

# Zolton Ferency Cooperative House Constitution

## MISSION STATEMENT

Zolton Ferency Cooperative House is hereby established to promote a pleasant living environment through self-ownership and operation of living quarters at an efficient cost.

This organization shall be known as Zolton Ferency Cooperative House, named after the late East Lansing political activist, MSU professor, and friend of the cooperatives, Zolton Ferency (1922–1993). Zolton Ferency provided support for the student housing cooperatives while teaching and inspiring individuals to stand up for their beliefs, and we choose to honor his memory through the actions of this organization.

This document is enacted as our ultimate guide to stewardship and functionality, directed by these cooperative principles:

- Membership is open to all, without discrimination against any personal trait which does not affect an individual's ability to fulfill the responsibilities of membership;
- Democratic decision-making, with each member having one vote, and no voting by proxy;
- Limited interest, if any, on capital placed with the house;
- Savings placed for further development of the house;
- Constant education of members in co-op principles and methods; and
- Cooperation with other cooperatives.

## STANDING RULES

Zolton Ferency Cooperative House operates on a system of precedent, as decided at house meetings and maintained through the house meeting minutes. Zolton Ferency Cooperative House shall hold all-member house meetings at least once every two weeks, where quorum shall be required to take any action. Quorum shall be defined as at least two-thirds of the membership of the house. Any action that complies with the Zolton Ferency Cooperative House mission statement and that is not forbidden by the MSU Student Housing Cooperative may be made with a simple majority vote—that is, half plus one—of the membership during a regularly scheduled meeting, with two exceptions: any uncaged pet requires two-thirds approval by the membership, and the Zolton Ferency Cooperative House annual budget requires unanimous approval by the membership.

Minutes, as defined by the house, will be taken at all house meetings and shared to the entire membership within twenty-four hours of the meeting. Any rule made during a house meeting shall be considered a standing rule of the Zolton Ferency Cooperative House and will remain in effect until such a time that it is overturned by some later decision of the membership. Once every year, all members of Zolton Ferency Cooperative House shall review and update a list of standing rules. When a change to the rules is made, it must be added to the house constitution within one week.

Standing rules may be overturned by a simple majority vote, but in an effort to maintain a historical

record of the standing rules of Zolton Ferency Cooperative House, standing rules can only be redacted through a unanimous decision of the membership.

The Zolton Ferency Cooperative House constitution, list of standing rules, and archival list of overturned standing rules shall be kept publicly available to the membership of the house.

### **ROOM PICKS**

Room assignments in Zolton Ferency Cooperative House will be decided based on seniority, with the following factors determining seniority (in descending order of importance):

1. Semesters lived in Zolton Ferency Cooperative House in the past two years at the time of the room picks meeting. No future semesters shall be considered in the room picks procedure. No member who has not lived in Zolton Ferency Cooperative House can attain a higher room pick than a member who has lived in Zolton Ferency Cooperative House within the past two years. Semesters lived in Zolton Ferency Cooperative House more than two years ago do not count toward seniority.
2. Semesters lived in other MSU Student Housing Cooperative houses at the time of the room picks meeting do not count towards seniority.
3. First contract signing date does not affect seniority except in the case that a member's first contract and contract for the upcoming term are the same contract (i.e., first-year residents).

At the time of room picks, a member may lay claim to the room that member occupies at the time of the room picks meeting for the following contract period. Any member who decides to remain in the same room may do so, regardless of seniority, and that room shall not be available to any other member during the room picks proceedings. A member may not lay claim to a room that the member will begin to occupy following the room picks meeting (i.e., for the summer months). If a member subleases their room, that member is responsible for telling the subletter that they do not have seniority over those who have already signed, so they may have to change rooms if they choose to sign for the next contract period.

If a member obtains a contract release for the entire contract period after room picks have taken place but before the beginning of the contract period, the room that member chose may be re-picked by the remaining members in order of seniority. The person who fills the release does not keep the former member's seniority.

If a member obtains a contract release for part of the contract period or after the beginning of the contract period, the room that member has chosen will stand, and they may offer it to the person who fills the release. The person who fills the release does not keep the former member's seniority.

### **AMENDMENT PROCEDURE**

This constitution cannot be changed except by a unanimous vote of the membership of Zolton Ferency Cooperative House. Proposed amendments to the constitution must be announced at least one month before a vote to change the constitution. All members must sign the amended constitution to demonstrate their support for the amendments. Any changes to the constitution must be reported to the MSU Student Housing Cooperative, along with minutes of the meeting wherein the change was made.

## **Zolton Ferency Standing Rules**

## I. Officers

At the first meeting of the contract period, Zolton Ferency Cooperative will appoint officers to the Board of Directors and all SHC standing committees.

- The Board Representative will be elected at the start of the contract period and will not change until the end of the contract period unless they resign or there are other exceptional circumstances.
- No member may hold more than one officer position.
- Any member who holds an elected position in the SHC or is a paid SHC staff member may not hold an officer position.

## II. Chores

Chores will be assigned at the first house meeting of the contract period, with an attempt to divide work as equitably as possible taking into account time, planning, transportation, energy, on-call, etc. Chores can be switched with the consent of both workers; officer positions may only switch with a house vote. The chore assignments will be up for review at the first meeting of each semester.

**Expectations for all members:** 1. Keep personal belongings/clutter in common areas to a minimum. 2. Clean any exceptional mess within 24 hours. 3. Wash and rinse all personal dishes. Do not keep your dishes around for longer than 24 hours. If you are going to write a note, it must have a name and time on it. The dish night chore is intended for "good intentions." Don't abuse it! 4. Don't play Jenga with the dish drainer. If it is full, at the very least take one/leave one; preferably just put them all away yourself, jackass. 5. Rinse recyclables. 6. Don't put personal (i.e. bedroom) trash in the house trash. Take it directly to the dumpster.

**Remember: every chore is your chore. Speak up if you think a chore is not being performed up to an acceptable standard (or do it yourself!).**

### Current Chore List:

**Officers** Note: Officer duties listed here are in addition to those required by their committee or listed in the SHC Code of Operations. Each officer is expected to report on the activities of the committee and solicit feedback on future agenda items.

- Board of Directors Representative
- Membership Officer
  - Responsible for ensuring that prospective members get house tours
  - Sign dinner/meeting cards for new members
  - Act as a first resource for house conflicts. Attempt to mediate, or refer to the Grievance or Membership Committee if necessary
- Facilities Officer
  - Fix small problems around the house
  - Facilitate maintenance projects that are beyond their skill level
- Education Officer
  - Maintain a house scrapbook/history
- Finance Officer/House Treasurer
  - Pay house bills on time
  - Keep a record of the house finances and make available on request

- Give a report at each meeting on the status of the house account, balances due and how close we are to the house budget

## Administrative

- Chore Coordinator/Work Enforcer
- Meeting Facilitator (see Section V: House Meetings & Dinners)
- Office Labor
- Mail Sorter
  - Sort mail for current members
  - Forward mail for former members
  - Recycle junk mail
- Minutes Taker
  - Must make minutes available within 24 hours
  - Also responsible for maintaining the list of Standing Rules

## Cleaning

- Dish Nights
  - Sunday (2)
  - Monday
  - Tuesday
  - Wednesday
  - Thursday
  - Friday
- Dining Room
- Living Room
- House Laundry
- Laundry Room Cleaning
- Hallways and Foyer
- Upstairs Bathroom (2 times per week)
- Downstairs Bathroom
- Kitchen (2 times per week)
- Outdoor Maintenance (2)
- House Trash
- Recycling - Transporting
- House Shopper

## Procedures and Fines

1. **1.** Receive a verbal reminder about chores being checked before they are due.
2. **2.** Receive written notice that your chore was not completed by its due date.
3. **3.** Complete your chore within 24 hours OR receive a fine and have an additional 24 hours to complete it\*.

\* This repeats every 24 hours until the chore is done, and the fine will increase by \$3 for each 24 hour period.

If you forget to do the same chore the next week, it starts wherever you left off in fines. So if your last fine for not doing the dining room was \$12, your fines next week start at \$15 and not \$3. After 6 weeks of doing the chore the fine is reset to \$3 if the worker requests it at a house meeting.

† Dishes are checked at noon the following day. ‡ Thursday dishes are checked at 11:59PM the following day.

Fines may be appealed at any house meeting. If the appeal stands, the fine amount will be credited to the member's account the following month. A fine that is pending appeal is still added to the member's outstanding balance unless they work with the finance officer to delay the fine.

**House Work Days** The house will work with the Maintenance and Physical Development officers to schedule at least one all-house work day each semester. Members who cannot be present may be assigned additional tasks with a deadline decided by the house. Members who fail to attend the work day or complete make-up work will be fined.

### III. Smoking

Smoking tobacco is allowed on the front porch, but is prohibited anywhere inside the house (even if the window is open).

### IV. Quiet hours

Quiet hours are 11:00PM to 11:00AM Sunday-Thursday and 1:00AM-11:30AM Friday and Saturday. A member who continually disregards quiet hours may be fined.

### V. Meetings and House Dinners

**Meeting Procedure** House meetings are every other Sunday. The Facilitator is expected to provide a loose agenda and notify members of the time at least 24 hours in advance. Attendance is mandatory. All members may miss one house meeting per semester without penalty. After this "freebie," any member who misses a meeting may be fined \$10, unless the house decides to excuse the absence.

Members may leave comments/issues/requests/ideas in the comment box under the whiteboard. The house facilitator must read each out loud and allow for discussion time if necessary.

The meeting must include but is not limited to committee reports, member time, and issues from the comment box.

Quorum for a house meeting is 6. Any decision that receives 5 or more "yes" votes stands, with the exceptions of pet contracts (6), the house budget (9), parties (7), and constitutional amendments (9). If the decision is not one-time, it will be added to the Standing Rules.

Unless otherwise specified, the Meeting Agenda will be:

1. Rose & Thorn/ Icebreaker
2. Officer/Committee Reports
3. Chore Report
4. Previous Business/Follow-ups
5. Comment Box
6. Member time - anyone can bring up something not already addressed
7. Plan next two house dinners

8. Assign tasks and plan Follow-ups for the next meeting

9. Go through lost-and-found box

- Follow-ups: If the House decides something should be done, it needs to hold itself accountable. “Let’s paint the living room” is not an actionable decision. “Zolton is going to research paint colors and costs, and share at the next meeting” is an Whenever possible, all tasks:
  - Should be assigned to a specific member or group of members
  - Have another member assigned to remind them before the next meeting
  - Be revisited and evaluated in “Previous Business” at the next meeting

## Meeting Guidelines

**1.** Don’t complain about being at the meetings or about the length of a house meeting. They are an infrequent opportunity to come together as a house, and each issue deserves thorough deliberation.

**2.** Refrain from passive-aggression in the comment box.

**3.** Do not edit or add to suggestions already in the comment box. Start a new one if necessary.

**4.** Respect the anonymity of the comment box. Any member may give an anonymous comment directly to the Facilitator.

**House Dinners** House dinners are every Sunday. Attendance is limited to current house members and prospective members. Each current member may bring one guest with prior approval of the house. If a member is unable to attend the house dinner, the house will save a “late plate” for them. The House will assign cooking and cleaning jobs for each dinner.

## VI. Doors

All exterior doors should be shut and locked at all times unless they are in active use. For safety and security reasons, the second floor emergency exit must never be used as an entrance or exit (i.e. it must remain shut and locked at all times), including by the room’s occupant.

## VII. Pantry

Respect the personal property of others. Any food not on designated house shelves or labeled house is off limits.

The house will purchase the following items with the grocery budget:

- Milk (regular and almond/soy)
- Eggs
- Butter
- Spices
- Garlic
- Salt and Pepper
- Vanilla Extract
- Flour
- Sugar - white and brown
- Vinegar

- Oils - canola and olive
- Cooking spray
- Baking soda & baking powder
- Cleaning supplies
- Hand and dish soap
- Paper towel
- Toilet Paper
- Light bulbs
- About \$5 of "treats"

Items not on this list that are added to the shopping list are considered suggestions and may be purchased at the house shopper's discretion, provided they do not go over the budget.

## VIII. Parties

Any party hosted by Ferency must receive a  $\frac{3}{4}$  approval at a house meeting, with a record of any members who voted no. All members (regardless of how they voted) are responsible for party preparations and cleanup.

## IX. Parking

Ferency is entitled to seven parking spots, six behind the house and one in the front driveway. If more than seven members have cars, spots will be given to those members in the order of room picks seniority (see ZF Constitution).

Members who have guests parking in the lot should inform the house and give details on what the car looks like and how long it will be there.

## X. Miscellaneous

Members who elect to use a space heater or air conditioner may be subject to an additional fee.

If you choose to store something in the basement, label it. This helps with cleanup in the future.

Remove shoes when inside the house (especially in the winter). No roly chairs on the finished floors. This helps keep our lovely wood floors intact and clean. <3

- 1. Never leave**
- 2. Do your fucking dishes**
- 3. No house-cest**

## Zolton Ferency Overturned Standing Rules (Historical)

None yet :D

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