



Meeting Minutes

March 8, 2024

Location		No. of Presenters	Start Time	End Time	Recorder
via Zoom Video Conferencing		0	9:04 a.m.	9:51 a.m.	Jacquette Maynard
This Council is composed of the following agencies, farmers, and restaurateurs:	University of the Virgin Islands (UVI)	Department of Agriculture (VIDA)	Department of Education (VIDE)	Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR)	Economic Development Authority (USVI EDA)
	Farmer (TBA)	Farmer (TBA)	Farmer (TBA)	Restaurateur (TBA)	Restaurateur (TBA)

Present:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-chair: Dr. Louis E. Petersen, Jr., – Commissioner Nominee (VIDE) VIDE Designee: Mr. Harith Wickrema – President of Island Green Living DPNR Designee: Dr. Sennai Habtes – Bureau Chief, Fisheries Honorary Farmer Member: Ms. Abeba Sellassie – The B-Hive Farm Collective Honorary Farmer Member: Dr. Nate Olive – Ridge to Reef Farm Honorary Farmer Member: Mr. Edmon Titre – New Breed Farm Local Food and Farm Coordinator: Ms. Sommer Sibilly-Brown – VI Good Food Coalition
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Absent:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-chair: Dr. David Hall – President (UVI) Member: Dr. Usman Adamu – Dean and Director of the School Agriculture (UVI) Member: Wayne L. Biggs, Jr., – Chief Executive Officer (EDA) Member: Jean-Pierre L. Oriol – Commissioner (DPNR) Member: Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington – Commissioner DPNR Designee: Dr. Nicole F. Angeli – Director of Fish and Wildlife VIDE Designee: Dr. Renee Charleswell – Deputy Commissioner of Curriculum and Instruction Honorary Farmer Member: Mr. Royce Creque – Greenridge Guavaberry Farm
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I. Welcome, Member Introductions, and Charge

- The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Dr. Petersen, Co-Chair of the Local Food and Farm Council.
- Dr. Petersen warmly welcomed all members and expressed gratitude for their presence and engagement.

II. Meeting Minutes: February 23, 2024

- No corrections or changes were observed in the minutes.
- Dr. Nate Olive motioned to approve the Meeting Minutes as presented; seconded by Ms. Sommer Sibilly-Brown.

III. Public-Private Partnership Investment Fund (PPPIF) Development

- Overview of PPPIF Implementation Process:** Dr. Petersen led a comprehensive discussion on the Public-Private Partnership Investment Fund (PPPIF) implementation process. The members thoroughly reviewed essential documents, focusing on the PPPIF application form and cover letter and identifying areas for enhancement. Notably, it was unanimously agreed to integrate references to the Governor and his involvement in agricultural initiatives into the cover letter, aligning it with key stakeholders.
- Establishing a Conflict of Interest Policy:** During the meeting, Dr. Petersen proposed forming a subcommittee to evaluate PPPIF applications. However, concerns arose regarding potential conflicts of interest, particularly farmer council members' involvement. In response, the members unanimously decided to establish a Conflict of Interest Policy to maintain transparency and integrity throughout the application evaluation process.
- Financial Risk Assessment and Technical Assistance:** The meeting progressed to the review of the Financial Risk Assessment Form provided by the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), introduced by Dr. Habtes. Emphasis was placed on the form's significance in assessing financial risks associated with funding

allocations, sparking a conversation on providing technical assistance to farmers in setting up business accounts. The pivotal role of the business center in facilitating this process was collectively acknowledged.

- d. **Eligibility Criteria Discussion:** Eligibility criteria for PPIF applications underwent thorough deliberation, with a consensus emerging to include a dedicated section on eligibility requirements in the application. Extensive discussions ensued, particularly regarding the eligibility of NGO groups, culminating in a unanimous decision to affirm their eligibility to apply.
- e. **Timeline Extension and Educational Support:** Concerns were raised regarding the availability and deadline of the application timeline. Members proposed extending the timeframe to afford applicants adequate review and submission time, specifically suggesting an extension of the deadline to May 1 to bolster promotion and farmer engagement. This extension garnered unanimous support, with an emphasis on providing educational support to farmers on financial management practices to ensure responsible fund utilization.
- f. **Funding Allocation:** Dr. Petersen raised queries regarding the administrative process and suggested clarity on funding requirements and updates from the EDA. He indicated the need for more information regarding funding channels through EDA, including how award monies are issued and the options available to farmers and fishers.
- g. **Extension Services:** Ms. Sellassie brought attention to a class planned for UVI extension services in May. She advocated for its advancement and availability on St. John and St. Thomas. She emphasized the importance of follow-up to ensure the class's execution.
- h. **Establishing a PPIF Subcommittee:** Members discussed forming a subcommittee to review and assess PPIF applications, expressing interest in volunteering, and emphasizing the need for equitable policies and procedures to avoid conflicts of interest. There was a suggestion to involve non-voting members representing farmers in the review process.

IV. Town Hall Meetings

Dr. Petersen suggested postponing the planned Town Hall meetings due to uncertainties surrounding the allocation of PPIF funding and the pending updates to the application process. Members agreed with this suggestion, expressing the view that it would be better to have the funding and application distributed and available to farmers and fishers at the Town Hall Meeting.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

VI. Next Meeting

The next virtual LFFC meeting will be held on Friday, March 22, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.