The Shire Constitution

Preamble - Brief Synopsis

The Shire Housing Cooperative (subsequently described as “the cooperative”) is a member-owned housing cooperative that has existed since the purchase of the property of 5473 Okemos Road, East Lansing, by Rivendell Cooperative House in December of 2011. In September 2017 The Shire became a member of Michigan State University Student Housing Cooperative (MSU SHC) As a cooperative, members (occupants) take partial ownership of the property and are expected to contribute to the maintenance and upkeep of their respective house during the duration of their stay. Members strive to pursue a low-impact, ecologically-friendly lifestyle. As a member residents are expected to fully participate in the decision making process as it pertains to the health of the cooperative. All decisions made by the cooperative will be reached through consensus; that is, all members of the cooperative must agree on any changes or policies adopted by the cooperative. All members of the cooperative hold equal standing in the decision-making process.

Article 1 - Adherence to Member Agreement, Bylaws, and Cooperative Policies

Members of The Shire Housing Cooperative agree to adhere to the policies and practices established in the Member Agreement, the cooperative’s Bylaws, and all policies (whether verbal or written) established by the cooperative. A signed copy of this agreement for each member, as well as all other written cooperative policies, will be kept in an accessible location within the house. Any changes to the Member Agreement, Bylaws, or other cooperative policies (either verbal or written) must be approved by the membership through consensus.

If a member fails to adhere to the policies and practices established by the cooperative, the cooperative reserves the right to levy any penalties against the member subsequently described in this document. Contingent on the severity of the situation, the cooperative also reserves the right to hold a meeting with any member found to be in violation of the Member Agreement to discuss the member’s continued residency and membership in the cooperative.

Article 2 - Adherence to Cooperative Principles

Members of Rivendell Housing Cooperative agree to adhere to the cooperative principles adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance in 1995 (see: http://www.nasco.coop/node/22):

-Voluntary and open membership -Democratic member control -Member economic participation -Autonomy and independence -Education, training and information -Cooperation among cooperatives -Concern for community

Article 3 - Non-Discrimination Policy

The Shire Housing Cooperative will not discriminate against any member or potential member in regard to race, ethnic background, religion, national or political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, weight, or disability. Families with children and pets within reason are welcome too. Any person capable of fulfilling their responsibilities to the cooperative may apply to become a member without discrimination.

Article 4 - Safer Space and Sexual Harassment Policy

Article 5 - Membership Dues and Responsibilities

Membership Fees & Shares + Dues
Members of The Shire Housing Cooperative agree to pay a monthly membership fee (rent) of $xx.xx per month, due on the first of each month.

The membership fee covers housing, utilities, and internet access. At the discretion of the cooperative, the fee may also cover house food.

The monthly membership fee may be raised as needed through a decision arrived at by consensus of the MSU SHC.

Shares & Dues are to be paid to MSU SHC prior to move in.

House Hours
Members are required to contribute hours of work per month to the house. House hours include, but are not limited to, attending house meetings, cleaning common areas, outdoor maintenance, indoor maintenance, house shopping and maintaining house financial records. If a member fails to complete twelve hours of work in a given month they are allowed the following month to make up any missed hours.

House Meetings
Members of The Shire Housing Cooperative will hold regular house meetings between residents of The Shirel. The time and place of the meeting will be agreed upon by the membership and posted via the Google Group and chalkboards in the house.

Attendance at house meetings is mandatory, excepting instances in which a member is ill, must be at work, or has another important obligation which cannot be rescheduled. If a member must miss a meeting, they should give at least 24 hours notice to the cooperative, except in cases of personal emergency.

Physical Maintenance of Cooperative Property
Members agree to keep both their rooms and common spaces of the house in compliance with any applicable building or fire codes and in good physical condition, excepting normal wear-and-tear to the property. Additionally, members agree to keep common spaces, including the living room, dining area, kitchen, storage space, and laundry area reasonably tidy and clean. If the actions of any cooperative member, that member’s guests, or that member’s pets lead to damage to the property beyond normal wear-and-tear, the member agrees to make or pay for any necessary repairs of the

property and/or forfeit all or part of their security deposit.

Pets
Members of The Shire Housing Cooperative may have pets in their house given that all other members of the house agree to the presence of the member's pet.

Subletters
Members of The Shire Housing Cooperative may sublet their room for a designated period of time to another individual given the approval of the other members of the house. Any subletters must go through an interview process similar to that of long-term members. Any subletters must agree to abide by all cooperative policies, including those laid out in the member agreement. Any member who sublets their room accepts responsibility for any actions or damages to cooperative property carried out by the subletter.

Room Assignment
Room assignment in each house is based on each member's seniority in the cooperative. Members with seniority get first choice of rooms in the house if a room becomes vacant.

Article 6 - OFFICERS

BOARD REP:
The board rep will represent The Shire as SHC board meetings as needed/fitting. The board officer speaks for the house and house decisions.

TREASURER:
The treasurer shall be selected. The duties of the treasurer are as follows:

1. **A.** Submit a proposed budget for the term one week after the first house meeting. The budget is subject to amendment and approval by a majority vote of the members of the house.
2. **B.** Maintain the house financial records in an accurate and timely manner. The financial records are to contain revenue and expense journal, revenue receipt book, deposit records, expense receipts for all purchases made by the house, and member accounts.
3. **C.** Submit a budget variance for the previous term at the first meeting of each term.
4. **D.** Pay bills for the house on time.
5. **E.** Collect monies owed to the house.
6. **F.** Keep the members informed of the status of their accounts and post rent lists in a public place in a timely manner.
7. **G.** Record fines on member accounts as directed by the facilitator.
8. **H.** Bring any member's large balance to the attention of the house.
9. **I.** Represent The Shire at SHC Finance meetings

MAINTENANCE:
The maintenance officer is selected for one term. The duties are:

1. **A.** Initiate and implement a predictive and preventative maintenance program within the house.
2. **B.** Submit a list of maintenance projects that are to be completed during the term at the second house meeting of the term and every meeting thereafter give a report as to the status of this list.
3. **C.** Coordinate and supervise work weekends, which are general house maintenance projects. House members become secondary maintenance workers in the house. The head maintenance officer must see that projects are completed within the prescribed time period. Work weekends

shall be scheduled within the first two months of the semester at the decision and agreement of the majority of the house.
4. **D.** Is responsible for preparing the house for any inspections.
5. **E.** See that fire alarms and extinguishers are functional and fully recharged. A smoke detector inspection shall be done once a term.
6. **F.** Represent The Shire at SHC Physical Development committee meetings.

MEMBERSHIP:
The membership officer is selected for one term. Duties include:

1. **A.**Maintain the house at full capacity. This may require extensive correspondence with prospective members. The membership officer will arrange house tours and dinners for prospective members. It is suggested that the membership officer use the resources of SHC to aid the membership process.
2. **B.** Coordinate room assignments.
3. **C.** Be responsible for systematically distributing and labeling house keys and room keys to new members and gathering them from departing members.
4. **D.** Orient new members as to the rules of the house within one week of their arrival.
5. **E.** Maintain membership records on all current and last year's members. The membership officer is responsible for insuring that a permanent record of all last year's members is kept at the SHC office.
6. **F.** Maintain a file of forwarding addresses of members that have moved away.
7. **G.** Coordinate The Shirel involvement in SHC ‘AMPOs.
8. **H.** Represent The Shirel at SHC Membership Committee Meetings.

EDUCATION:
The education officer is selected for one term. Duties are:

1. **A.** Submit or collect submissions for the SHC newsletter Pine Press.
2. **B.** Educate house and community about SHC and The Shirel.
3. **C.** Maintain a revised copy of the house constitution.
4. **D.** Assist Education Committee in coordinating MSU-SHC events.
5. **E.** Represent The Shire at SHC Education Committee meetings.

SECRETARY:
The secretary is selected for one term. Duties include:

1. **A.** Recording the minutes of the house meetings in a neat and orderly manner and posting them soon after the meeting. Following approval of the minutes, they should be stored in the house files.
2. **B.** At the end of the term, the secretary shall review the minutes with the Education officer and record changes in house documents with SHC. Copies of the documents shall be posted upon revision.
3. **C.** The secretary is responsible for keeping phone areas supplied with paper and writing utensils.
4. **D.** Sorting and distributing daily mail.
5. **E.** Forwarding old member's mail.
6. **F.** Tidying mail area. This includes sorting excess paper for recycling.

From:
https://wiki.spartan.coop/ - **SHC Policy Wiki**

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Last update: **2019/06/09 10:27**