

# Howland House Constitution

## Preamble

This constitution is established by the undersigned for the purpose of continuing the organization known as Howland House Cooperative.

The house is named for Arthur Howland, a former MSU extension specialist who from 1927–57 played a major role in revitalizing Michigan's farm cooperatives and reorganizing them along more democratic lines.

Howland House Cooperative was founded in 19XX. As part of its members' agreement when joining the MSU Student Housing Cooperative, its members shall fulfill the following requirements in perpetuity:

- The name shall remain "Howland House Cooperative."
- Annually, the current members shall host an event on the property for the alumni members of Howland House Cooperative.

## Article I: Purpose

1. **Section I.I:** The primary purpose of the organization shall be that of providing sustainable low cost housing for its members.
2. **Section I.II:** The further purposes of the organization shall be those of promoting the educational and social goals of its members.

## Article II: The Membership

1. **Section II.I: Membership Requirements**
  1. Members of Howland House Cooperative shall fulfill the requirements of membership defined by the MSU Student Housing Cooperative.
  2. No person shall be granted membership without majority approval by the current members of Howland House Cooperative.

## Article III: Member Labor Contribution

1. **Section III.I:** Each member of Howland House Cooperative shall be required to fulfill an approximately equal share of the labor required to maintain the house on a weekly basis.
2. **Section III.II:** Unfulfilled member labor shall be subject to fines, at a rate determined by the members.

## Article IV: House Meetings

The members are empowered, through house meetings, to make decisions about the functioning of the cooperative and rules its members must abide by.

### 1. Section IV.I: Requirements for a House Meeting

1. For a house meeting to be valid, the meeting must be announced and its agenda provided to the members at least 24 hours in advance. If meetings are regularly scheduled by the house (e.g. biweekly), the meeting agenda may be sent out as little as 6 hours in advance (instead of 24).
2. Quorum, required to take any action at a house meeting, shall be defined as half-plus-one of the number of members.
3. A simple majority of quorum shall be required to take any action at a house meeting, unless the Code of Operations or this constitution defines a different requirement .
4. "Emergency Meetings" shall only be for the use of topics related to safety.
5. Meeting topics shall only be addressed again if the method of the vote is in question or new information on the topic has come to light.

### 1. Section IV.II: Attendance Requirements

1. Attendance of house meetings is required by all members.
2. Members shall be subject to fines for missing meetings, at a rate determined by the members.

1. Section IV.III: Members have the power to determine a budget, under the direction of the house treasurer and the MSU Student Housing Cooperative.

1. Section IV.IV: The membership may recall elected officers by a two-thirds vote at any house meeting.

## Article V: Seniority Privileges (Room Picks & Parking)

1. Section V.I: Room assignments and right to a parking space in Howland House Cooperative will be decided based on seniority, with the following factors determining seniority (in descending order of importance):

1. 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.
2. A signed release request transfers the right of the released room to the new member, unless there is an agreement between two current members of the house. Such an agreement must be ratified and noted during a meeting. Seniority regarding parking spaces, or other house matters, does not transfer with a release request. 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).
3. Semesters lived in Howland House Cooperative in the past three 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 Howland House Cooperative can attain a higher room pick than a member who has lived in Howland House Cooperative within the past three years. Semesters lived in Howland House Cooperative more than three years

ago do not count toward seniority.

4. **a.** For members who have lived in Howland House Cooperative for the same number of semesters, contract signing date for the upcoming term's contract will be used to determine seniority—not semesters lived in other MSU Student Housing Cooperative houses.
  5. **1.** For members who have not lived in Howland House Cooperative, but have lived in other MSU Student Housing Cooperative houses, seniority is determined by the number of semesters lived in the MSU Student Housing Cooperative at the time of the room picks meeting. No future semesters shall be considered in the room picks procedure.
  6. **a.** For members who have lived in MSU Student Housing Cooperative houses other than Howland House Cooperative for the same number of semesters, contract signing date for the upcoming term's contract will be used to determine seniority.
  7. **1.** Contract signing date for the upcoming term's contract. If a member has lived in the house multiple years, only the most recent contract signing date affects seniority.
1. **Section V.II:** 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 or get the former member's chosen room.
  2. **Section V.III:** 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.

## Article X: Amendments

1. **Section X.I:** The current members of Howland House Cooperative may amend this constitution with a three-fourths majority vote of the entire membership of the House.
2. **Section X.II:** Amendments must be proposed to the entire membership at least one week before being voted upon.
3. **Section X.III:** When the constitution is amended, the new constitution shall be provided to the MSU Student Housing Cooperative.

## Appendix A: SHC Policies

Howland House Cooperative, as part of the MSU Student Housing Cooperative, follows the direction of the Code of Operations. The Membership and House Operations titles of the Code of Operations define the following processes, which we include here for reference:

1. **Appendix A.I** In the case that the House wishes to remove a member before the end of the current contract period, members should follow the guidelines in the Code of Operations titled Expulsions.
2. **Appendix A.II** In the case that the House wishes to prevent a member from living in the House in future contract periods, members should follow the guidelines in the Code of Operations titled Member Referral Process.
3. **Appendix A.III** Smoking cigarettes, parties, guests, pets, member room damages, lofts, and PACE violations are all addressed in the House Operations title.

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