

Date: July 14, 2022

Time: 19:00-20:00 (PT)

Location: Zoom

Subject: Development Process Overview & Forming Community Groups

Facilitator: Laura Chatham

Note taker: Kate Moffat

In attendance: Gord Lovegrove, Dauna Kennedy Grant, Gary Kennedy, Pam Desjardine, Dariusz & Renata Paluch, James Summers-Gill, Leigh Stutters, Cara Geistlinger, Alice Strom

## Meeting Notes

Topic	Recorded Notes
<p><b>Introduction &amp; Housekeeping:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the name of the monthly meetings was changed from <i>Meetings for the Cohousing-Curious</i> to <i>Monthly Coordination Meetings (MCM)</i> to capture the higher level of productivity in each project we hope to achieve.</li> <li>to clarify the aim of MCMs is to bring together like-minded people interested in creating cohousing in the Okanagan and to educate &amp; guide them in through development process.</li> <li>for everyone to understand the time and experience I (Laura) have to offer, I am paid by UBCO for 20hrs/week working for Dr. Lovegrove – but this time is not all dedicated to OKC &amp; will reduce to 5-10 hours in September. We currently have another student, Kate working on OKC and has been a huge help, though we may lose her come September (She’s into her 4<sup>th</sup> year of kinesiology!). My experience is in coaching, team management, and project development, and I have been working on OKC since Spring 2021. Therefore, I am confident in guiding OKC members to come together, create community, and organize themselves for the tasks ahead, but we will need to call on other experience (Like Gord) for details of building, engineering, purchasing property, incorporating...etc.</li> <li>OKC will help and guide as much as possible, but <b>each group is ultimately responsible for hosting their own project-specific meetings and driving the process forward</b> because a couple hours per month IS NOT enough time committed to building a cohousing community. That said, we all have only a degree of time (and money) to commit to this and we want cohousing to be accessible for everyone who wants it – this means that everyone, no matter if you’re in a specific project or not, is welcome to the MCMs and each project should consider how to include those who want to be a part of a project but have such limitations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vernon Community Tour Debrief</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We were graciously invited to tour the outside of a community in Vernon, which does not identify as cohousing but has many similar aspects. Our host, Heidi, told us of how her parents and 6 other families got together to create this shared home in the 80s. There are 9 autonomous apartments, a common dining hall, and beautiful gardens. Heidi grew up here and has recently moved back to raise her own children.</li> <li>The original owners incorporated and became <i>owners-in-common</i>. There are now 3 of them left who make all the key decisions for the property –</li> </ul>

the other tenants, including Heidi, are renters. This has clearly been working for over 3 decades, but the owners are getting up in age and with such as small group (it's usually recommended for cohousing to have ~25-40 households) we do wonder at the sustainability of the community going forwards.

- After the tour, Dauna invited us over for a backyard gathering (as we'd found out she lives just a few doors down from this community!). We enjoyed refreshments and pleasant, productive discussion:
  - Jocelyn Smith gave great advice on group/business communication, advocating for Slack as easy to organize and keep track of conversation. The general consensus was that some information was getting lost in too-long email treads. Microsoft Teams was suggested as an alternative with more capabilities but the learning curve is steeper – we decided to go with Slack, which is already set up.
  - Everyone agreed more in-person meetings are desired, even necessary, to build strong community connection going forwards. However, we have several members who do not live in the area so we must keep to a degree of online meetings for inclusiveness. It was suggested we start something like one every second MCM we meet in person. Jocelyn suggested it may be good to have a mix of meeting types, **some 100% in-person, some 100% online, and some mixed-media**, because mixed-media can be complicated with two very different fields of vision.
  - Leigh suggested she might be in connection with a property downtown Kelowna, which she agreed to inquire about

**Potluck debrief** • fell through due to some confusion in planning & communication (no one's fault, but a learning lesson!) – planning further in advance and with a more streamline mode of communication will help.

**Communication** → Decided to keep **events on Outlook Calendar**. You will receive an email invite; please 'accept' or 'decline' to help us gauge head counts.  
→ email is for summary/informational messages – **too much chit-chat gets difficult** to keep up with; we should **engage more on Slack** as our principal discussion board  
→ **please contact Laura for Slack Access**

**August Meeting** • August 11<sup>th</sup> – Consensus Decision Making & Design Charrett  
• In-Person **Potluck at UBCO 5-7pm**  
• Zoom meeting as regular **at 7-8pm**

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**The Cohousing Development Process** • Overview and walk through of development process on CohoUS – <https://www.cohousing.org/create-cohousing/create-it/>  
→ 3 interrelated processes for successful cohousing communities:

- 1) *Gathering resources*: people, money, & knowledge
- 2) *Building the physical structures of community*: land, houses, & common space
- 3) *Building the relational structures of community*: connection and group process

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- We are currently working between Steps 1-4: Learn, Dream, Organize, and Form. These steps may seem simple but are crucial in creating the foundation for a successful project. Each group needs to come together, realize their common goals (and where they disagree), organize themselves for strong communication & task management, then work together with consensus decision making to lay things down concretely.
  - We encourage each & every OKC member to review the *entire* development process steps and start thinking about how you will tackle each one, where your individual and group strengths lie, and what you will need the most help with (eg. what professionals will you hire?)
  - Next MCM we start on **Step 5: Decide** by Consensus decision making.

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### OKC Community Building Questions

- Last month, we found a clear split in OKC members where some are seeking a rural, environmental haven and others wish to be close to amenities like shopping and schools. To build on this, we split these groups into break out rooms and presented each with a set of questions to start collaboratively forming their goals and vision:
    - (1) What values are important to you? As a group, decide on your top 3 values and explain how they could be incorporated
    - (2) As a group, come up with a vision/goal statement that encompasses the values and principles of your ideal cohousing community.
    - (3) Of the steps described earlier, which do you think will be the most challenging in the cohousing process? Can you think of any ways to make it less difficult?
  - ANSWERS: *\*DRAFT statements for both projects \**

**Rural Cohousing Values & Vision:**  
*Members:* Dauna, Gary, Pam, and Alice (though Alice is with SOC, she helped form this)  
*Values:* (1) sustainability, (2) Access to nature (eg. hiking trails), and (3) Adaptable to climate change  
*Vision Statement:* to create a sustainable community in nature that responds to climate change and maintains a connected and high quality of life.  
*Challenge Steps:* financial support, governance to sustain long-term

**Kelowna Cohousing Values & Vision:**  
*Members:* Gord, Dariusz & Renata, James, Leigh, and Cara  
*Values:* (1) walkable to at least some things but flexible, (2) multi-generational (inclusive; schools for kids), (3) water and/or food security (community garden), and (4) low operating costs & sustainability  
*Vision Statement:* Not answered  
*Challenge Steps:* Not answered
  - NOTE: We truly have 3 forming groups, the third being South Okanagan Cohousing (SOC) Forming in Penticton. For you folks, please reflect on these questions, individually and as a group & we'll revisit them for you & everyone next meeting.
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## Photos of the Vernon Community Tour





Okanagan Cohousing – July MCM





Post-tour at Dauna's