

# 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.

## 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.

## Article I - House Meetings

1. **1.1** The operations and activities of New Community shall be governed by rules and regulations proposed and adopted at house meetings.
  1. **a.** Meetings will be conducted informally and cooperatively.
  2. **b.** A bi-weekly meeting time will be established and followed at the beginning of every semester.
  3. **c.** Attendance at house meetings is mandatory. Excused absences must be discussed with the moderator prior to the meeting, or a fine will be enacted for the absent member.
  4. **d.** House meetings are convened by the moderator with at least a three-day notice to the members by the moderator unless an emergency meeting is required. Emergency meetings require 48-hour notice. Notices should be posted to all forms of social media/communication the house uses.
  5. **e.** 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. If a meeting is held without quorum, no voting may occur, if a vote happens the results are null. A meeting that does not meet quorum is solely for the purpose of discussion and potential planning, not direct action.
  6. **f.** Decisions at a house meeting are made by a simple majority vote of those members in attendance.
  7. **g.** The membership may recall elected officers by a majority vote at any house meeting.

1. **1.2** Decisions of a regulatory nature are to be codified and recorded separately from the moderator's minutes as detailed under the duties of the Education Officer.

## Article II - Powers of Membership

1. **2.1** 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. **2.2** 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.

## Article III - Responsibilities of Membership

1. **3.1** All members are to participate in work duties as decided on by house, including both weekly work duties and Big Jobs projects once per semester.
2. **3.2** All members are not to be found in negligence or tardiness of work duties, or will be subject to fines. This fine shall be set at \$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 member and the Finance Officer.
3. **3.3** 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. **3.4** Fines and other charges from the house shall be due with the regular monthly charges on the 1st of each month.
5. **3.5** Absence from any house meeting results in an automatic fine, unless the moderator is informed in advance of the absence and provided with a valid excuse.
6. **3.6** 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. **3.7** At the beginning of each semester quiet hours are to be defined and established by the active members of the house.

## Article IV - Seniority

1. **4.1** Seniority is determined first by months lived at New Community and then secondly by months residing in the Spartan Housing Cooperative.
2. **4.2** In case of a tie among the number of semesters, the date that contracts were signed will determine the order of seniority.

## Article V - House Officers

1. **5.1** Officers are to be elected at the first meeting of each semester by simple majority, before the assignment of housework, (See Article VI) and will fulfill their duties as follows:
  1. **5.1.1 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 the education committee.
  2. **5.1.2 Board Representative**

1. **a.** Represents the house at SHC Board of Directors 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.
3. **5.1.3 Finance Officer**
  1. **a.** Represents house at all SHC Finance Meetings and works closely with corporate treasurer and the other house treasurers about SHC financial manners.
  2. **b.** Maintains house accounting. Posts charge sheet on the first of the month, posts charge sheet and on the 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.
4. **5.1.4 Membership Officer**
  1. **a.** Represents house at all SHC Membership Officer meetings.
  2. **b.** Helps resolve disputes between residents, reporting to SHC and grievance committee if necessary.
  3. **c.** Leads tours and signs tour cards for potential new housemates.
  4. **d.** Notifies future residents of room picks. Conducts room picks according to seniority outlined in article IV of this constitution.
5. **5.1.5 Facilities Officer**
  1. **a.** Represents house at all SHC Maintenance and Physical Development 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.
  4. **d.** Keeps copies of all house keys.
  5. **e.** Responsible for city code compliance, including yearly inspection.
  6. **f.** Encouraged to write grant proposals each semester for larger scale home improvement projects that will better the house for future members.

## Article VI - Housework Duties

1. **6.1** 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 the job description as it deems necessary. The general purpose of jobs is to maintain an adequate level of sanitation in shared spaces, create a pleasant living atmosphere for residents, and inspire cooperation amongst members of New Community.
  1. **6.1.1 Jobs Manager (1)**
    1. **a.** Conducts job appointment ritual by seniority every semester.
    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. **6.1.2 House Shopper (1)**
    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 maintains a generally 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.** Uses bottles and can deposits to offset costs from the budget.
  3. **6.1.3 Moderator (1)**

1. **a.** Creates a template for house meeting notes and posts it to house social media prior to every meeting, so members may add agenda items.
2. **b.** Takes detailed notes during house meetings and posts them after the meeting in the Facebook group.
3. **c.** Reminds members multiple times through social media of the house meetings (minimum once per week), giving at least three days notice.
4. **d.** Files constitution amendments to this constitution conditional to §12.1
4. **6.1.4 Trash Manager (2)**
  1. **a.** Empties the kitchen trash and compost bins when full or as needed.
5. **6.1.5 Recycling Manager (1)**
  1. **a.** Organizes and maintains the kitchen recycling station.
  2. **b.** Posts recycling guidelines for members.
  3. **c.** Runs recycling to the MSU Recycling Center on a weekly basis or uses East Lansing Recycling curbside service.
  4. **d.** Takes returnables (bottles and cans) to the store and gives resulting vouchers to the House Shopper.
6. **6.1.6 Groundskeepers (2)**
  1. **a.** Mows, rakes, waters and weeds the garden; shovels snow, when applicable.
  2. **b.** Keeps the yard clean in general.
7. **6.1.7 General Cleaners**
  1. **6.1.7.1** General cleaners are assigned to clean various sections of the house at different times of the week. Cleaners should vacuum, sweep, empty trash, disinfect surfaces, organize clutter, and mop where appropriate.
    1. **a. Hallways**
    2. **b. Kitchen**
    3. **c. Airlock**
    4. **d. Living Room**
    5. **e. Bar/Mail Room**
    6. **f. Basement/Laundry**
      1. **i.** Washes house blankets, bath rugs, towels, etc. as needed
8. **6.1.8. SHC House Labor**
  1. **1.** It is an obligation of the house to fulfill any SHC-imposed labor requirements. (e.g. Office Labor).
2. **6.2** 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. **6.2.1 Dish Days**
    1. **a.** All members will hold one dish day per week.
    2. **b.** On their dish day, members are responsible for washing, drying, and putting away house dishes for a minimum of 15 minutes.
    3. **c.** If needed, dish day duties may be completed one day in advance or one day late.
    4. **d.** After completion of their dish day, members must sign the dishes dry erase board on their assigned day. If they do their dishes early or late, they must still sign in their assigned day, along with the date completed.
  2. **6.2.2 Bathrooms**
    1. **a.** Each bathroom's cleaning schedule will be determined amongst the members who use that bathroom most regularly.
    2. **b.** Bathroom cleaners should 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.

## Article VII - Parking

1. **7.1** Parking spots are determined by seniority at the first house meeting of the semester.
  1. **7.1.1** If there are remaining unclaimed spots, they shall be considered guest spots.
2. **7.2** Members must notify the house if a guest is using parking if parked longer than 8 hours.

## Article VIII - Room Decisions

1. **8.1** A current member may not sign a second housing contract until they come before the current membership and explain their 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. **8.2** The decision of room picks will be based on seniority. This will proceed as follows, in order of importance:
  1. **a.** 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. **b.** After members may choose to claim the room they currently reside in, seniority (see Article IV) determines the order of room picks.
  3. **c.** Any member who chooses a double may choose their roommate regardless of where that roommate may fall in the order of room picks.

## Article IX - Party Policy

1. **9.1** A party shall be defined as an official house gathering that is voted on by the house members and as defined in the SHC Party Policy in the SHC Code of Operations. This status requires that house members recognize and follow the specific traits and responsibilities described in this section of the house constitution as well as those of the SHC Party Policy in the SHC Code of Operations.
2. **9.2** All house parties must be proposed at a house meeting and voted on and approved by at least a simple majority.
3. **9.3** Party Participation:
  1. **a.** A house member voting yes may enjoy the full privileges enjoyed as a host of the party as well as shared responsibility of any damages, fines, legal action, or any other negative ramifications resulting from the party, and must comply with §9.3.d.
  2. **b.** A house member voting no or abstaining from the vote will be expected not to attend and will be exempt from any shared responsibility; if the member later chooses to attend, they assume the privileges and shared responsibilities of a house member voting yes (see §9.3.a).
  3. **c.** In the event of a dispute concerning a members' attendance, their participation and assumption of responsibility will be decided by simple majority vote at a house meeting.
  4. **d.** The house members who vote yes or choose to participate in the party must also participate in the set-up and clean-up of the party. Failure to participate is considered an additional fineable offense (see §3.2) and will be fined as such.
4. **9.4** A party is subject to being stopped or canceled at any moment due to medical, legal, or any other situations where the welfare or safety of the house or its members is at risk. A party is not

subject to being stopped or canceled due to personal reasons that lie outside of the reasons listed above.

5. **9.5** A party may only be approved once a “sober representative” is appointed by a simple majority. The member must be in attendance for the entirety of the party and is not beholden to §9.3.a. In the event emergency services arrive (i.e. police, fire), a fire alarm goes off, or a member’s health at risk, the sober rep. is designated to talk with all emergency personal. The sober rep. is granted power to stop or cancel the party as they see fit in accordance with §9.4.

## Article X - Guest Policy

1. **10.1** Each member is responsible for the actions of their accompanying guest(s) and making sure that their guest(s) has been made aware of house norms.
2. **10.2** A guest may not be left alone in the house without house approval.
3. **10.3** A guest may stay in a resident’s room for up to two weeks. After two weeks, the guest must be voted on and pass with quorum (half of membership +1) or is required to leave.
4. **10.4** A guest may stay in the common room for up to three nights, the membership is to be informed of the guest through house social media. A guest staying longer than three nights will need approval of a majority of members.
5. **10.5** Voting on guests staying longer than the approved limits established in numbers in §10.3 and §10.4 may happen at a house meeting or through social media poll.
6. **10.6** A guest may stay and attend house meetings in their entirety until open floor discussion. Any guest, including potential housemates, are expected to leave the room for this part of house meetings.

## Article XI - Pet Policy

1. **11.1** All uncaged pets residing in the house must be discussed and voted in by simple majority at a house meeting before it is brought into and allowed to reside in the house.
2. **11.2** Any and all pet allergies must be considered when bringing new pets into the house.
3. **11.3** Pet owners are responsible for any and all impact their animal has on the house’s day to day operations and environment. This includes, but is not limited to, sights, smells, animal droppings, use of house resources, space needed to house the pet, and any damages incurred.
4. **11.4** A limit of two uncaged animals residing in the house will not be exceeded as per SHC policy (not more than 1 per 7 members).

## Article XI - Amendments to the Constitution

- **\*12.1\*** This constitution may be amended at a regularly scheduled house meeting by a majority of members present; amendments shall be filed with the SHC by the appointed house moderator (see §6.1.3) and a new copy of the constitution should be compiled for the house to record past changes.

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