

## HOLDING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

In the process of participating in our Cohousing community you will be attending a lot of meetings. The more effective we are at holding meetings, the easier this process will be. Time is at a premium for most people so it becomes important not to waste one another's time.

The following are items that we use during our meetings. It is helpful to become familiar with them so you can participate fully in the meetings.

### FACILITATION:

Our meetings are run by the facilitation team. The facilitators are community members who have spent time learning methods regarding group process and consensus training. The facilitator's job is to make it easier for the group to do its work. They assist and guide the group. Facilitators are responsible for collecting agenda items from the different teams prior to the meeting and posting the agenda on email two days prior to the meeting.

The facilitator is responsible to call on members who want to speak during the meeting. Members raise their hands when they want to speak. The facilitator tries to rotate who speaks, so there is a balance among all the members. If someone has been speaking extensively during the meeting, the facilitator may choose not to call on that person until others have gotten a chance to speak.

### STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING:

The following structure is used during our business meetings:

Welcome

Assignment of tasks, minute taker

Corrections to last meetings minutes

Community Building Exercise which may consist of any or several of the following:

- Emotional check-in (members share how they are doing, highlights of their last Week)

- Appreciations (formal appreciations to members that have helped the community during the past week)

- Launch (a short game or sharing to help unite the group and energize them for the Week)

Agenda starts. Items on the agenda fall into the following categories: Brainstorming, Discussion, Making a report or Making a decision

Open Forum (members bring up issues they would like to see on future agendas)

General Announcements

Meeting Evaluation

Closing

This meeting structure is not set in stone and may vary from facilitator to facilitator.

#### TYPES OF MEETINGS:

**BUSINESS MEETINGS:** The purpose of business meetings is to get something done. These meetings need to be organized and facilitated well. Starting and ending on time is important. It is important to determine what information is needed to be discussed by the large group and what can be done in the teams or on email. We usually try to use email to give team reports. Open forum is used to help bring up issues and determine if the issue needs to be discussed at the business meeting or handled in a team.

**SOCIAL EVENTS:** It is important for a community to have social events. These are times for members to chat causally and get to know each other better. The member services team is responsible for planning social events. We encourage residents and prospective members to participate in them. Often it is hard to hold a business meeting if members have not seen each other socially recently. There tends to be a lot of chatting amongst members during the meeting. For this reason, members are encouraged to come 30 minutes early to our business meetings, so causal chatting can happen before the meeting and we can be more focused during the meeting.

**SHARING CIRCLES:** Sharing circles are a method of sharing feelings and concerns. They usually occur during a business meeting and around one specific topic. It is a time for members to be able to be heard without any interruption. A more detailed handout regarding sharing circles is in this packet.

**TEAM MEETINGS:** A lot of our work is done in smaller teams. Teams typically meet on a regular basis and share their work at the larger business meeting. All members are encouraged to join a team. The teams are: Member services, Marketing, Design Review, Landscape, Legal/finance, Facilitation, Development, Emergency and Community Facilities.