

Building and Grounds Committee Report

Date: Friday, July 19, 2024

Meeting Type (telephone, in person, zoom): **In Person**

Board Members Present:

Catherine Tester – Chair
Lawrence Cupoli
Michael diMonda
LTC David Fabricius (called into the meeting)
Melisa Walsh

Board Members Absent:

Asa Whitcomb, MSW, LICSW, LNHA COO/Deputy Administrator – Excused

Invited Guests (staff members):

Shannon Barsotti, Community Development Director at Town of *Bennington*
Michael Fernandez, Commissioner for Conservation at *Bennington* County Regional Commission · District
Manager at *Bennington* County Conservation District
Melissa Jackson, CEO and administrator at the Vermont Veterans' Home for Bennington County
Susan Sgorbati, Director of Bennington College's Center for the Advancement of Public Action

Meeting Start Time: 11:05 a.m.

Strategic Goal(s) addressed: #2 Capitalize on the Bennington Asset

Contents and summary of discussions:

Bennington Veterans Incubator Farm Cooperative

Mr. Fernandez, Ms. Barsotti and Ms. Sgorbati joined our meeting to discuss the Bennington Veterans Incubator Farm Cooperative. This Cooperative is to develop and utilize funds from the Bennington Fair Food Initiative effectively through strategic leveraging of funds and aims to enhance sustainable veteran agriculture with minimal programmatic burden and liability concerns for the VVH. The goals are to create a connected farm and food system, boost the growth of the agricultural workforce, establish farm-to-institution partnerships, acting as a hub for marketing and aggregation of cooperative members' products. This project was approved by the Trustees to move forward at our June 2024 meeting. We discussed the leasing of approximately 20 acres and reviewed the map of the Bennington Veterans Home property; where land is already leased or reserved for the home and what is available. We reviewed the different types of Plans: Forrest Management, Soil Health Management, Grazing Management, and Irrigation Water Management. Water and electrical usage was discussed and there are options available that would not impact the water supply or electrical usage of the home. A lease agreement will be brought to the Board of Trustees' meeting in August for Board approval.

Review existing leases

The committee reviewed all of the current leases and there is no further action to take on the leases.

Other issues/concerns addressed (if necessary):

(email Report within 5 days of meeting to President De Gasta, Melinda Crowl and Robyn Boland)

Melissa Jackson provided an update on American Way.

The Committee's next meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. in person weather permitting.

No other information was discussed.


Findings and Recommendations (if any):

The committee recommends Melissa Jackson and Catherine Tester work on a lease agreement for Bennington Veterans Incubator Farm Cooperative to present to the Board of Trustees at the August 14, 2024 meeting.

Attachments (as required):

Future Agenda Items:

Meeting end time (adjournment): 12:15 p.m.



July 22, 2024

Committee Chair

(sign and date)

(email Report within 5 days of meeting to President De Gasta, Melinda Crowl and Robyn Boland)