koi-** Swanton has struggled with different models of farmers' market. Some success with crafts but not the same success with food producers.

**Rachel-** How nice it would be to have a new space that we would be able to introduce someone as a part of the internship program to this space before sending them out into the world.

**Emily-** Pull a part the hub into its components

-Storing & packing

-Loading dock

-Processing gleaned produce (commercial kitchen)

-Cooler

One of the problems we have with our geography is location. Would there be a problem having a hub in St. Albans? If we were really dreaming...there would be satellite facilities and that they would communicate with a centralized facility. Be able to serve people more locally.

**Brad-** Agrees...an alternative a mobile hub or mobile food truck to these locations. You are limited because food trucks are only so large. That mobility aspect is important though. Transportation is not easy in this area.

**Koi-** We need some farmer voices in this conversation. We need the markets before we commit to an aggregation site. Thoughts around needs for commercial partners? Nina has mentioned that ordering systems are a priority. To facilitate product going to schools. Where are we with that? Green Mountain Farm direct...Northwest affiliate that could plug into that system for school ordering.

**Emily-** I think that some of them are at full capacity (the other area hubs). Are other efficiencies gained by working with facilities that already exist? Still always consider whether the expansion of existing sites is better than building something new.

We need to look at bottlenecks...slaughterhouse capacity across the state. The problem has only grown over the past 10 years.

Frozen fruit and vegetables making them available year round and cost effective for people to buy? How can we make that accessible to our communities?

**Nina-**Precooked beef could not be found in New England! A requirement for Farmers to Families.

**Emily-** Winter Farmers' Markets need some more discussion. Normally they are stuck in church basements. Wouldn't it be nice to have a structure that was intentionally made for that use.

Critical Folks to talk to...Tools to talk to community members  
Robert O. & Bethany R! (obviously) already part of the community  
Phelan O'Connor @ Pigasus Meats  
Farmers' Markets  
Restaurants

Tim Camisa (VT Organics)- Wild Seed Mix...building cold storage in St Albans. He has a vision of processing food at the space and selling it through Costco. We will continue to be in touch to see if here is any overlap.

**Next meeting is scheduled for: November 12<sup>th</sup> (1pm-3pm)**

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