



Cohousing in Corvallis

An E Newsletter from CoHo Ecovillage
Corvallis, Oregon

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Remember when your best
friend lived right next door?

CoHo in 2007—From Dreams to Reality

At CoHo Ecovillage, doors opened and doors closed, both literally and figuratively this year. We "closed the door" on years of meetings at Willamette Neighborhood Housing Services at 3rd and Madison and "opened the doors" of our very own Common House for our "first" on-site community meeting in October. Unit doors also opened as closings were completed and all 34 homes were sold by early December. And more doors will be opening next year with the anticipated births of two babies.

January

- At our Winter Wellness Retreat, the theme was transition--with a focus on what we were letting go of and what we were gaining. Juggling lessons gave us tangible practice in letting go in order to move on and catch the next opportunity.
- CoHoots started selecting kitchen cabinet and countertop finishes.
- Topics under discussion--TV in the Common House; how to transition to WorkShare Teams at move-in.
- Fortis Construction started monthly site tours for members; photos on a Watch Us Build page on our website heralded the month-to-month progress.
- A clothing swap and give-away at the Wellness Retreat prompted a series of similar "reuse and recycle" opportunities at community meetings. Let the downsizing begin!



February

- CoHoots lined up around the room to show their preferences for meal plan features and the "aerial photos" (taken by Valerie on a ladder) aided the Meal Plan SubSubCommittee in its design work.
- A Coordinating Council was formed to coordinate operations with our Project Manager and multiple committees.
- Several non violent communication (NVC) practice groups were launched.
- Alex started walking and gave us an in-person demonstration at a community meeting.



March

- A Home in Community (AHIC) was launched and fundraising began to purchase A Home for Mike.
- Landscaping plans were unfurled and folks volunteered as area coordinators for the first major planting thrust in the fall.
- Members said "YES!" to survey questions about their interest in bulk buying.
- Folks imagined how the Common House would be furnished room-by-room and built a wish list of furniture and other items.



- The first peek of sunshine brought CoHoots to Central Park for an impromptu picnic.
 - Concerns about radiant in-floor heat under different flooring surfaces led to more research.
 - Under discussion: gifting in CoHo; food needs (how to better feed each other at common meals); whether we should return to our original name—CoHo Ecovillage; the amazing view from the upper flats.
- Renee and Isabelle moved to town.

April



- Our original name (CoHo Ecovillage) was reclaimed as a reflection of our eco values and features and as an inspiration to be a greener community.
- Our first "real meal" prepared by a meal crew was a trial for future community meals. The Meal Crew and the diners completed surveys to give feedback.
- Construction items: timber harvested from trees cut for construction was milled on site (and some will be used for interior trim in the Common House); exterior color palette and plan proposed by SERA Architects was adopted; members made flooring decisions; photos were taken to document plumbing and



- wiring locations before drywall was installed; Bike Barn is underway
- Under discussion: Home Selection Guidelines (modifying steps to speed up the process).
- Ken and Brigetta from WNHS shared info and tips on mortgage readiness.



- Aerial photos of our project gave us the "big picture" perspective.
- Jessica, Jeremy, Shoshana and Rachel moved to town; Crystal Lake Apartments has unofficially been renamed the "CoHo Annex" as more CoHoots arrive in Corvallis and settle down the road from CoHo.
- The CoHo salmon costume was refurbished with slinky fabric for this year's soggy Earth Faire parade.





May

- A session on Safety and Trust was facilitated by Tree Bressen, a Eugene consultant who has worked with CoHo several times.
- A forum on local/organic/sustainable foods opened up discussion on food choices.
- After "heated" debate (aka a "warm and cozy" conversation), a decision was made to purchase a wood-burning stove for the Common House library/living room.
- A Conflict Resolution Committee was created.
- Reality TV found CoHo and is taping an episode of the show House Hunters with a CoHo resident.

June

- In response to another survey, folks estimated the number of common meals they'd eat each month. Folks are hungry for both food and community! A meal plan bookkeeper was selected.



- Consensus decisions: document standards were adopted, revised home selection guidelines were approved, and the meal plan was OK'd.
- Under discussion: withdrawal policy.
- As more CoHoots move to town (and to the CoHo Annex), the crew making Welcome Signs has been very busy. In-town folks started to

prepare their homes for sale, with LOTS of help from their CoHo neighbors.

- The Common House is taking shape; the two-story tower is modeled after the tower in the hops barn that was on this property.

July

- At the summer Wellness retreat, folks focused on empathy (NVC style), and did more sharing about transitions to living in community.
- CoHoots greeted visitors at Da Vinci Days and Farmers Markets.
- An ad hoc group formed to create a process for community-wide prioritizing and funding of projects.
- The community agreed that HOA (homeowners association) dues would be paid by direct deposit.
- Susie, Loyal and Xavier plus Debby and Ron celebrated their arrival in Corvallis.



August



- At the August Welcome Weekend, it was hot, hot, hot, but our Common House was cool, cool, cool.
- To expedite the sale of our last units, our membership steps were revised and shortened.
- Looking ahead to a September or October move-in, folks took on tasks from an "urgent tasks" list, models were being developed for a revised governance structure, and a resale policy was being crafted.



- Rob, Jen and Skya, plus Joey, David, and Aria, plus Peter, Jess, Ellis, and Georgia all became Corvallis residents.
- Crews met for training on planting in preparation for landscaping days in September.

September



- As we transitioned to move-in, folks met on the land for a "Letting Go" ritual, elected board officers for the new fiscal year due to start in October, and started to compile emergency contact information.
- Our FINAL Welcome Weekend was held. Our last household completed the membership steps and reserved the last unit.
- At our first landscape work day, we were exhilarated by the prospect of moving in soon and deeply saddened by the dramatic demise of our Old Oak.
- CoHoots greeted folks at Fall Festival.



October



- October was much, much more than the beginning of our fiscal year.
- We received the long-awaited Certificate of Occupancy, set up our common house, celebrated our first closing and move-in by serenading our neighbors in our first Welcoming Ceremony, had our first community meeting followed by our first meal, feasted at our first birthday parties, and made our first deposits in our first compost pile.
- A session was held in late October to solicit donations for urgent projects and all were funded.

November



- At a special "turnover" meeting, CoHo took over responsibility for our project from the developer.
- Consensus Decisions: Utility billing proposal, resale guidelines, and design review process were adopted.
- Our group bus pass program started and CoHoots began taking advantage of 30-minute service on route #6.
- An NVC parenting class met.
- Willamette Neighborhood Housing

Services hosted an open house to thank the many organizations and agencies that worked together to make our project possible.

- The first meal of our official meal program was enjoyed by a large crowd. Ditto for a day-after-Thanksgiving dessert potluck.
- Linda plus Meredith, Ted, Mason, and Jessica moved into CoHo from California.



December

- CoHoots celebrated the holiday season with caroling and a concert by the Corvallis Community Choir, a Hanukkah meal, cookie baking, and sessions to make personalized holiday stars to decorate the Common House.



- A Sharing Circle was convened to share perspectives on meat at common meals.



- Through mid December, 398 diners had been served at 9 common meals by 56 folks working on Meal Crews.
- The community will meet once a month for business meetings and once a month for "community life" meetings with a community-building focus.

To find out more about CoHo Ecovillage

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