

Proposal:

Create the NJ Cohousing Development Cooperative (NJCDC)

Purpose:

To develop cohousing in the New Jersey area:

A. The immediate goal of the cooperative is to support the development of new cohousing neighborhoods, ecovillages, and village cooperative businesses in NJ.

B. The overall mission of the cooperative is to develop sustainable communities in a way that is itself self-sustaining and beneficial to the co-op members.

Membership:

Open to all but requires a declared commitment and financial obligation.

Mode of operation and decision-making:

A. The group will use sociocracy as its operating model.

B. The cooperative will adopt the principles and practices of permaculture: earth care, people care, and fair share; and

C. The seven principles of cooperatives: 1. Voluntary and Open Membership, 2. Democratic Member Control, 3. Member Economic Participation, 4. Autonomy and Independence, 5. Education, Training, and Information, 6. Cooperation among Cooperatives, and 7. Concern for Community.

D. It will explore the model developed by the Ecovillagers Alliance, for one or more community land cooperatives that include investors, owners, and tenants in each community.

Resources:

A. Member contributions

B. Member investments

C. External sources of capital, including: NJ Community Capital, the Reinvestment Fund, credit unions, and others.

Setup:

The co-op will get started inside the existing EVNJ nonprofit, with legal and financial structure to be determined by the members afterward.

Additional notes:

Legal structure and IRS status: a cooperative may be designated “for-profit” or “non-profit,” but is

mostly considered a “third way”: the co-op does not pay taxes, because any taxable benefits are distributed to the members.

Sub-Proposal:

Establish six initial Action Circles, including the Coordinating Circle and the full Members’ Circle, with sub-circles as described below. We request that every member join one or more circles based on their expressed interests, skills, and willingness to engage in the work of each group.

1. Membership

Including all aspects: roles and responsibilities of members, one-time and recurring fees, recruitment criteria and intake interviews, etc.

2. Finance & Legal

Including the management of members’ funds, legal basis for the organization and its member communities, arranging financing for homes, neighborhoods, and communities, etc. Acquisition of properties. Valuation of shares. Share transfers.

3. Site Assessment, Design, and Construction

Some of the things that are critical to real estate development; these may not be needed for every project, but will be for any project the co-op is starting from scratch.

4. Organization and Community Development

This includes everything from continuous learning, to internal and external communications, reorganization if and when needed, events, etc.

Coordinating Circle

Delegates + Leaders

Members’ Circle

Includes everyone

To join the Cooperative, complete the CDC Interest Form online at EcovillageNJ.org.

EVNJ Agenda — August 11, 2019

Meeting starts		<i>starts</i>	
Ice breaker	15	2:15	Larry & Rosemarie
Welcome	5	2:30	Jonathan & Victoria
Check-in Round	10	2:35	Members: What energy do you bring?
Announcements	5	2:45	Victoria
Agenda / Consent or Modification / initial meeting roles	10	2:50	Steve / Note-taker, facilitator, time-keeper
Schedule next meeting?	5	3:00	Steve: Sept 22 or 29?
<i>Proposal: Cohousing Development Co-op</i>	15	3:05	Jonathan
<i>Discuss choices that need to be made</i>	10	3:20	Members Go-Round
Proposal on Sociocracy & Color Cards	20	3:30	Rosemarie
Discuss Sociocracy & Group Process	10	3:50	Members Go-Round
<i>Proposal: Circles</i>	5	4:00	Jonathan
<i>Interim Coordinator Assignments</i>			<i>Victoria / Rosemarie / Larry / Jonathan</i>
Consent to interim Circle structure	5	4:05	Members Go-Round
Sign-up for Circles	5	4:10	Clipboards & Requests
Updates on Neighborhoods Progress	15	4:15	Steve & Larry
<i>Discuss Neighborhoods Progress</i>	10	4:30	Members' Questions
Next month's Agenda / Coordination	5	4:40	Rosemarie
Thanks / Gather in Circles	5	4:45	Jonathan & Members
Evaluation & Conclusion Round	10	4:50	Members Go-Round
Potluck & Clean Up	30	5:00	All attendees

Sociocracy Proposal

To connect members of the Cohousing Development Cooperative in our shared purpose to support co-housing in NJ, we propose using [sociocracy](#) which is based on equivalence, transparency and effectiveness. (Please see separate document outlining the use of Sociocracy) Because it will take some time to learn, at the August 11 meeting one of our first steps is to form a working group, or sub-circle as part of the Organization and Community Development circle, to put together a plan for integrating sociocracy into our governance and operation.

In the meantime, we propose trying out a few key methods of sociocracy—[rounds](#), [consent](#), [proposals](#) and a modified version of [double-linked circles](#)--to gain some of the benefits of this model. Each member will join one of four circles (see over); additionally Delegates and Leaders will participate in a Coordinating Circle, which will also prepare all future Agendas.

Each of these circles will coordinate with and solicit input from helping circles, as needed, and make proposals to the full Member circle, as appropriate, in an effort to obtain consent. Each of the circles will select a [Delegate](#) who will serve on the Coordinating Circle (along with the agenda committee for the time being).

The [Coordinating circle](#) is responsible for information flow to and from the other circles and organizes the full Member circle meetings. The Coordinating circle also appoints a Leader of each circle.

The members in these circles will take on the work to get the Cooperative up and running. Each circle will run sociocratic [meetings](#) with collaborative [decision-making](#) and accountability in which the whole group takes responsibility to resolve [objections](#).

After we've had three full Member circle meetings, this structure will be evaluated for effectiveness and altered as needed. Evaluation will be based on whether the circles have reached consent on a plan to move forward as well as member involvement and satisfaction. [Links will be posted at cdc.ecovillagenj.org](http://cdc.ecovillagenj.org).