



Local Food and Farm Council

Meeting Minutes

September 6, 2024

Location		Members Present	Guest Presenters	Start Time	End Time	Recorder
via Zoom Video Conferencing		12	0	9:03 a.m.	10:08 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 (VIDE) • Co-chair: Dr. Safiya George, – President (UVI) • Member: Wayne L. Biggs, Jr., – Chief Executive Officer (EDA) • Member: Dr. Usman Adamu – Dean and Director of the School Agriculture (UVI) • DPNR Designee: Dr. Nicole F. Angeli – Director of Fish and Wildlife • VIDE Designee: Mr. Harith Wickrema – President of Island Green Living • Honorary Farmer Member: Dr. Nate Olive – Ridge to Reef Farm • Honorary Farmer Member: Mr. Royce Creque – Greenridge Guavaberry Farm • Honorary Farmer Member: Ms. Abeba Sellassie – Ityopia Rootz Farm • Honorary Farmer Member: Mr. Edmon Titre – New Breed Farm • Honorary Fisher Member: Mr. Winston Ledee • Director of Sustainability: Cydney Meadows (VIDE) 					
Absent:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member: Jean-Pierre L. Oriol – Commissioner (DPNR) • Member: Dr. Dionne Wells-Hedrington – Commissioner • VIDE Designee: Dr. Renee Charleswell – Deputy Commissioner of Curriculum and Instruction • DPNR Designee: Dr. Sennai Habtes – Bureau Chief, Fisheries • Honorary Fisher Member Ms. Mavel Maldonado • Local Food and Farm Coordinator: Ms. Sommer Sibilly-Brown – VI Good Food Coalition 					

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Petersen at 9:03 a.m.

II. Opening Remarks

- Dr. Petersen thanked everyone for attending and extended a warm welcome to Dr. Safiya George, the new President of the University of the Virgin Islands and Co-chair of the Council, to her first Council meeting. He provided an update on his recent meeting with Dr. George and expressed his appreciation for her commitment to the Council’s objectives.
- Council members warmly welcomed Dr. George, gave brief introductions, and shared their roles and involvement with the Council.
- Dr. George expressed her enthusiasm for contributing to the Council objectives and shared her family ties to farming and 4-H.

III. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes (August 9, 2024)

- The minutes were reviewed, and no corrections or modifications were observed.
- Dr. Olive moved to approve the minutes as presented, and Mr. Wickrema seconded the motion.
- The minutes were unanimously approved with no objections or abstentions.

IV. **Public-Private Partnership Investment Fund Update**

- Dr. Petersen reported that all PPPIF Grant Program recipients were contacted, and a Press Release highlighting the recipients was issued. It was also shared that the process has started to initiate the transfer of funds from UVI to the EDA and should be completed within 2-3 weeks.

V. **Budget and Finance Subcommittee Formation**

- Members discussed forming a standing **Finance Committee** to oversee the Council's budget and financial decisions.

VI. **Federation of Southern Cooperatives Engagement**

- Dr. Petersen shared that members of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives will visit the territory in October to engage with local entities interested in forming agricultural cooperatives. Focused meetings with farmers and stakeholders will be held on St. Thomas, St. Croix, and St. John to further cooperative development.
 - **Dr. Nate Olive**
 - **Director Wayne Biggs Jr.**
 - **Dr. Usman Adamu** (tentative)
 - **Mr. Harith Wickrema**
- The subcommittee will draft a scope and mandate to present at the next Council meeting.

VII. **Future Activities and Events**

- Members discussed participating in several upcoming events to promote the Council's initiatives, including:
 - **Bordeaux Farmers Rastafari Agricultural & Cultural Food Fair (St. Thomas)** (January 18-19, 2025)
 - **Agrifest in St. Croix** (February 2025)
 - **Mango Melee** and **Coconut Festival**
 - **Food Day at Carnival** (St. Thomas and St. Croix)
 - **Seeds of Security Public Event** (September 21, 2024)
- The Council agreed to avoid using single-use plastics in promotional materials and focus on sustainable alternatives.

VIII. **Federation of Southern Cooperatives Engagement**

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IX. **Open Discussion**

- Mr. Wickrema suggested involving students in Council events to showcase their contributions to the "Seeds of Security" initiative.
- Dr. Olive recommended the Virgin Islands Good Food Coalition Summit and Food Day at Carnival as potential venues for Council involvement.
- Director Biggs emphasized that any decisions by the Finance Committee must be brought to the full Council for approval.

X. **Action Items:**

1. The Finance Committee will convene to discuss its responsibilities and present its findings at the next meeting.
2. The Council will begin preparation for the Bordeaux Farmers Rastafari Agricultural & Cultural Food Fair, including assessing the need for promotional materials.
3. Director Biggs requested a formal letter from the Council regarding the names of PPPIF Grantees to facilitate his office's initiation of check processing pending the forthcoming transfer of funds.

XI. **Adjournment**

Dr. Petersen motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was moved by Director Biggs and seconded by Dr. Adamu. The meeting was officially adjourned at 10:08 a.m.