

Ostara House Bylaws 2019

Appendix:

The following was cut and paste from the following document on June 28, 2019 at the time was known to be the current version of Ostara Bylaws

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TqP-3xAkrtKNLN7imdZ40p_qOmarhA8l377spC_YQjo/edit#

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Name and Purpose

The members of the Ostara Cooperative House adopt the following principles in accordance with the spirit of providing cooperative living. room and board to the people of Boulder, Colorado.

*The members of the Ostara Cooperative House adopt the following principles in the spirit of cooperative living.

Non-Discriminatory Membership

There shall be no restriction on membership for any reason other than available room and ability and willingness to discharge duties and uphold responsibilities as house members.

*Membership is solely based on space availability and the willingness to uphold responsibilities as a house member.

Democracy

Each member has one and only one vote; each shares the house duties in as nearly an equitable manner as possible; and each shares equally in the benefits derived.

*Each member has one vote; each shares the house duties in the most equitable manner possible; and each shares equitability in the benefits derived.

Education

The house will be a working example of cooperative living and will educate its members and others in the principles of cooperatives.

*The house will be a working example of cooperative living for its members and the larger Boulder community.

Neutrality

The house will be a member of no organization other than cooperative societies.

*The house will be a member of only cooperative societies.

[Note: Shopping @ Costco? Sustainability stewardship & practices?]

Expansion

By the house's membership in other cooperative organizations, it will support the cooperative movement in general as much as possible without impairing the efficient functioning of Ostara Cooperative House.

***Advocacy**

*Ostara will support the cooperative movement as much as possible without impairing the efficient functioning of Ostara Cooperative House.

[Note: Gardening strategy]

Organization

The name of the house that operates under this set of rules is Ostara.

Membership

As a democratic community living collectively, Ostara needs its residents to work in the collective management of the organization, and to live harmoniously with each other in shared dwellings. These demands of residents require an admission process more selective than that of typical rental housing. Admission to Ostara is also generally competitive, as the number of qualified applicants often exceeds the number of available rooms and Ostara seeks to recruit those individuals who are most likely to sustain and grow the organization and contribute to a healthy and vibrant community.

As a community the Ostara Co-op has a strong commitment to social justice. We believe that an inclusive and diverse Membership Policy is critical to achieving a strong and healthy cooperative housing organization. We commit to non-violent communication and what Buddhists call "wise speech."

Ostara strives for a balanced gender ratio. While this is a goal meant to foster diversity and an accepting environment, Ostara will not deny residency on the basis of an applicant's gender.

We also value other forms of diversity and we aspire to become a housing community that includes all individuals, respecting and accepting them without bias.

We actively seek and support the participation of individuals who reflect diversity of physical & mental ability status, age, class, ethnicity, gender expression, life experience, national origin, parenthood or custody of a minor, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and veteran status.

We will treat each other fairly and value & respect the opinions, perspectives and life experiences of all people, in our day-to-day practices, processes, policies & in the conversations that take place in & around our home. We will strive to continue to develop successful inclusiveness practices together.

1. Potential housemates (PHMs) must be approved by the house in order to be offered residency at Ostara Cooperative House.
2. Ostara shall select residents to serve on the Membership Coordinating Team (MCT). Three Stewardships shall be dedicated to the MCT.
 1. The MCT (acting as Ostara's Agent) shall be the contact persons for prospective residents and shall oversee the recruitment and admission of new residents. Ostara as a whole shares the burden of empty rooms and non-paying residents.
 2. The MCT shall advertise for available rooms on behalf of Ostara. Other Ostara residents may also post flyers, online notices, etc., in coordination with the Membership Coordinating Team.
 3. The MCT shall notify the Boulder Housing Coalition Staff of move in dates and room numbers of PHM's who have been approved by the house. The MCT shall ascertain that PHM's, once approved by the house, are in contact with BHC Staff to proceed with income qualification and lease signing procedures.
 4. The MCT shall assist current residents with the annual process of renewing their leases in coordination with the Boulder Housing Coalition Staff. This process begins a few months before the August 1 start date of the new lease. Rooms are assigned to people as they sign the new lease, including people who are not current residents, to ensure that all rooms are filled on August 1.
 5. The MCT shall oversee the process of current residents switching rooms, making sure a new lease is signed to match the rent of the new room.
 6. The MCT shall communicate with BHC Staff about any resident who is in the process of breaking a lease and leaving the house.
3. The Boulder Housing Coalition (BHC) and Ostara are equal opportunity housing providers and abide by the City of Boulder's prohibition against discrimination in housing, as recorded in [section 12-1-2 of the Boulder Revised Code](#). The BHC and Ostara will not deny housing to any individual because of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender variance, marital status, religion, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy,

parenthood, custody of a minor child, or mental or physical disability of that individual, or such individual's friends or associates. A statement explaining Fair Housing law with regard to renting will be read aloud or otherwise communicated to all participating residents before any house vote or action on an applicant. Houses shall follow consistent, fair processes for reviewing applications and accepting new residents.

4. Recruitment and interview process. The House shall advertise for available rooms. PHMs must attend at least one house meals or other events as well as [complete an application](#) in order to be considered for an interview. After the interview Ostara will make a decision on the acceptance of all PHMs. Ostara also reserves the right to request additional information from any PHMs. Ostara may request that PHMs meet with certain house members and/or request that PHMs attend additional house dinners in order to meet all house members before Ostara makes its decision.
5. When Ostara rejects an applicant, either prior to or following an interview, each opposing resident participating in the decision shall state their reason(s) for rejection. The House must record the reason(s) but not the name of the resident stating the reason, for each rejected applicant, in the House meeting minutes. The following reasons may be used for rejecting an applicant. This list is not an exhaustive list, rather, these are the most common reasons for rejection. Ostara may reject an applicant for legal reasons other than the ones listed below.
 1. The applicant has a poor rental history. Lack of a rental history will not necessarily indicate a poor rental history.
 2. The applicant has made false or deliberately misleading statements regarding their application.
 3. The applicant does not meet low-income requirements that may be in effect.
 4. The applicant has not indicated a reasonable source of income or funds for meeting the financial obligations of their contract.
 5. The applicant is believed to lack respect for other people. This may include, but is not limited to, lack of respect for other people's belongings, safety, privacy, space, or time; racial, social, ethnic, religious, gender identity, or sexual orientation backgrounds; shared facilities, resources, or tools.
 6. The applicant is believed to be unable or unwilling to perform the duties of cooperative living, including, but not limited to, completion of labor, participation in meetings and other obligations listed in the contract. Ostara will make reasonable accommodations in Rhode Ith disabilities. All residence I i are required to contribute equitably to the operations of the co-op. Thanks Judy I

7. The applicant is believed to lack interest in cooperative living and working to sustain and improve the cooperative.
6. If more than one applicant is accepted by Ostara for an available room, the House shall vote on the order in which the applicants will be offered the room. The House shall record the reason(s) for prioritizing each applicant.
7. Applicants who have been accepted by the House, but for whom there are no available rooms will be kept on a waiting list for three months and will be offered rooms as they become available. The waiting list will be ordered by application date, unless the House votes to prioritize the waiting list. If the House prioritizes the waiting list it must record the reason for each reordering. A person will be removed from the waiting list at their request, once they are offered a room, or after three months, whichever is soonest.
8. The MCT will only disclose the reason for rejection to an applicant upon their request.
9. Any member or applicant who believes that a law may have been violated during an application process should inform the House immediately. Any decision to reject an applicant may be appealed to Ostara within 14 days. The House shall collectively revisit such decisions.
10. Once the PHM has been approved by the house the following steps must be completed before move in.
 1. The Communications Steward shall provide the PHM with a link to the Lease Documents: NHCO Mediation and Member Review Policy, Articles of Incorporation for Ostara Community Housing, Ostara House Bylaws, Rules of Ostara Community Housing and Ostara Labor System. All members are required to read the Lease Documents.
 2. The Membership Coordinating Team will inform the PHM of the relationship of the house to the Boulder Housing Coalition, and what steps they must take with the BHC Staff in order to sign the lease and move into the house.
 3. The MCT will describe to the PHM how residents receive and pay the monthly bills for rent and food.
 4. The MCT will describe the annual lease renewal process to the PHM, informing them of when they can expect to receive the next year's lease.
 5. The PHM must complete the income qualifying process with the Staff of the Boulder Housing Coalition.
 6. The PHM will meet with the Staff of BHC to discuss and sign the lease.

7. The PHM must make all required payments before moving into the house.
11. Once all of the above steps are completed the PHM is considered a member of Ostara. The new member may move in, will be added to the house email list, and is entitled to participate in Ostara's consensus-based decision making processes.
12. The PHM shall have 2 weeks or until the start of the lease period, whichever comes first, to complete the above steps. If by that time the above steps have not been completed then Ostara may offer their spot to the next PHM on the waiting list, on a first come first serve basis.
13. The MC shall abide by the following conditions when setting start and end dates:
 1. PHMs shall first be offered contracts beginning Aug. 1 and ending July 31 of the following year. Priority should be given to those willing to sign such contracts. The Membership Coordinator may offer a shorter contract if not doing so would result in a vacancy.
 2. Successive contracts for a particular room should be drawn so they do not produce vacancies. Priority should be given to residents willing to sign contracts.
14. Two residents may occupy the same room.
 1. Both residents must be accepted for residency and will be considered members of Ostara.
 2. Only one of the two residents shall be responsible for the entire room rent and pay a utility fee, although both residents shall sign the lease. It is to the discretion of the two residents to decide which of the two of them shall be signing responsibility for rent.
 3. The other resident shall pay the current utility fee.
15. The members of the house shall comprise the board of directors of Ostara Community Housing, the Colorado Non-Profit Organization which manages Ostara for the Boulder Housing Coalition.

Expulsion

16. The house will consider all the recommendations for expulsion brought by house members. They shall gather evidence from all interested parties including the member in question, and form an opinion at an open house meeting with the member to be judged and her/his accuser present, if possible. This meeting is to take place within one week of the accusation.

17. The House shall hear evidence from interested persons and a defense by the accused. An outside, unbiased facilitator is recommended.

18. Whether the member is to keep her/his membership shall be voted on at a house meeting within one week of the hearing and will be determined by consensus.

19. Grounds for eviction shall include failure to perform house duties, failure to obey house membership agreements, and failure to pay house fees or bills resulting in a debt to the house of one month's bills, and uncooperative behavior.

Labor Responsibilities of House Members

House members are responsible for a minimum of 6 hours of labor as described in the Ostara Membership Manual.

House members are responsible for payment of bills as determined by the house.

House members must abide by the agreements passed at house meetings.

House Stewardships

Permanent [House Stewards](#) shall be agreed upon by consensus of house members. All house stewards serve until the steward or the house decides a new member should fill that stewardship position. A new steward must be determined for replacement of a resigning steward, within one week, or preferably within the same house meeting as the resignation.

All Stewards are responsible for regularly educating members at house meetings on matters pertaining to the stewards' duties and are responsible for passing all materials to their successor, including computer files.

Stewards are subject to recall for dereliction of duty upon house review and consensus.

House Meetings

Attendance at house meetings is mandatory for residents. Input can be provided in written form but proxies for decision making are not allowed.

Boarders are encouraged to attend meetings. They may vote on matters pertaining to boarding.

A quorum for a house meeting will be 1/2 the total number of residents. Round down in the case of an uneven number of members.

House meetings will be held weekly. A petition signed by 5 members and posted on G+ and the labor board for one day may cancel meetings, or call emergency meetings. There will be a 24-hour notice in the form of a posting before emergency meetings.

House agreements will be passed or deleted by a [consensus](#) of members present at house meetings. The house agreements, as accepted, shall be duly recorded.

Consensus, Quorum

All house decisions must be approved at a house meeting by consensus of the house members. If consensus cannot be reached, the decision will be tabled until the next meeting, or for 24 hours if it is an emergency decision. Upon this time's expiration, the house will reconvene and attempt to reach consensus again. If consensus still cannot be reached, the decision will be decided by a two-thirds majority vote.

House meetings and decisions require a quorum of 50% or more present house members. A “present house member” in terms of quorum is defined, as anyone who lives in the house and is not away for more than a week at the time that quorum needs to be reached.

There will be a rotating facilitator at meetings.

There will be a 24-hour notice in the form of a posting before emergency meetings.

Amendments

- Amendments to these bylaws shall only be approved by a consensus vote at an Ostara house meeting.
- Proposed amendments shall be posted to the house via email in advance of house meeting.
- Amendments are subject to revision by a consensus of those voting.
- Amendments may only be approved if they have been posted in their final form for at least 7 days.