

**Healthy Roots Collaborative Advisory Committee Meeting  
December 7, 2023 – 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm**

**NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION- 75 Fairfield St., St. Albans, VT 05478**

**Zoom link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87640341868?pwd=VCtZOHdrMmFySUUpDVVkc08yUWdhUT09>

Meeting ID: 876 4034 1868

Passcode: 932011

One tap mobile

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**Attendance:** Tim Smith, Emily Alger, Marietta Scholten Payne, Cassie Fraser, Jess Graff, Katie Darr, Bethany Remmers, Peter Jenkins, Christine Porcaro

**Goals:**

- Share first look at HRC gleaning numbers for 2023
- Feedback on HRC individuals campaign

Times	Agenda Item	Action
1:00 to 1:30	<b>2023 HRC Gleaning Preliminary Numbers</b>	
<p>P. Jenkins reported on the 2023 preliminary gleaning numbers. There is a projected decrease in pounds gleaned compared to 2022. The information included gleaned, 2nds pick-up and produce grown for donation. P. Jenkins shared that while pulling together the numbers, they were better than expected but still less than 2022. P. Jenkins reported that purchased produce #s are up. E. Alger asked if purchased produce is also tallied by pounds so that it can be compared to gleaned produce pounds. P. Jenkins said that he was going to have estimated pounds for purchased produce in the final report.</p> <p>In 2023, 63.6% of recipient sites received regular deliveries. P. Jenkins reported that we gleaned at 14 farms and purchased from 6 farms. M. Payne asked where the difference (the decrease) in total pounds is coming from. P. Jenkins shared the example of one of our primary gleaning partner farms and how they lost half of their fields in flooding this past July. E. Alger added that even farms that did not experience flooding struggled with the quantity of rain from this summer. M. Payne asked if there were any new farms that HRC worked with in 2023. P. Jenkins shared that HRC worked with Vermont Orchards location in Swanton for the first time. M. Payne added that it would be interesting to see a full list of farms that show if they are old, new or no longer gleaning partners.</p>		

P. Jenkins shared that there were 11 gleaning field trips (10 with schools and 1 with Ben & Jerry's employees). This was the first corporate field trip that HRC has done. M. Payne asked the age of participants from the schools. P. Jenkins said that HRC works with 3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> graders. C. Fraser asked if the total number of gleaning field trips is up or down. P. Jenkins confirmed that this number is also down compared to 2022. M. Payne asked which age group is the most engaged in the gleaning field trips. P. Jenkins shared stories about two separate groups: a 4<sup>th</sup> grade class that visited Pomykala Farm and the students from Northwest Tech Center that HRC reconnected with. They went to a field trip to JK Markle Potatoes where they learned to use the root washer. C. Fraser asked if HRC thinks Ben & Jerry's will come back next year for a gleaning field trip. C. Porcaro shared that the coordinator from Ben & Jerry's seemed interested in a continued partnership.

P. Jenkins shared final highlights which included, great gleaning field trips, increased food box purchasing & distribution, a fantastic CCV intern, and a strong fall harvest despite the weather. J. Graff added that she was happy to hear about the successes and thinks it is important to celebrate successful programming. J. Graff also encouraged more corporate engagement to increase volunteerism/support of HRC gleaning program.

1:30 to 1:50	<b>Sheldon Storage Update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Coordinate open house</li> <li>-Work with partners on press release/narrative for fundraising ask.</li> </ul>
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C. Porcaro reported an update on Sheldon Storage space and asked for feedback from advisory members. C. Porcaro shared photos and videos of the space which showed HRC produce moved into the walk-in cooler. J. Graff added that the completion of this project is just the beginning and that it can be used as a launching pad for a fundraising ask to grow programming and that we should reach out to food shelves to let them know about the space. C. Porcaro asked about potentially hosting some sort of Open House for invited community members/organizations. P. Jenkins shared that we need to figure out what additional space is available for other community organizations. J. Graff shared that there are no imminent plans for large scale storage needs for NorthWest Family Foods/CVOEO, so for right now there should be storage space available. P. Jenkins shared that the new storage space might also change some ways the gleaning and local food access programming works, like not gleaning and delivering on the same day. J. Graff added that that change could potentially create more variety for recipient sites. The shared space with CVOEO could also provide ample room for collaboration, like combining shelf stable and produce to pack out and distribute to homes and food shelves.

1:50-2:00	<b>HRC Individuals Campaign quick update</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Execute online ask for end of 2023</li> <li>-Start planning for a late winter/early spring fundraising ask to coincide with Sheldon space "launch"</li> </ul>
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M. Payne asked for a description of what an individuals campaign is. E. Alger explained that it is a fundraising ask to individuals in the community to support HRC programming. With the

unpredictability of grant funding, adding the individuals campaign provides diversity and an alternative avenue for revenue generation. E. Alger shared potential ways that HRC could target the ask to specific areas to help build regular support for HRC programming.

M. Payne asked about adding a donation button to HRC website. C. Porcaro shared that a button would be added to the site before sending out our first ask to the community. B. Remmers shared that HRC would be using the non-profit Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation to collect the funds. M. Payne shared that in her experience on other non-profit boards that it normally takes “7 touches” to convert a donor and that HRC needs to be conscious of strategy and of the number of times outreach is made.

J. Graff cautioned on the time of year HRC is making the ask and shared that perhaps during the holidays the ask could be lost. J. Graff said perhaps late winter/early spring could be a good time for HRC to make an ask.

2:00 to 2:20

**DBIC Grant Reporting**

C. Porcaro reported that the Dairy Business Innovation Center (DBIC) Business Viability and Technical Assistance Grant ended November 1, 2023. This grant provided technical assistance (T.A.) to three Vermont dairy farms/creameries to support product development, sales and marketing development and conservation projects. Stony Pond Farm, Villa Villekulla Farm and Aires-Hill Farm were the 3 businesses looking to receive technical assistance. This project brought together three technical assistance providers, HRC, independent T.A. contractor Blair Johnson and Franklin County Natural Resource Conservation District (FC NRCD). C. Porcaro described the project outcomes for each business including the development of two new value-added products, updated websites, new food safety plans, new markets, and increased sales.

E. Alger shared how this presentation gave a clearer representation of the business assistance work that HRC is providing. B. Remmers also shared about the work C. Porcaro did with Blair at the beginning of the project to set up insurance so that he could be a part of the project.

E. Alger shared that this project presentation made her think about the VHCB 30 by 30 Conservation Goal and what that means for water quality. E. Alger added that she wondered about the micro-decisions that are and will be made and how we can proactively build in water quality protections that also contribute to the economic viability of farms.

K. Darr shared a 2023 report from LCBP and shared that if there were any specific questions or information from farmers that they should reach out to her as they will be presenting an ask to the VT Legislation in January.

P. Jenkins asked if there are any agricultural requirements included in conservation easements. E. Alger responded that there are some things like buffer zones built into easements or federal funding used for conservation practices that takes fields out of practice that are harmful to water but that there is rarely an easement requiring organic practices. E. Alger added that not knowing what future practices that might exist, it becomes difficult and potentially restrictive to add

agricultural practices to easements. The easements need to be both flexible while also protecting land as best they can.

M. Payne shared about her work on the board of the Lake Champlain Land Trust and how the board has done trainings to be more knowledgeable and better speak about this sort of work.

2:20 to 3:00

**Partner Org Updates & Discussion**

E. Alger shared that she has been facilitating a group of Conservation Leaders around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. They just launched their 2<sup>nd</sup> round cohort, which K. Darr is a member of. This group works to serve communities better by actually doing the education & action work around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

B. Remmers shared that NRPC has a new logo which had been approved by the Board of Commissioners. The launch and transition of the new logo will happen in the New Year.

C. Fraser shared that the Abbey Group has been working with food hubs through a Local Food to School grant. This has provided funding to purchase food items from local food hubs which created greater diversity for food items at schools while also supporting farms.

M. Payne reported on the latest Project Review Committee Meeting. The discussion from this past meeting surrounded the windmills at Howrigan Farm and Fairfield Pond. M. Payne shared about the difficult discussion and the consideration being brought to both sides. C. Fraser brought up the Georgia windmill project and wondered how that project was approved. M. Payne wondered if there could be a map that shows the alternative energy projects in the region. C. Fraser also wondered if there was any data/information about displacement after the implementation of alternative energy projects.

K. Darr shared that the State of the Lake Report from the Lake Champlain Basin Program will be coming out.

T. Smith shared that FCIDC had a luncheon with community partners, including Northwest Regional Planning Commission, to talk about economic impacts on the region and to see how everyone is doing. There was also an evening meeting at Jeff's Seafood where legislators were invited to discuss the work happening at FCIDC. B. Remmers asked about the tenants at the Enosburg property that FCIDC owns. T. Smith shared that they have a property manager handling apartments and that he is managing the retail properties. T. Smith also shared that Purpose Energy will start have Ben & Jerry's waste delivered directly to their facility which will supply energy directly to the grid.

Meeting end: 2:50pm

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