



# Cohousing Bootcamp Manual

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Okay, you've heard about cohousing and want to get serious about making your community happen. What next!? This Bootcamp Manual aims to help provide groups and individuals with some initial planning tools and check-lists to overcome the early obstacles to cohousing. The manual attempts to answer the question: How can a group of people who only met each other recently work together effectively to design, build and finance their own community?



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Less is more - we try to use check-lists and high-level summary guidance in this manual. The goal is to get you moving in the right direction quickly. Just as important, we also want to share some pitfalls that should be avoided....

The Danish started cohousing and have developed methodologies to help groups launch. Cohousing groups in Canada have now developed their own processes and legal arrangements to ensure the process goes smoothly here too. This provides new groups with a running start – don't try to reinvent the wheel by creating your own process and methodology for launching. Copy what has worked elsewhere and customize the processes to your needs.

## #1. Build Knowledge

**Committee Responsible:** Everyone, with New Membership Orientation Committee managing group library.

The key books to read on cohousing:

- *Creating Cohousing: Building Sustainable Communities*
- *Senior Cohousing: A Community Approach to Independent Living*

You can find more at this link:

<https://cohousing.ca/resources/books-audiovisual/>

**Visit Other Communities.** Visit as many regional cohousing communities as you can. Most are welcoming - but call/email in advance. Check CCN for locations near you:

<https://cohousing.ca/communities/>

**CCN.** Visit the Canadian Cohousing Network for information on nearby groups and communities, plus web resources.

*Comment from Chuck Durrett – the architect who brought cohousing to North America (with his partner Kathryn McCamant): Over the years, one thing has become clear to us: Cohousing is so much more than a sound bite. Halfway decent grassroots organizing always is. When someone has the book on the coffee table and their partner flips through it over weeks and months, the book starts to seep in. Especially when some life experience happens, like lack of childcare so someone can run to the grocer or the absence of a neighbour to confide in. And then when a friend comes to the house and starts flipping through the book, well that seals the deal “We’re going to look into this.”*

Build a library of books about cohousing and community development. Kathryn McCamant and Chuck Durrett's books can be purchased in bulk and used as part of an “Orientation Package” for new members.



## #2. Team Roles

### **Committee Responsible:** Process & Steering

- Demonstrate to every new person who joins a meeting that this is a professional and serious group with a realistic plan to move forward. Build the confidence of new members to invest their time (and eventually their money) to join your group.
- Designate people to follow-up on inquiries: new member calls, media, emails received within 24 hours. Have a back-up contact person to fill in when primary contact is on vacation. Rotate people through this role every few months – it is easy to burn-out.
- Establish a schedule and action plan to move forward.

### Set up committees<sup>1</sup>:

1. **Outreach & Marketing** – the outgoing people of the group – Type As, likes talking to strangers. Prepares proposed membership policies for group to consider, maintains records of when members joined. Work as greeters at events and generally get the word out that this is happening. Also ensure existing members are not bogged down with work and organize team building events and fun activities.
  - **New Member Orientation** – a subgroup of the Outreach & Marketing team (often same team members). The organized, process-oriented people in group. Diligently follows up with people after the initial introduction.
2. **Social Events** – local people familiar with current events in the community. Organize outings, potlucks, supports group building, ensures people are having fun and it isn't all work and business. Can book halls and perform all the administration/logistics needed to organize an event.
3. **Finance/Legal** – People with business experience – not someone learning on the job. Reviews budgets, records membership, collects fees from members, opens and manages chequing account, pay/reimburse for snacks/babysitting/facility costs etc. Oversees creation of limited liability company and eventually homeowners strata association. Reports financial status to the group (working with developer to obtain all data needed).
4. **Site Search** – People who know the local market and have a “nose” for a good site and a good deal in the area. Professional real estate experience not needed.
5. **Process & Steering** – Keeps the group on track, thinks about processes and the “how” to get things done, manages the agenda, track status, shares information, ensure people/committees are communicating. Facilitates meetings and identifies and brings in training resources when needed. What type of consensus decision making options

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<sup>1</sup> We've tried to flag roles in this Bootcamp Manual with the committee who will lead the initiative. Some “committees” might be composed of one person (e.g. Technology). But it always helps to have someone responsible for these workstreams to ensure things do not slip through cracks once you get busy.



are available? How is your group going to work together? Holds discussions with developer for collaboration and development matters.

6. **Technology.** There's normally someone you know who can set up website, Mailchimp mailing lists, MeetUp and Facebook. Dedicate them to the technical side of making this all work, but do not necessarily expect they can also populate these webpages/materials with content. It's tough enough to get things set up. Ask others in group to provide the words and content of webpages.
7. **Design & Construction Committees.** This comes later. Coordinates a number of design issues in three workshops: overall site layout, common house design and home design. Often creates a Landscape Team as subcommittee. Construction Team is created as construction approaches.
  - **Optional Subgroup: Sustainability Committee.** Most building codes are improving the level of sustainability standards for all homes these days, however there are always more opportunities to improve sustainability especially for groups willing to share cars etc.
8. **Community/Media Relations.** Role created later in the process when working through the rezoning. Designated people to talk to newspapers and other media, plus also chat with neighbours.
9. **Ad Hoc Committees.** Created as needed for specific tasks.

In the early days with only a few members it is normal for everyone to be involved and have far fewer committees. Participation will evolve as you get closer to selecting a site and money becomes more important. After securing the land, time literally is money since you'll be paying for interest on a land loan – establishing well-organized meetings from the start will ensure you stay on schedule when time pressures build.

### #3. Meetings & Decisions

#### **Committee Responsible:** Process & Steering

- Be professional from the start. Make this a habit – everyone appreciates an efficient well-managed meeting.
- Be inclusive - set up meetings so everyone has an opportunity to be heard (not just the alphas). Learn about and choose your decision-making approach. We like sociocracy but it is not the only way.
- BUT importantly, avoid having non-equity members drive discussion and direction. Equity members are more focused and mindful of the critical path to move forward.

See: Group Works <http://groupworksdeck.org> for resources.



- Organize meetings to run efficiently:
  - **Facilitator** (organizes agenda, introduces items, ensures everyone is heard, brings topics to conclusion, watch for glossy eyes and keeps people engaged, keeps people from repeating/lobbying, summarizes, may express personal opinion).
  - **Agenda tracking/time keeper** (notifies everyone of minutes remaining, keeps eye on clock).
  - **Notetaker** (records agenda in minutes, decisions, conclusions, shares minutes with group reads back to group to ensure wording agreed).
  - **Stacker/questions tracker/queue** (keeps questions in order if more than one person wants to speak, facilitates listening by keeping people from interrupting).

Everyone should try facilitating once to understand how difficult it is, and how valuable a good chair/facilitator is to the group.

It is *\*your\** individual responsibility to help the meetings run smoothly and effectively. This means:

- Attending on time
  - No repeating what has already be said
  - Staying on topic
  - Communicating your idea or point.
- If you want more families in your group then you need to find a way to organize childcare for parents. Shared childcare in a nearby room can work and also makes meetings go more smoothly.

#### #4. Define a Shared Vision & Home Priorities

**Committee Responsible:** Everyone, with Process & Steering.

- The big picture for your community. What gets everyone excited to meet, talk and follow-up with action?
- Create draft written statements and work toward a common vision and shared ideas. See Tree Bresson's website for information and suggested exercises.

<https://effectivecollective.net/>

- Define a list of all the local amenities you would like within walking distance of your new home. Compare lists and merge into a master wish-list – urban, rural, semi-rural, green, other sustainable features, inter-generational, seniors.

## #5. Tricky Topics and Consensus. Rely on Your Vision

### **Committee Responsible:** Process & Steering

Use your Vision Statement to help guide tricky topics that are causing the group to stall and decisions to slow.

Also, defer some decisions until later – you do not have to do everything right now. For example, choosing a name for your group and your project is sometimes difficult. To get things rolling try simply calling yourselves the “Sunday Evening Crew”, “The New Cohousing Group”, “<<Your Town>> Cohousing”, or some other temporary name. Agree to name the group later.

There are many decisions like this that will chew up lots of time if you’re not careful. It is up to the Steering Committee to ensure the group’s time and efforts are directed at the most important topics needed now....and helping everyone let go of less pressing items until the time is right. Other classic topics that can (unnecessarily) chew up your time if not managed properly:

- Amount of parking needed,
- Amount of sustainable features in the community,
- Pets policy,
- Rental policies,
- Members who do not participate in community work or meals,
- Big screen TV in the common house,
- Frequency of meals and how costs are shared,
- Wood stoves,
- Smoking,
- Pesticides,
- Choosing external home colour coordination schemes in your community etc.



There are no right or wrong answers or approaches to most of these topics. It’s a matter of personal opinion. That makes it a potential source of conflict.

Your Vision Statement can be a good source of guidance to help navigate contentious issues. Some topics can be deferred until later. However they must all be addressed sooner or later because they are important to most people and will make people feel and will influence their decision on joining. More important, the inclusive approach used by the group to listen to everyone’s view on these topics will send an important message about your commitment to compromise and consensus. The journey on resolving and agreeing on these topics is a



wonderful opportunity for the group to come together and find the right answer that works for your community. The journey is just as important as the outcome.

If you're struggling with items like this then bring in a cohousing facilitator to help work through these topics (and be sure to chat with other cohousing communities to see how they handled more contentious matters).

## #6. Social Events & Monthly Information Meetings

**Committee Responsible:** Social Committee & Marketing

- Building your community starts long before construction begins. Give a warm welcome to everyone who attends your meetings. It takes time for people to get to know each other and to realize that their varied visions may be accommodated under one roof. It takes all kinds!
- Hold regular events that are easy to organize. Bi-weekly tea/coffee in a local cafe can be fun. Food is not always required - that requires logistics and a common house kitchen!
- Days out to regional events are also fun - community markets, wine festivals, street parties etc. all work well.
- Develop a list of regional events for the next 12 months – plan to attend them together for fun, or rent a booth/table at the event to talk to people about your plans.
- Create business cards or flyers that can be handed out at events. Include contact information and link to your website.
- Use free publications to promote your events.
- The Social Committee organizes the events. The Marketing Team attend the events and meet/greet people.
- Contact local media outlets to let them know about your project and what cohousing is all about. Local newspapers like to cover cohousing.
- Hold monthly information sessions and events. Try school halls, libraries and anywhere else that is inexpensive and community-orientated. Topics can include:
  - Cohousing 101 – what is it
  - Guest speakers like LiveWell etc.
  - Technical presentations on extracts from this Manual – financing, membership etc.



- Sustainability discussions
- All and any other topic related to cohousing to allow you to spread the word and obtain some free media coverage

**Keep repeating the above monthly meetings until you have enough members to move forward and acquire your site. This is a marathon, not a sprint, so plan for ongoing meetings and develop systems and procedures to make setting up these meetings easy.**

## #7. New Member Orientation

**Committee Responsible:** New Member Orientation Committee.

- Those outgoing social committee types are not always great at following up with people to keep them engaged and attend follow-on meetings. That takes a more process-orientated person.
- Let the world know you're there. Register on CCN, create Facebook page (if you are fb-inclined....wow, some people really don't like fb ☺). Meetup can also be a useful tool to organize events.
- Create a website. Check Wordpress for templates. Make sure you have a section called "Who We Are" with pictures of members and a brief bio.
- Create a mailing list (ideally linked to website) so you can broadcast events (see [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com) etc.)
- Set up a "buddy system" so new members can be assigned a contact person to help the new member understand the work and decisions to date. This will speed things along and ensure meetings to not get too bogged down revisiting old decisions for new members.
- Use MeetUp to let people in your area know about your plans.
- Develop a "Welcome Package" of materials that will help new members understand all the work to date. Includes books and other materials. This can be included in the Associate Membership fee.
- At the risk of being overly blunt, don't feel obligated to invite everyone who attends a meeting back to your follow-on events. Assess group chemistry and fit of new members and try to attract people who are a good fit and will help move the community forward.



## #8. Your Group

**Committee Responsible:** Social Committee & Marketing

Getting your project built is going to take some “Type A” people who have a dysfunctional need to be in control and push things forward. The group needs to get comfortable with these types of people while at the same time finding the balance to allow everyone’s view to be heard. Cohousing people all typically all have a high degree of forcefulness and “Type A” traits – it takes something like this to believe you can build your own community! So managing conflicts among strong-willed people will also become an important group skill. Take on professional help using facilitators as needed.

Who are we anyway? It is often a useful and entertaining exercise for everyone to take the Myers-Briggs personality test and share the results together. Here’s a few websites with free tests:

<http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/jtypes2.asp>

<http://similarminds.com/jung.html>

<http://www.quistic.com/personality-type/test>

<https://www.16personalities.com/>

## #9. Sustainability

**Committee:** Sustainability Sub-Group

This group should keep a few things in mind learned from other cohousing communities:

- there is a great opportunity to build sustainability features into your community through members sharing – cars, bikes, group buying from local farms, central hot water heating systems – things other communities are not set up to achieve;
- choose a site that is walkable to amenities or close to transit; and
- cohousing members often want to make additional sustainability features optional rather than part of the base design plan. This allows some members to meet their immediate affordability/cost requirements, while others can plan for longer-term savings through installing sustainability features into their own homes. It’s about balance, sharing and finding common ground.



## #10. Money & Early Funding

**Committee Responsible:** Accounting/Legal Committee overseeing.

- CMHC will consider providing seed funding and possible pre-development funding for cohousing communities. This money can be used to fund early costs including workshops and site feasibility assessments, plus legal costs to get the group set-up. CMHC normally reimburses costs – so you will have to raise some early money to get things going then seek CMHC support for the reimbursal.
- When talking to CMHC emphasize the affordability of the project by reviewing the following:
  1. Cohousing group members are joining forces to develop this project themselves. This eliminates (i) the developer and associated profit margin, and (ii) marketing/sales costs. The group is retaining an experienced development manager to assist with the process.
  2. Our homes are more affordable than surrounding new homes in the nearby area. Provide examples of the cost of surrounding homes (for example in new nearby projects) and illustrate how this compares to your community. You may require a feasibility study to demonstrate costs.
  3. Residents have new homes in an area they could not afford as individual purchasers.
  4. The cohousing group members will share meals in the common house. This will reduce living costs for members. Residents will also review car pooling and other shared group buying activities to reduce costs of living in the community.
  5. Cohousing also reduces long-term effects of loneliness and isolation, often improving the health and wellness of community members well into retirement. Maintaining healthy lifestyles in a supportive community has proven benefits on health and wellness of members, and ultimately reduces the demands on the province's health care system.
- Other local organizations are often willing to explore funding support for groups if they are aligned with the intent of the foundation. Talk to local funders in your town to access their interest in supporting a new cohousing initiative. Each location is different, however it is often worth a chat.
- Keep the spending low at early stage - use small \$5 to \$20 fees for events to fund ad hoc expenses like food, child care, room rentals, online fees/ads. Some events will be free, but charging a small fee for some events will help fund early costs.
- Open a chequing account (in someone's name to start until the group is organized).
- This is typically the largest investment of your life. It will eventually require cash investment of 25% to 30% of the cost of the project. This can be arranged through lines of credit, in-



laws, savings or other sources. Partnering with a developer can also help reduce the cost of the project. Some groups split these contributions differently – with more affluent members contributing more than others (once the appropriate legal arrangements have been put in place to protect such money).

- Not all funds are advanced at once. Members make small advances in intervals during the planning stages to cover costs at that stage. During the feasibility phase small contributions are made – sometimes \$1,000 or \$2,500 per household.
- Once the group decides to move into the land acquisition and design development phase then costs increase significantly for architectural advisors and other engineering consultants. This is typically requires a larger cash contribution of \$10,000 to \$25,000 per household.
- Group evolution often occurs through financial milestones.
  - **The Umbrella Group.** This is a large initial group of supporters who have not yet made significant financial investments in the community.
  - **Associate Members.** People who have invested +/- \$200 to participate in the planning process in a meaningful way for the next +/-6 months, however they are not yet sure about making a full commitment.
  - **Equity Members.** This is the “**Core Group**” who typically drives the process and keep things moving along. These members have invested significant cash to launch the community.
- Equity Members Drive Direction. It is amazing how cohousers turn into fantastic project managers once they have invested over +/- \$5,000 into the process. They develop a very good sense of critical path items, priorities and focus. All the key characteristics of good project management. They should lead. Unfortunately, people who have not committed significant financial resources often do not have the same focus. They should step back from decision-making and respect/support the efforts of the Core Group.
- The land purchase will be a key moment for the group. Can all of your members afford to contribute or do they have available cash at the moment to help acquire the land? Members with homes can normally arrange funding. First time buyers often require help from the “bank of Mom and Pop” or a development partner. It is important for the group to understand overall resources while protecting individual privacy – a professional cohousing consultant like LiveWell can assist the group understand funding requirements and available resources while protecting personal financial information/privacy.



## #11. Group Communications & Community Building

**Committee Responsible:** Marketing & Outreach have ideas to keep things fun and people engaged.

- Don't let the money discussions distract you. It is important but it is not the true source of value or the reason people participate in a cohousing community.
- The most important "Value Creator" of the community is having a highly functioning group with excellent communications skills.
- Do some community-building exercises. See Tree Bressen's site

<https://effectivecollective.net/library-full>

- The greatest "value" of any cohousing project is the community within. Invest in your community with your time, care, shared ideas and passion, and you will create far more "value" than any type of financial investment. And when it comes to selling your home many years in the future, the person buying it will be looking for community too....not hardwood floors and stainless steel appliances. Community is the true benefit and true value of cohousing. Protect and nurture community connections and you will reap many different types of "return on investment".
- Here are the signs of a well-functioning community that works well together to accomplish goals:
  - Organized, effective and efficient decision-making
  - Community agreements are honored by members – processes are followed
  - Members feel they can influence the community
  - People care for and trust each other
  - Fun social events
  - Sense of belonging
  - Resolve conflicts. Keeps it real – deals with issues as they emerge
- People will pay a substantial premium to live in a well-functioning community. It is your community that will attract people, not the real estate. You will be amazed at how flexible people become about real estate locations and design decisions once they connect with other members of the group. The group becomes the most important driver of a person's decision to commit.
- Hire group facilitators to help the group overcome obstacles and build momentum. A good facilitator can make an enormous positive impact of the group's ability to move forward effectively. They can:
  - Assist group with decision log / policy documentation



- Assist with Orientation
  - Manage / Arrange group development workshops
  - Provide / arrange training and workshops when the group gets stuck
  - Support group to stay on track with policy development
  - Keep things fun
- By the end of the cohousing development process you will be a “communications black belt”.

## #12. Site Search

### **Committee Responsible:** Site Search

- Use the LiveWell “**Site Assessment Work Plan Manual**” to rank sites and perform a preliminary feasibility assessment. Site can also be reviewed in more detail during the Getting it Built workshop. Contact us for a copy of the Site Assessment Manual.
- Visit open houses of new projects to understand pricing and amenities.
- Identify basic geographic parameters of target areas. Use Google to calculate commute times for broader searches.
- Work with a real estate agent (don't sign exclusive agreement). A “commercial property” real estate agent will likely be more helpful than a typical residential agent. You want someone familiar with land values, servicing costs and large sites. The agent should not be a group member (unless working pro bono).
- Check [www.realtor.ca](http://www.realtor.ca) for local MLS listing.
- Create a list of 3-5 target sites - don't fall in love with one site too early. In site search, you often have to kiss a few frogs before finding your prince.
- Once knowledgeable and at least 6 members in group, call local Planning Department to introduce yourself and request their listing of available sites.
- Site search is one of the most difficult aspects of the cohousing journey. Be prepared to spend many months looking for your site.



## #13. Site Feasibility Assessment

**Committee Responsible:** Site Search

Securing a site should be your top priority. Start identifying sites that appear attractive now and continue to track sites moving forward.

Once you have located some sites, hire an independent professional to perform a thorough feasibility assessment of your preferred sites. Remember the real estate agent is working for the vendor of the site, not the group. Also most land sites have numerous technical matters that must be fully defined:

- Likelihood of rezoning to allow cohousing,
- Availability of sewer, water, electricity at reasonable cost,
- Expectations of local town/city hall for contributions toward nearby roads and other works (yes the town will ask the developer (you) to make “off site” cash contributions toward services in the community as part of the approval process),
- Political support for rezoning the property and likely opposition to rezoning,
- Timing of approvals and development on the site,
- Availability of financing for the property,
- Full costs of the site after all of the above have been considered,
- Local construction costs for the homes, and
- Overall home prices upon completion of development.

Affordable options for ownership may be identified during this process including shared living, rental suites, communal arrangements, and exploring building plans that are efficient and allow for smaller suites with a lower cost. The common house makes it easier to live in a small home because your living area more than doubles when the common house becomes an extension of your living room.

## #14. The Shake Out

Selection of a preferred site will inevitably lead to some members of the group leaving or stepping back from the process. Some members re-join later. Others go on to form their own new group focused in an area they prefer.

Keep it real. You will never find a site that fits the expectations of everyone. Therefore, aim for a site that fits the needs of a Core Group large enough to make it happen. Many fledging groups struggle with this shake out and avoid/defer making a site decision for years – stretching the entire process and never finding a satisfactory site. A moment will arrive when decisive action is needed to lead on a site. Having good communication skills, knowledge of the group’s financial depth, and a feasibility study with thorough homework on costs and value will help everyone to have the confidence to make a decision. An outside group facilitator can help during these times.



## #15. Hire a Professional Development Consultant to Secure Land Rights

**Committee Responsible:** Core Group and Associate Members.

After completion of the feasibility assessment and Getting it Built workshop, the time will come to hire a professional development consultant to help guide the group through the next stage and secure land rights.

Quick LiveWell plug for business 😊: LiveWell Cohousing can help and is happy to chat about preparing the feasibility assessment and Getting it Built workshop. [www.LiveWellCohousing.ca](http://www.LiveWellCohousing.ca)

Who does what with the Development Consultant?

LiveWell Team	Cohousing Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May share some early costs with group</li> <li>• Confirmation of group resources and access to funding (maintaining personal privacy)</li> <li>• Feasibility study to assess short-listed sites</li> <li>• Getting it Built workshop</li> <li>• Negotiate and secure legal rights to site</li> <li>• Coach group members on the process</li> <li>• Arrange for facilitators to help group development</li> <li>• Implement a well structured and systematic approach to project design and development using a workshop approach – following lessons from other successful cohousing communities</li> <li>• Project Management</li> <li>• Arrange financing for land and construction</li> <li>• Rezoning approvals</li> <li>• If desired by group, can arrange for a joint venture with a development partner</li> <li>• Earns fees for services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund early costs</li> <li>• Designs project – it is your home and community – you should design it!</li> <li>• Community engagement – talking to neighbours, news media, politicians</li> <li>• New member recruitment – they are your neighbours, you should pick them!</li> <li>• Finance project and loan guarantees (limited to agreed levels using legal agreements that have been successfully used on other Canadian cohousing projects)</li> <li>• Buy individual units</li> </ul>

## #16. Development Partnering

**Committee Responsible:** Site Search

Another possible option to reduce costs is to partner with a developer for part of the land. Sharing costs and benefits of the rezoning process. This should be managed very carefully and the group should not joint venture without having good professional advisors on hand to help negotiate such arrangements.

The basic plan: Identify a site larger than your community's needs, then work with a developer to acquire the large site. Half the site going to your community and the other half going to the developer. Jointly work through the rezoning and subdivision process together (sharing costs). Depending upon the location, developers will be willing to contribute significant early funding toward this type of arrangement – and may also share part of the land appreciation on their portion of the site. This is a great way to subsidize your land costs and early planning costs.

## #17. Frequently Asked Questions

### **How frequently will we share meals?**

The Canadian approach to common meals could be described as “cohousing lite” – meals often tend to be pot-lucks or focused around specific events, birthday, holidays etc. However not all Canadian communities take this laid back approach – Vancouver Cohousing has started their plans with a highly energized social gathering and meal plan – three times per week plus weekend brunch. Windsong tends toward sub-group meals – bridge nights, theme nights etc. where smaller sub-groups from within the community with common interests get together. It really just depends on what people want within your community – stay flexible and let the process evolve naturally.

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, semi-transparent blue triangles of varying shades, creating a layered, geometric effect.

A very appealing common meal email invitation to members in a cohousing community, sent out Thursday (meals are not always as wonderful!):

*“The Culinary Kooks (or at least some of us) will be creating a meal this Saturday. I'm going to draw on my recent Philippine cooking class and new cookbook acquisitions and we'll make Chicken Adobo (Chicken stewed in a mixture of coconut milk, vinegar and herbs and spices) with a Baked Butternut Squash and Barley casserole, green salad, and some sort of dessert, probably using Rhubarb as it is the season. Sorry no veggie option unless you just want to come and have the casserole salad and dessert at a reduced price. I'm not quite sure what the cost will be. Depends upon the price of the Chicken. Between \$6 and \$8. Most likely around \$7. Half price for kids under 10. I hope to get the sign up sheet tomorrow morning. (Hopefully I won't forget!) Please sign up by 9 am Saturday morning.”*

It is notable this menu does not have child-friendly options so most families might skip this one. But that's fine – subgroups will emerge in your community where connections are stronger.



### **How do we set up our legal structure?**

This is covered in detail in the Getting it Built workshop, however here's the punchline: Use a standard corporation, incorporated under local provincial laws.

### **Why not a cooperative?**

- These are more difficult for banks to understand as banks seldom deal with them (there are +/-2,000 coops and +/- 180,000 corporations)
- We can achieve the 1 member 1 vote we desire with a company by issuing 1 share to each member.

### **Why not a not-for-profit?**

- Lenders get a little nervous providing construction financing to not-for-profits
- We want to have governance of the project controlled by the investors/owners
- If the project wraps up for another reason, we want the funds returned to the members.

### **Why not a partnership?**

- A corporation adds additional liability protection and makes it easier for members to join and exit the project.

### **Can group members provide services to the group for a fee?**

Yes this can be organized and managed. It typically requires an outside third party like LiveWell to help the group establish fair business arrangements and ensure work is performed in accordance with agreements. It also depends on the type of service/job being performed – some roles are easy while others are more difficult to blend membership and work.

### **Can the land owner be part of the group?**

Yes this can be managed, but it requires some careful planning and agreements in place.

## **#18. Getting it Built Workshop**

**Committee Responsible:** Site Search / Process & Steering

Once you have a short-list of target sites and can attract 8-12 households to pay +/- \$350 for a weekend workshop then you are ready for the GiB event. The workshop will build momentum to help you move to the next level. It covers a deeper dive into technical matters and group development.



## Typical Agenda of the Getting it Built Workshop

### ***Understanding the Roles & Responsibilities of Team Members***

- ▶ Development Manager & Project Manager
- ▶ Investors
- ▶ Group Facilitator
- ▶ Architect (cohousing & localized detailing)
- ▶ Engineering and other consultants
- ▶ General Contractor / Builder
- ▶ Cohousing Group

### ***The Design Process for Cohousing***

- ▶ Site Layout workshop
- ▶ Common House Design Workshop
- ▶ Unit Design Workshop
- ▶ Permit approvals and submission of development application

### ***Building Group Membership***

- ▶ Communications and attracting new members
- ▶ Buddy system
- ▶ The group decides who will be a neighbour, not the developer

### ***Scheduling & Overall Timing of Development***

- ▶ Design process
- ▶ Development approval process
- ▶ Construction
- ▶ Move-in party!

### ***All About the Money***

- ▶ Sources of funding
- ▶ Credit Unions and construction loans
- ▶ Other possible financial support
- ▶ Cohousing Group contributions and timing



## Getting • It • Built

*Taking cohousing from dream to reality*

## Cohousing Development Workshop

January 25 & 26, 2014

Parksville, BC

**Do you want to live in cohousing? Then make it happen!**

Our Getting It Built Workshop is an essential step toward taking ownership of the planning and development process. **It works!** Group members save both time and money after attending this workshop.



### Members

Learn how to:

- Organize your group
- Work together efficiently
- Effectively make decisions
- Build and grow your community
- Define your role, the Group's role, the role of Professionals



### Development

Get vital guidance for:

- Optioning a building site
- Designing a community
- Working through the city approval process
- Hiring and managing construction professionals
- Incorporating maximum sustainability practices



### Technical

Take control of:

- Financial realities (costs)
- Financing options
- Ownership structures
- Budgets and Budgeting
- Your project. Keep it on track, on budget and on schedule.
- How to put money in and how to get money out.

#### Contact Us:

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[Yonas.Jongkind@LiveWellCohousing.ca](mailto:Yonas.Jongkind@LiveWellCohousing.ca)

#### Date & Location: Sat./Sun. January 25/26

(Sat. session in Parksville Community & Conference Ctr, and Sunday in Library Building, upstairs in VIU)

See [www.ParksvilleCohousing.ca](http://www.ParksvilleCohousing.ca)

#### Workshop Fee:

\$200 per person (\$175 in advance), or \$250 per couple\* (\$225 in advance).

\*Friends, couples or groups of 2 or more get same reduced rate per person. We provide all workshop materials.