

Bower House Constitution

Preamble

We the members of Bower House Cooperative, in order to form a sustainable and just cooperative recognize that it is necessary:

1. **A.** To promote a clear awareness to the membership of their responsibilities and obligations towards the house and surrounding ecosystems; furthermore
2. **B.** To ensure that said responsibilities and obligations are discharged in a manner efficient, practical, and harmonious; also
3. **C.** To maintain Bower House financially and physically in the soundest possible condition; moreover
4. **D.** To protect the individuals, living in the house, of minority opinion from harsh and unjust

rules; To protect all members from non-consensual decision making and unjust rules.

1. **E.** To ensure the safety, health, and comfort of all current and future members of Bower House.

We hereby create this constitution to govern over the Bower House Cooperative:

Article I: Definitions

1. **A.** 'Constitution' shall refer to this document in its entirety.
2. **B.** 'Bower House Cooperative,' 'Bower House,' 'Bower,' and 'house' shall be defined as property number 284227, which is Zoning Designation RM32 and lot number 80.

Bower is located at 127 Whitehills Drive, East Lansing, Michigan 48823.

1. **C.** 'Spartan Housing Cooperative,' and 'SHC' shall refer to the body that owns the Bower House Cooperative.
2. **D.** An 'member,' or 'house member' is any member currently living in Bower House privy to both of the following conditions:
 1. **1.** Has a valid contract with SHC.
 2. **2.** Is occupying their personal living space
3. **E.** A 'guest' is anyone staying at Bower House for any length of time without having signed a contract.
4. **F.** A 'house meeting' shall be defined as a congregation of house members assembled to transact business pertaining to the internal operation of Bower House subject to the rules and regulations set forth by this constitution.
5. **G.** The 'constitutional addendum,' or 'addendum' will be where passed rules and regulations will be placed. The addendum is not a part of the constitution, but a supplement to it.
6. **H.** The term 'personal living space' is defined as the individual room that a member lives in.

7. **I.** A 'common room' shall be defined as any room that is not an active member's personal living space.
8. **J.** An 'Ecosystem' is a synthesis of all flora, fauna, and biological processes that interact with and are affected by membership of Bower house.

Article II: Scope

1. **A.** This constitution shall be subject to all laws and regulations set forth by the United States of America, the State of Michigan, and the City of East Lansing.
2. **B.** This constitution shall be subject to all rules and regulations set forth by the Spartan Housing Cooperative and all of its respective governing bodies.
3. **C.** This constitution shall supersede and null all previous constitutions initiated by Bower House Cooperative.
4. **D.** This constitution shall supersede any rules or regulations that were implemented under its governance.
5. **E.** All rules and regulations made under the governance of this constitution shall be placed in the addendum section of this constitution upon the approval of the active members during a Regular House Meeting.

Article III: Governance

1. **A.** All rules and regulations imposed upon the members and guests of Bower House shall be adopted at house meetings or be stated within this constitution.

Article IV: House Meetings

1. **A.** A Regular House Meeting shall be a house meeting composed of the membership subject to the following:
 1. **1.** Quorum shall consist of 1 member more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of members.
 2. **2.** Will be held every other week as it is agreed upon the house, barring school breaks and major holidays.
 3. **3.** A facilitator for a meeting shall be selected at the previous house meeting. In the event that no facilitator was selected at the previous house meeting, a volunteer to whom no member objects shall facilitate.
 4. **4.** Will have the ability to vote on any business that concerns Bower House.
 5. **5.** Decisions at a house meeting will pass by $\frac{3}{4}$ of a quorum as defined above, unless otherwise described in this constitution.
 6. **6.** An Emergency House Meeting shall be a house meeting composed of members subject to the following:
1. **B.** An Emergency House Meeting shall be a house meeting composed of active members subject to the following:
 1. **1.** A minimum of 48 hours notice will be given to all active members. When called, a brief agenda must be announced.
 2. **2.** Will have the ability to vote on any business that concerns the structural integrity of Bower House, legal issues, or SHC decisions.
 3. **3.** Shall not have the ability to implement new rules, regulations, or fines.
 4. **4.** All decisions made at an Emergency House Meeting shall be subject to review at the

following Regular House Meeting.

5. **5.** Can be called by any member of the house.
2. **C.** All house meetings are mandatory. If a member does not receive approval from the facilitator to miss a given meeting, then they shall be fined \$10.

Article VI: Rules

1. **A.** All members and guests are expected to read and heed all rules implemented in the manner dictated in Section C of Article VI.
2. **B.** Any member or guest who violates a rule is subject to a fine as prescribed by that rule and/or this constitution.
3. **C.** Rules shall be implemented in the following manner:
 1. **1.** Suggested rule is brought up during a Regular House meeting.
 2. **2.** Is passed in the manner prescribed by Article V, Section A, Subsection 6.
 3. **3.** Is written, posted, and added to the addendum section of this constitution.
4. **D.** Any rule not added to the official constitution addendum shall not be enforced.

Article VII: Standing House Rules

1. **A.** Smoking
 1. **1.** There is no smoking of cigarettes, cigars, or other tobacco paper rolled paraphernalia within Bower House.
 2. **2.** Smoking is allowed outside of Bower House.
2. **B.** Meat
 1. **1.** Meat is hereby allowed to be prepared, cooked, consumed, and stored in common areas and house member personal living spaces.
 2. **2.** House members are expected to keep in mind both the diets of their fellow house members and the history of
 3. **3.** Bower House with its relation to meat; and therein keep their actions respectful in this regard. This includes dishes used with meat being washed thoroughly.
 4. **4.** House money shall not be used to purchase meat.
3. **C.** Room Picks
 1. **1.** Room picks will be based on seniority. Overall the member with the most seniority will get the first room pick, and the second highest will get second, and so on and so forth. Seniority will be decided as follows:
 1. **i.** The person with the highest points has the highest seniority.
 2. **ii.** For each fall or spring semester living in Bower, the active member will be assigned 5pt.
 3. **iii.** For each summer semester living in Bower the active member will be assigned 3pt.
 4. **iv.** For each fall or spring semester living in SHC outside of Bower, the active member will be assigned 2pt.
 5. **v.** For each summer semester living in SHC outside of bower the active member will be assigned 1pt.
 6. **vi.** If point totals are equal for the two active members, then their signing dates will be used to determine whose seniority is higher. If that is the same, then an impartial manner such as drawing straws, flipping a coin, or rolling a die will determine who has higher seniority for those individuals.
 2. **2.** When room picks are done:

1. **i.** For fall/spring semesters, room picks are done by the end of the preceding spring semester. Room picks are set until May, however if a room becomes empty, that room will be available for any member to move into based off of seniority.
2. **ii.** For summer semester, room picks are done after the fall/spring picks of the following school year, but must be done at least two weeks before the summer contract period starts.
3. **3. Squatter's Rights**
 1. **i.** Squatter's rights are in effect. Active members occupying a room have the right to not be kicked out of the room they currently inhabit.
 2. **ii.** Exception: Summer semester. The summer semester room picks do not carry over into the school year. The room picks decided the preceding spring hold precedence.
4. **D. Energy Consumption**
 1. **1.** Window-mounted air conditioning units are banned from use in any personal living space.
 2. **2.** Personal refrigeration units in personal living spaces will be charged an additional \$10 per month.
 3. **3.** Space Heaters in personal living spaces:
 1. **i.** Space heaters must be newer than 5 years old
 2. **ii.** Maximum energy usage for a space heater is 1000kWh
 3. **iii.** Active members using a space heater will be subject to an additional \$20 per month charge each month of use.
 4. **iv.** This charge is based on whether or not there exists a space heating unit within an active member's personal living space, not if they claim to be using it or not.
5. **E. Voting in New Members**
 1. **1.** Voting in new members requires the consensus of all house members, whether or not they are present at the meeting during which the initial vote takes place. Consensus is defined here as the absence of a "no" vote.
 2. **2.** A single "no" vote of any member may block the prospective member.
 3. **3.** A revote of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the house in favor of allowing the prospective member to move in, and not simply quorum, may overturn the "no" vote.
 4. **4.** Votes on prospective members may not be made while they are present in the house.
6. **F. Bower Parking**
 1. **1.** Parking seniority in the Bower parking lot (and other spaces guaranteed to the house by the SHC) will be determined by two factors: whether a member has a vehicle upon their move-in (or renewed contract start) date, and their signing date. Members who will have a specific vehicle by the time of said move-in/renewed contract start dates will have the priority to access parking for the remainder of their contract, but if there are more members with vehicles, then access will be based on the earliest signing date.
 1. **i.** Exception: If a member has physical limitations or needs to have a vehicle in the lot for their personal health and/or safety, then such members will have top seniority for a parking spot in the Bower parking lot.
 2. **ii.** Exception: If a member has possession of a vehicle that is not with them physically or has a proof of a definitive plan to own a specific vehicle within three months of their contract start date, they can request to have a parking spot held in the lot up until the end of the third month. If by then they do not have said vehicle they will revoke their parking spot. During the period that this spot is empty, members next in line of seniority may use this spot until the original member has their vehicle.
 3. **iii.** If there are any extenuating circumstances, additional accommodations can be

made.

2. **2.** Guests may use the Bower parking lot to park their vehicle if at the time there are more parking spots than members with vehicles. Otherwise, guests must find a different spot to park their vehicle(s).
3. **3.** Assigned parking spots (a specific physical area for a specific person's vehicle) are determined by current members, yet members do not need to assign spots if they decide this as a house.

Article VIII: Specific Powers of the Membership

1. **A.** The membership is empowered to determine the work obligation of members and to establish the rating system for each given job.
2. **B.** The membership is empowered to impose sanctions as outlined in this constitution in the event of non-performance of work duty on the part of a member or a consistent delinquency of payments.
3. **C.** The membership is empowered to recall a house officer by a 2/3 vote of those present at a Regular House Meeting, in the event that said officer has been negligent in their duties.
4. **D.** The membership is empowered to evict a member as outlined in the SHC Code of Operations.

Article IX: Responsibilities of the Membership

1. **A.** Work Responsibilities
 1. **1.** All active members of Bower House are required to perform work duties as decided upon by the house. These include:
 1. **i.** Weekly work duties.
 2. **ii.** Work Weekend tasks chosen from the approved lists.
 2. **2.** Final responsibility for assigned work rests with the active members who originally signed up for the job. If an active member cannot do a job, they may exchange duties with another active member if both active members agree to the conditions of exchange.
 3. **3.** Any active member who fails to do assigned work within the specified time will be fined; this is in effect for house officers and house leaders as well.
2. **B.** Financial Responsibilities: Contracts, Rent Payments, and Deposits
 1. **1.** Dues and deposits required by Bower House and MSU SHC must be paid before a new member moves into the house.
 2. **2.** Any fines imposed by the membership for violating house rules, non-performance of assigned work, or other offences shall be added to the member's share of expenses. The member in question must pay these.
 3. **3.** The Keeper of the Keys will fill openings due to eviction.
 4. **4.** Openings due to a vote to release a person from a contract must be filled by that member.
 5. **5.** If a contract is broken:
 1. **i.** And there is more than one person which will be released from their contract, the rooms will be filled by prospective members that contact the house independent of an individual's advertising efforts in the order that the departing members signed their release forms at the SHC office.
 2. **ii.** And an active member finds an acceptable applicant through their own advertising efforts, then that active member will be released from their contract when the new contract is finalized.

6. **6.** All house expenditures not accounted for will have an immediate stop payment put on them by the Guardian of the Vault.

Article IX: House Officers and Other Leadership Positions

1. **A.** Bower House shall have the following elected officers: Keeper of the Keys, House Scholar, Guardian of the Vault, and Maintenance.
2. **B.** Bower house shall have the following leadership positions: Steward, Work Manager, House Scribe, Groundskeeper, Guff Manager.
3. **C.** Elections for a given term are to occur at the first Regular House Meeting of each semester with the following constraints:
 1. **1.** The previous semester's Work Manager will facilitate the election process.
 2. **2.** A list of each job position shall be provided to all members to view.
 3. **3.** Any active member may run for any given position.
 4. **4.** A vote will occur for each position, in the event that multiple active members wish to hold a position. The lowest vote receiver will be dropped after a vote, and further votes will be taken until one person achieves a clear majority.
 5. **5.** The newly elected active members shall take charge of their respective positions immediately.
4. **E.** Descriptions of officer and leadership duties:
 1. **1.** Keeper of the Keys
 1. **i.** Maintain membership records in an efficient and timely manner.
 2. **ii.** Strive to maintain the house at full capacity.
 3. **iii.** Advertise and actively recruit prospective house members.
 4. **iv.** Give house tours to prospective house members.
 5. **v.** Coordinate room picks.
 6. **vi.** Mediate conflicts between house members, as it is needed.
 7. **vii** Represent Bower House at all SHC Membership Committee meetings or find a house member to act as a proxy.
 8. **viii** Notify the SHC Vice President of Membership of any issues that cannot be resolved; and any issues that deal with sexual harassment, intimidation, or anything potentially criminal. These are issues that are not to be dealt with at a house level.
 2. **2.** House Scholar
 1. **i.** Shall do everything in their power to discontinue the Pine Press
 2. **ii.*** Update and organize the House Constitution and its respective Addendum. These documents should be updated in both paper and electronic form as changes occur.
 3. **iii.** Represent Bower House at SHC Education Committee meetings or find a house member to act as a proxy.
 4. **iv.** Maintain responsibility for Bower house community outreach and the preservation of Bower house history.
 3. **3.** Guardian of the Vault
 1. **i.** Maintain the house fiscal records in an accurate and timely manner.
 2. **ii.** Keep house members informed of the status of all house accounts, including, but not limited to posting house charges monthly.
 3. **iii.** Pay all house bills using house funds.
 4. **iv.** Issue member fines as directed by the Work Manager.
 5. **v.** Represent Bower House at SHC Finance Committee meetings.
 6. **vi.** Submit a budget proposal to the SHC Corporate Treasurer for the following term at the end of the current term.

4. 4. Maintenance Officer

1. **i.** See to the corrective and preventative maintenance of the house and the surrounding ecosystems.
2. **ii.** Organize and supervise each semester's Work Weekend.
3. **iii.** See that all fire alarms, smoke detectors, and extinguishers are functional and stage a fire drill at least once a term or as prescribed by law.
4. **iv.** Complete specific tasks as requested by the membership.
5. **v.** Report to members at house meetings on maintenance problems and their suggested solutions.
6. **vi.** The Maintenance Officer may not spend more than \$25 on a single item that is neither specially budgeted for nor approved by the house, except in the event of an emergency.
7. **vii.** Will represent Bower House at SHC Facilities Committee meetings.

5. 5. SHC BOD (Board Of Directors) Representative

1. **i.** Will Represent Bower House at SHC BOD meetings, and any other organizations the house may have collectively joined.
2. **ii.** Must give notice to the house of the affairs of these organizations during every Regular House Meeting.
3. **iii.** Secure the membership's vote and/or opinion on current issues requiring the SHC BOD Representative's vote at an SHC BOD meeting.

6. 6. Steward

1. **i.** Take inventory of food and kitchen supplies while working with house shoppers to make sure the food supply is sufficient.
2. **ii.** Work with the house cooks to prepare a shopping list for the house shoppers each week.
3. **iii.** If applicable, coordinate bulk orders and arrange smooth pickup and delivery of bulk supplies.
4. **iv.** Work with the Guardian of the Vault to keep track of the food budget and strive to stay within said budget.
5. **v.** Maintain communication with the membership about food preferences, and take these preferences into account when preparing shopping lists.
6. **vi.** Organize and maintain the pantry in a cleanly manner.

7. 7. Work Manager

1. **i.** Will prepare and post a list of all house jobs and the members assigned to do them.
2. **ii.** Develop a system to make sure the house jobs are being done on a weekly basis in a timely and efficient fashion.
3. **iii.** Fine those who are not doing their housework according to the rules laid out in Article X.

8. 8. House Scribe

1. **i.** Take minutes for each house meeting, place them into an intelligible form, and post them within 48 hours of the house meeting. Copies of minutes will be provided to those who ask.
2. **ii.** Maintain a forwarding file of addresses of members who have moved out of Bower House, and forward any mail for those members who moved out less than one year ago.
3. **iii.** Retrieve and sort mail daily.
4. **iv.** Recycle all solicitations for members more than one year moved out

9. 9. Groundskeepers

1. **i.** Will maintain, clean and organize the exterior property and surroundings of Bower House while:

1. **a.** taking steps to ensure the viability of the ecosystems in which Bower House resides.
2. **b.** adjusting for, and being prepared for the seasonal demands of exterior cleanup
2. **ii.** Shall update the house members on all affairs involving the external property of the house
3. **iii.** The groundskeeper shall work in conjunction with the Maintenance Officer
4. **iv.** Shall be responsible for planning the Bower House Garden during the off season
5. **v.** Shall make all provisions to save the seeds that are produced within the Bower House Garden
6. **vi.** Shall ensure that Harvests of food from the Garden shall be executed
7. **vii.** Shall send all funding requests through the Maintenance Officer
10. **10.** Guff Manager
 1. **i.** The guff manager shall organize and maintain all GUFF designated areas on a weekly timeline
 2. **ii.** Shall use discretion on when and how to remove GUFF items from the house
 3. **iii.** Shall update the house members at the house meetings on all GUFF related issues.

Article XI: House Events

1. **A.** Work Weekend
 1. **1.** The purpose of Work Weekend will be to clean Bower House and to complete projects that add value to Bower House.
 2. **2.** Will be held by the sixth weekend of the semester.
 3. **3.** The Maintenance Officer and Work Manager will be in charge of organizing, facilitating, and supervising Work Weekend.
 4. **4.** The following items must occur prior to Work Weekend:
 1. **i.** List of jobs will be completed and receive approval during a Regular House Meeting by a vote.
 2. **ii.** House members will choose the jobs they will complete from the approved list with facilitation from the
 3. **iii.** Maintenance Officer and Work Manager.
 4. **iv.** Times and dates for the work to be completed will be established and approved during a Regular House Meeting by a vote.
 5. **v.** House members unable to attend Work Weekend must notify the Maintenance Officer and negotiate a project to make up for that house member's absence.
 6. **vi.** The Maintenance Officer will acquire all tools, supplies, and permits necessary to complete work weekend.
 5. **5.** This event is mandatory for all house members.
2. **B.** Tour de Chambre
 1. **1.** The purpose of Tour de Chambre will be to introduce new house members to other house members and to bring awareness to where each house member resides.
 2. **2.** This event will occur each semester with times and dates selected during the first house meeting of each semester.
 3. **3.** This event will be planned and organized by the House Scholar.
 4. **4.** Active members, former house members, and significant others of members are allowed to attend this event.
 5. **5.** This event is not mandatory.
3. **C.** House Parties

1. **1.** The purpose of a house party is to allow for the social outlet of the active members.
2. **2.** This event will require the following:
 1. **i.** A sober active member to facilitate the party.
 2. **ii.** House money will not be used for any party or damages/fines that result from the party.
 3. **iii.** A written plan that addresses all concerns the active membership must be brought up at the Regular House Meeting prior to the date of the party.
 4. **iv.** A vote of consensus of the active membership is required for any party to occur.
3. **3.** All members that approve/attend the party will be responsible for the damages/fines, as well as cleanup, that result from the party.

Article XII: Amendments

1. **A.** This constitution may be amended by the following procedure:
 1. **1.** A committee or house member writes the amendment.
 2. **2.** The house approves the amendment by minimum vote requirements/restrictions described in Section B of Article XII during a Regular House Meeting.
 3. **3.** The House Scholar adds it to the constitution at the SHC office.
2. **B.** Vote Requirements/Restrictions
 1. **1.** Article XII: Amendments cannot be amended.
 2. **2.** Article VII: Standing House Rules requires an 80% vote of the active membership.
 3. **3.** All other articles require $\frac{2}{3}$ of those present at the Regular House Meeting.

Addendum

1. **A.** It is hereby decided that all grandparents, before visiting Bower, must be made aware of the steep staircases and bike racks.
2. **B.** The following bulk food items must be kept at all times:
 1. **1.** Black beans
 2. **2.** Lentils
 3. **3.** Oats
 4. **4.** Onions
 5. **5.** Potatoes
 6. **6.** Rice
 7. **7.** Sugar
 8. **8.** Flour
 9. **9.** Spices
3. **C.** The heat will be kept at 66° Fahrenheit during the winter months.
4. **D.** Quiet hours will henceforth be:
 1. **1.** Sunday-Thursday, 12:00 AM to 9:00 AM
 2. **2.** Friday and Saturday 2:00 AM to 9:00 AM
5. **E.** Quiet hours for playing instruments:
 1. **1.** 10:00 PM to 9:00 AM, everyday
6. **F.**
 1. **1.** All active members must have 2 work hours of jobs. The following jobs will be offered as house job:
 2. **2.** All jobs written into our constitution must be filled before any other jobs can be taken.

| Job | Description | Work Hours |
|------------------------------|---|------------|
| Maintenance | See Article IX | 2 |
| Guardian of the Vault | See Article IX | 2 |
| Keeper of the Keys | See Article IX | 2 |
| House Scholar | See Article IX | 1 |
| Physical Development | See Article IX | 1 |
| House Scribe | See Article IX | 1 |
| Steward | See Article IX | 1 |
| Shopper (2) | Purchases the house goods per request of the Steward | 1 |
| Work Manager | See Article IX | 1 |
| Groundskeeper (2) | See Article IX | 1 |
| Guff Manager | See Article IX | 1 |
| Dumpster Diver | Gets food stuffs from dumpster for guff | 1 |
| Cook (10) | Cooks with another cook once a week | 1 |
| Board Representative | See Article IX | 1 |
| Room Cleaner | Cleans a designated room once a week | 1 |
| Office Labor (3) | See Article IX | 1 |
| Recycling (2) | Manages the recyclables | 1 |
| Rag Cleaner | Washes all dirty rags once a week | 1 |
| Odd Jobber | Has 2 chores assigned at every house meeting for the next 2 weeks | 1 |
| Baker | Bakes homemade bread once a week for a dinner | 1 |

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