

Vision

This policy is designed to provide clarity about the process of becoming a unit owner at CoHo and the expectations of membership.

Needs

- **Connection.** Helps prospective unit owners build connections with the community prior to unit purchase.
- **Clarity.** Clearly defines the application process, plus responsibilities and rights of unit owners.
- **Trust.** Facilitates the development of trust and safety through regular ongoing contact prior to unit purchase.
- **Communication.** Encourages open sharing and communication via buddy and clearness committee.
- **Ease.** Supports a smoother transition for sellers, buyers, and the community.

Vision and Values, Purpose Statement

This Owner Member Policy supports our community values of:

- **Sharing Our Lives.** Connection is the foundation of our community and welcoming new members is an ongoing connection process.
- **Safety and Trust.** This policy provides both the prospective member and the community an opportunity to build trust through the application process.
- **Purpose Statement/Enrich Our Lives and Refresh Our Spirits Through Connection and Cooperation.** Prospective members add a new dimension and energy to the community.

History

The membership application process has changed as the community has grown and evolved.

In the early stages of the community, the threshold to membership was minimal. When a site was acquired and units were designed, the process became more complex with the addition of legal and financial commitments.

The timeline to complete the membership process shifted from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, then 8 weeks, and eventually down to 3 weeks as the time before move-in became shorter. There was a deadline to complete the membership process to retain position in the queue.

Once all of the units were sold, the community no longer had a role in the financial/legal part of unit sales. While the financial/legal aspects of unit resales are currently handled by sellers, the community continues to play an active role in helping prospective buyers gain sufficient information, experience, and feedback to make a decision about purchasing a unit and becoming a member of CoHo Ecovillage.

Policy

In accordance with CoHo policy, a general overview is provided in this policy document and specific details are listed in CoHoMembershipGuidelines (see the most recent version; also see documents listed in Related Files section at the end of this policy). All of the categories of membership and affiliation are defined and listed in these guidelines, along with details on the application process, rights, and responsibilities for each category.

Membership in CoHo Ecovillage is based on self-selection.

Application Process

CoHo's Membership Team helps prospective members start and complete the membership process.

The standard amount of the application fees is recommended annually by the Membership Team and the Finance Team.

A prospective member seriously considering the purchase of a unit is pursuing two tracks at the same time with a shared deadline. One track involves the legal and financial details in negotiating a purchase. The other track involves the steps in becoming a member of the community. According to the CoHo Condominium Declaration, only unit owners can be members. Closing on a CoHo unit is the final step in the owner membership process (creating the shared deadline).

The application process is designed to provide enough time for community members to connect with the prospective member. The application timeframe is flexible (but does include a minimum number of weeks). It is recognized that the resale process may need to move quickly for financial or logistics reasons. If the prospective buyer is already a Friend of CoHo or an Associate Member, the membership application process could go more quickly. If the prospective buyer is new to CoHo, the process could take longer.

During the application period, prospective members complete a series of steps to enable them to understand expectations of life in a cohousing community (including reviewing documentation, taking part in meetings/meals/activities, and becoming familiar with NVC) and reach a decision about joining the community.

During the application process, open and ongoing communication with prospective members is encouraged (via conversations with community members, buddies, at least one Clearness Committee, and assistance from Conflict Prevention Resolution Team if needed). Community members with concerns about prospective member(s) are asked to use these channels to share their feedback and work toward a resolution.

The Membership Team also provides assistance after the application process is completed, including coordinating a Welcome Ceremony and providing orientation to CoHo's features (meal program, Tiki, Common House, Bike Barn, etc.).

Membership Rights

Membership in CoHo has many benefits--including use of email communication and intranet features, inclusion in the meal program, use of facilities (Common House, Bike Barn, workshop, greenhouse, gardens, etc.), social support, and participation in activities.

Membership Responsibilities

Members are expected to be actively involved in community life. Responsibilities include abiding by agreements, participating in community work/life, and meeting financial commitments. See ParticipationPolicy for more information.

Non-resident owners have additional responsibilities to support the connection between their renters and the community (such as designating a resident owner as a buddy to the renter). A percentage limit on rental units in CoHo is set in the CoHo bylaws because this impacts mortgage availability for prospective buyers.

Members participate in our exit process when leaving the community.

Related Documents

See the most recent versions of these documents (dates omitted to avoid frequent revision of this document when related documents are updated)

CoHoMembershipGuidelines
ParticipationPolicy

OwnerMembershipPaperwork
ResaleGuidelines

RentalPolicy
ResidentNonOwnerPaperwork

AffiliatesPolicy
AffiliatesGuidelines
AssociateMemberPaperwork
FriendsofCoHoPaperwork

OrientationGuide

Revision History

A Membership Policy was adopted in 2004.

The MembershipDefRRPolicyAfterMoveIn was adopted in March 2006.

In 2008, ResponsibilitiesGuidelinesV1 was generated to more easily display the information in the 2006 policy, but the policy itself was not updated.

In 2012, ResponsibilitiesGuidelinesV1 was expanded to create CoHoMembershipGuidelines20121021 which lists all categories of membership (including the new Associate Member category added in 2011).

In 2012, the 2006 policy was revised and renamed OwnerMembershipPolicy20121021. The focus was changed to reflect the membership issues with resale of units by owners.

In 2013, the 2012 policy was modified slightly to reflect revisions of related documents.