

# New Community Constitution

## Preamble

We the people of New Community, in order to form a more harmonious cooperative; establish education, training, and information; ensure equity and solidarity; promote honesty and openness; and secure autonomy and independence for ourselves and those that come after us, do ordain and establish this Constitution for New Community Cooperative. We hold that New Community is composed both of the house in which the members reside and the members themselves; the identity of the property in which the members reside shall thus be New Community, governed thereby with this constitution.

## Article I - Governance

1. **A.** The operations and activities of New Community shall be governed by rules and regulations proposed and adopted at house meetings.
  1. **1.** House meetings are convened by the elected president with at least a three-day notice to the members unless an emergency meeting is required.
  2. **2.** Unless specifically stated elsewhere in this constitution, a quorum for a house meeting shall be half plus one of the contract-holding members in residence. Meetings cannot be held without quorum unless the preceding regularly-scheduled meeting failed to achieve a quorum. Once quorum is achieved, the meeting may continue to its finish even if a quorum is no longer present.
  3. **3.** Decisions at a house meeting are made by a simple majority vote of those members in attendance, unless otherwise described by this constitution.
  4. **4.** Emergency house meetings may be called by any member by notifying the president. Notice of at least 24 hours is required and only one topic or series of closely related topics may be discussed.
  5. **5.** Meetings will be conducted informally and cooperatively, however, the president is empowered to impose forms of parliamentary procedure as the situation requires.
  6. **6.** Attendance at house meetings is mandatory.
  7. **7.** A bi-weekly meeting time will be established and followed at the beginning of every semester.
2. **B.** Decisions of a regulatory nature are to be codified and recorded separately from the minutes as detailed under the duties of the Education Officer.
3. **C.** Referenda may be called.
  1. **1.** A referendum consists of a statement of the problem and a proposed solution; this is signed, seconded, and posted in a prominent place in the house.
  2. **2.** There will be space for every member to sign on the referendum; there will be room also for comments. The comments should be made on a separate sheet.
  3. **3.** Members vote with their signature, in two columns for "aye" or "nay"
  4. **4.** Problems dealt with in a referendum and their solutions need a vote of 2/3 of the total membership to pass.
  5. **5.** The referendum is posted for two weeks; at the end of that time the issue is decided by

the number of signatures.

6. **6.** The solution, if it has been carried, will be implemented by the president.
7. **7.** Any member may demand that the problem encompassed in the referendum may be removed and dealt with at a house meeting.

## Article II - Powers of Membership

1. **A.** The membership is empowered to establish the schedule of labor and jobs at the first house meeting of each semester, as well as elect by popular vote officers as outlined in this constitution.
2. **B.** Members have the power to determine a budget, under the direction of the house treasurer and staying within SHC policies, and alter this budget at times in the future.
3. **C.** The membership may punish fellow members for negligence or tardiness of work duties, and for absence from house meetings.
4. **D.** The membership may recall elected officers by a 2/3rds vote at any house meeting.

## Article III - Responsibilities of Membership

1. **A.** All members are required to participate in work duties as decided on by house, including both weekly work duties and Big Jobs projects once per semester.
2. **B.** All members are automatically fined for negligence or tardiness of work duties. This fine system shall be \$5 for the first offense, \$10 for the second offense, \$15 for the third offense, and \$15 for all subsequent offenses. All fines are assessed by the Jobs Manager and reported to both the fined person and the Finance Officer.
3. **C.** A member may appeal a fine at the next regularly-scheduled house meeting, and may have the fine removed with a majority vote of the house.
4. **D.** Fines and other charges from the house shall be due with the regular monthly charges on the 1st of each month.
5. **E.** Absence from any house meeting results in an automatic fine, unless the president is informed in advance of the absence and provided with a valid excuse.
6. **F.** All members agree to abide by the decisions of the house passed in accordance with this constitution, as well as the policies of the SHC.
7. **G.** At the beginning of each semester quiet hours are to be defined and established by the active members of the house.

## Article IV - House Officers

1. **A.** Officers are elected at the first meeting of each semester and will fulfill their duties as follows:
  1. **1. President**
    1. **a.** Oversees general operation of the house and hears member complaints.
    2. **b.** Handles general public relations of house.
    3. **c.** Handles situations which require immediate attention. Responsible for making emergency decisions for house, but must account for actions at next house meeting.
    4. **d.** Posts agenda for house meetings. Responsible for notifying membership of any changes in good time, as outlined in this constitution.

5. **e.** At the end of each semester, reviews all meeting minutes and informs house of all changes which have taken place.
2. **9. Education Officer**
  1. **a.** Represents house at all SHC Education Meetings.
  2. **b.** Responsible for submitting (and soliciting submissions) to the Pine Press as required by SHC.
  3. **c.** Takes minutes at house meetings and posts them within three days of the meeting.
3. **10. Board Representative**
  1. **a.** Represents the house at SHC Board of Director's meetings and any appropriate committee meetings.
  2. **b.** Reports relevant BOD/SHC affairs to the house, posting relevant notices when necessary.
  3. **c.** Collects and returns ballots for SHC-wide votes.
4. **11. Finance Officer**
  1. **a.** Represents house at all SCH Finance Meetings and works closely with corporate treasurer and the other house treasurers about SHC financial manners.
  2. **b.** Maintains house accounting. On first of the month, posts charge sheet. On sixth of the month, posts the office Transmittal of paid members.
  3. **c.** Presents monthly Reconciliation at house meetings before submission to SHC.
  4. **d.** Pays bills for the house.
5. **12. Membership Officer**
  1. **a.** Represents house at all SCH Membership Officer meetings.
  2. **b.** Helps resolve disputes between residents, reporting to SCH and grievance committee if necessary.
  3. **c.** Signs tour cards for potential new housemates, delegating this responsibility if necessary.
  4. **d.** Notifies future residents of room picks. Conducts room picks according to seniority outlined by SHC and constitution.
6. **13. Maintenance Officer**
  1. **a.** Represents house at all SCH Maintenance meetings.
  2. **b.** Oversees the corrective and preventative maintenance of the house, working with SHC staff and officers when necessary.
  3. **c.** Organizes and supervises "Big Job" weekends once per semester, semesterly grant proposals, and keeps copies of all house keys.
  4. **d.** Required to attend and encourage attendance of SHC All Member Work Day.
  5. **e.** Responsible for city code compliance, including yearly inspection.
  6. **f.** Mows lawn in summer and shovels sidewalks in the winter, and keeps the yard clean in general.
7. **14. Physical Development Officer**
  1. **a.** Represents house at all SCH Physical Development meetings.
  2. **b.** Research the physical needs of the house and what membership would like to see change for the future of the house.
  3. **c.** Write semesterly grant proposals for larger scale home improvement projects that will better the house for future members.

## Article V - House Jobs

1. **A.** House jobs are assigned at the first meeting of each semester. House labor should be assigned as needed and may vary from semester to semester. The house may establish any

other jobs or change job description as it deems necessary. The general purpose of jobs is to provide a clean, pleasant house.

**1. 1. Jobs Manager**

1. **a.** Conducts semesterly job appointment ritual.
2. **b.** Prepares and posts labor schedules. Checks schedules weekly to ensure labor completion.
3. **c.** Assesses fines and reports them at house meetings.

**2. 2. Thing Getter**

1. **a.** Purchases all house supplies as determined by the house, keeping to the weekly budget amounts as closely as possible.
2. **b.** Establishes, posts, and generally sticks to consistent schedule for shopping.
3. **c.** Responsible for keeping necessary food and cleaning supplies in stock.
4. **d.** Works with Maintenance Officers to purchase relevant supplies.
5. **e.** Works with SHC and other house stewards and buyers when necessary.
6. **f.** Uses bottle and can deposits to offset costs from the budget.

**3. 3. Trash Manager**

1. **a.** Empties the kitchen and laundry trash bins on a weekly basis or as needed, attempting to empty trash before the dumpster is emptied.
2. **b.** Empties kitchen compost bin into compost pile when full.

**4. 4. Recycling Manager**

1. **a.** Organizes and maintains recycling station in kitchen and posts recycling guidelines for members.
2. **b.** Runs recycling to the MSU Recycling Center on a weekly basis or uses East Lansing Recycling curbside service.

**5. 5. General Cleaners**

1. **a.** General cleaners are assigned to clean various sections of the house at different times of the week. In general, cleaners: Vacuum, sweep, empty trash, and mop where appropriate.
2. **b.** Cleaners for the Commons, Bar, and Mail Room will sweep and mop the floors, empty trash, clean the windows, and take dish bins to the basement.
3. **c.** Cleaners for the second and third floors will vacuum the hallways and stairs, pick up any trash or debris, and clean the windows.
4. **d.** Cleaners for the Airlock will sweep and mop the Airlock weekly, and clean the windows once a month.

**6. 6. Dish Nights**

1. **a.** All members will hold one dish night per week.
2. **b.** On their dish night, members are responsible for washing all dirty dishes in the kitchen, including those left on counters, tables, and the stove.
3. **c.** Dish nights will be held every night of the week. Assuming a full house of 15 members, one night will have three members assigned.
4. **d.** Dish nights must be done on the night assigned from the hours of 8:00pm to 2:00pm the next day.

**7. 7. General Kitchen Cleaners**

1. **a.** Kitchen Cleaners are responsible for mopping the kitchen, disinfecting kitchen surfaces, cleaning appliances, and returning left out dishes to the sink.
2. **b.** Kitchen cleaners are also responsible for washing any house rags, towels, table cloths, etc. once a week.

**8. 8. Bathroom Cleaners**

1. **a.** Bathroom Cleaners clean their bathroom by Wednesday nights. They must clean

the toilet, sink, shower and mirror, empty the trash and restock toilet paper, paper towels, and soap. Floor mats and guff towels must be washed weekly.

2. **b.** In general, there will be three to four people responsible for a particular bathroom, rotating each week.

#### 9. **SHC Labor**

1. **a.** It is an obligation of the house to fulfill any SHC-imposed labor requirements. (e.g. Office Labor).

### Article VI - Room Decisions

1. **A.** A prospective member may not sign a second housing contract until he or she comes before the current membership and explains his or her need or want for the second contract. This must then be voted on whether or not to allow the signing of a second contract.
2. **B.** The decision of room picks will be based on seniority. This will proceed as follows, in order of importance:
  1. **1.** Any member may claim the room that member currently resides in for the following contract period at the time room picks occurs. This occurs regardless of seniority, and that room shall not be available to any other member during the room picks proceedings.
  2. **2.** Semesters lived in New Community at the time of room picks will determine seniority. In case of a tie among the number of semesters, the members class level (i.e. Senior, Junior, etc.) will determine the order. In case of that tie, the date that contracts were signed will determine order.
  3. **3.** Semesters lived in other MSU SHC houses at the time of room picks will determine seniority. In case of a tie among the number of semesters, the members class level will determine the order. In case of that tie, the date that contracts were signed will determine order.
  4. **4.** The date that contracts were signed will determine the order of any room picks after the above have already been fulfilled.
  5. **5.** Any member who choses a double may choose their roommate regardless of where that roommate may fall in the order of room picks.

### Article VII - Amendments to the Constitution

This constitution may be amended at a regularly schedules house meeting by a 2/3 majority of members present; amendments shall be filed with the SHC and a new copy of the constitution should be compiled for the house to record past changes.

### Article VIII - Scope of the Constitution

This constitution supersedes all previous constitutions and all policies at variance with it other than those of the SHC. Except where limited by this constitution and the SHC, members are empowered to make decisions and enact policies independently and with concern for their fellow residents and the well-being of the house.

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