

# Participation policies

## Preamble

Residents of Columbia Ecovillage enjoy a wonderful landscape and network of buildings, paths, and other elements that are held in common by the Community. Care and improvement of these elements are necessary so that the property is maintained and quality of life for residents enhanced. Meals are also a central component of community life. A participation system is important for getting the work done, building community through working with our neighbors, and minimizing Homeowner Association dues. The Columbia Ecovillage participation system is designed to facilitate joyful and **equitable sharing of the work necessary** for a functioning community.

## Requirements

The following participation requirements should be viewed as the minimum or basic amount of work necessary to keep Columbia Ecovillage running. Residents are encouraged to consider how the community thrives when members contribute beyond the minimum.

Adult community members 18 and over are required to:

- Actively participate on at least one Team.
- Participate in four ½ day work parties per year, or equivalent work party related hours.
- Work eight hours per month on tasks defined by Teams, including at least one task pertaining to meals (e.g., cook, prep, clean) per month. Board members' work counts toward their monthly hours except they must still sign up for at least one food task per month.

Renters – Participation by renters is strongly encouraged. As per the By-laws, it is the responsibility of renters and homeowners to determine whether the renter will complete the participation requirements assigned to the Unit, and if so, for the Owner to notify the Board in writing of such agreement. In the event that the renter does not fulfill the participation requirements for the Unit, the Owner is solely responsible for any fees or penalties accrued.

**We hold an expectation of regular participation in community meetings and workdays.**

1. Community meetings are held once each month. An annual schedule is established and publicized so that we can make these a priority in our lives.
2. Community workdays are also scheduled for every month and set well in advance. Our working time together not only accomplishes an amazing amount beyond the routine chores, but is a good time of collegueship and community building. We need all of us!

**Routine Work**

**Some tasks are simply shared in a cohousing community. At Cobb Hill these include:**

1. "Feeding and stoking" the garn (our heating unit). We have agreed to a clear expectation related to the size of our living units, e.g. X times per week for a three floor home and X times per week per studio apartment. We sign up for garn duty on sheets posted in the garn room.
2. Wood stacking and moving. Without a physical disability, each of us is committed to putting a minimum of 8 hours per year into these essential tasks. We do much of the major work on monthly workdays and respond to email invitations to help out when a special need arises.
3. Common House cleaning. We rotate the chore of cleaning the common house thoroughly, with teams of 4 residents cleaning for a two-week interval. We clean just about once every four months. These teams are assigned by the Common House Committee; we have the opportunity to swap times if they are not convenient for us.
4. Path maintenance. In winter, this involves shoveling and sanding; in summer, it means tidying up! The community plows the emergency access roads, but it is up to residents to see that the narrower paths between houses and down the hill are kept clear and safe. Households sharing paths agree informally to cover them all, and it works quite well.
5. Common meal preparation and cleanup. We rotate cooking and cleanup for our common meals, which are scheduled two times each week. Sign-up sheets are posted in the mudroom. Two cooks for each meal plan the menu, purchase the food, prepare the meal, and clean up afterwards (with everyone pitching in to help with cleanup).

Policy:

When Windsong or a committee agrees to have a task done the following steps occur:

1. A task is identified
2. The task gets assigned to a committee and a specific person(s). The committee defines the tasks and the amount of time to complete the tasks.
3. The tasks get reviewed at each meeting until it is complete.
4. Each committee (team) creates a buddy system, where everyone is assigned another group member to call and courteously inquire, "Did you do that task yet?" without shame or blame.
5. When the task is complete the person(s) is (are) acknowledged.
- 6. If someone still frequently fails to do what they say they'll do then the "Graduated Series of Consequences" will be used**

## **WORK (10/14/01)**

- a. All community members are asked to honor the guideline of 6 1/2 hours of community work per month, Associates, four hours of work per month. Community work includes all work done through work teams, committees or independently.  
(2/27/00)
- b. **REQUIRED WORK/EVERYONE REPORTS TO SOMEONE**
  - i. Each community adult member is expected to do community work. This agreement will be implemented in a way which 1) minimally intrudes on people's privacy, and 2) assures the community as a whole that, if some person is doing little or no community work, the situation will be brought to that person's attention and discussed (in a private forum).
  - ii. Everyone will either 1) join one of the four existing work teams or 2) choose one of the work team coordinators to be her coordinator (without being on the work team). People not on a work team will have to make sure that their coordinator knows what they are up to.
  - iii. Each Work Team Coordinator will keep track (formally counting hours or just keeping a pulse on each individual's situation) of all the work done by people on her work team and by the people that they coordinate who are not on the team. If work hours are short, a Work Team Coordinator will aim to get the essential work done first and may encourage people to work more when circumstances call for it.
  - iv. There will be no penalties for not working "enough" hours, but the Work Team Coordinator will inquire into the situation whenever an adult is working less. For that reason it is important that each adult on a work team be comfortable with his or her coordinator.
- c. **COMMITTEE LEADERS**
  - i. Each of the committees (Kitchen, Common House, B& G, etc) will designate one Leader who will oversee the work for the committee and communicate the work needs of the committee to the four Work Team Coordinators. The Leader is also responsible that nothing falls through the cracks in that committee's area of responsibility. A committee may consist of just the Leader.
  - ii. Formalizing the roles of Committee Leader and Work Team Coordinator is aimed at creating a culture of responsibility. We believe that individuals are accountable, rewardable and communicable in ways which groups are not.
  - iii. The HUB will consist of at least the four work team coordinators and the Kitchen Leader. The Hub will make sure that every adult neighbor has someone to whom to report and that each committee has a leader. The Hub will designate one of its members to be the liaison to committees. The Hub will investigate and report on the current status of committees and explore a mechanism to assist people in changing

their committee memberships. The Hub will meet regularly, aiming to coordinate all the community's work.