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Proposal for Collective Stewardship of 585 Space

No terms or content outlined in this document are final or legally binding

Date: June 2025

To: Woodbine Directorship

1. Statement of Intent

We, a collective body of dedicated participants in the Woodbine community, are writing to formally express our intent and commitment to assume collective stewardship of the space at 585 Woodward Avenue. This proposal builds upon conversations with the current directorship, landlord, leaseholders, and active working groups, and sets out a clear path for transition, governance, and collective care. It also affirms our shared commitment to initiating a collaborative transition process with the current directorship that honors the relationships and practices that have made Woodbine a vital node of autonomous organizing in Ridgewood.

2. Transitional Leadership: The 585 Emergency Council

We have provisionally organized ourselves as the [585 Emergency Council], a temporary and open coordination body responsible for facilitating this transition on behalf of the broader community. We envision this group not as a new leadership body, but as a logistical tool: a mechanism to coordinate the collective assumption of responsibility through open assemblies, working groups, and accountable structures.

585 Emergency Council as of xx.06.2025
Johnny - current leaseholder; point person to landlord

Vanessa - to be added to the lease

Add additional names from working groups as members self-elect????

3. Agreements with Landlord

Leaseholders:

- Matt remains on the lease but is indemnified from ongoing responsibility.
- Duncan remains on the lease.
- Johnny becomes the designated point person on the lease.
- Vanessa will be added to the lease.
- During this transition phase (June-Dec 2025) the landlord has stated that no LLC or organizational entity can replace individual guarantors; is not open to reassignment of leaseholders (but can re-discuss at future date).

Finances and governance:

- Fiscal sponsorship, governance, or internal collective structures do not concern the landlord as long as leaseholders are individually accountable.

Basement:

- Basement must be cleaned and brought into fire compliance within 6 weeks.
- Absbestose?
- Use for storage only per insurance policy, with handshake agreement for limited use beyond storage if fire safety demands are met.
- Dino will repair and widen the basement stairs and reinforce flooring in September 2025.

Kitchen:

- Kitchen will be formally added to Dino's insurance policy after September 2025; expenses for this are pending.

4. Transition Plan & Timeline

This section provides a preliminary plan for the transition period (June-December 2025) of the 585 space from the current Woodbine directorship to collective stewardship. This plan will be expanded on and revised through **cooperative planning sessions** with the 585 Emergency Council Transition Coordination Group between July and September as detailed below

From July to September 30, 2025 (Q3):

We request that the current directorship engage in a series of **cooperative planning sessions** with the 585 Emergency Council Transition Coordination Group between July and September 2025. The goal of these meetings will be:

- Collection of existing contracts, keys, passwords, and inventories
- Walkthroughs and knowledge-sharing with current directorship
- Creation of a shared digital drive, calendar, etc.
- Establish clear expectations and points of mutual agreement
- Ensure continuity of ongoing projects and care for the physical space
- Reduce uncertainty and interpersonal friction during the transition

We believe that this plan offers a path forward that maintains the spirit of Woodbine while distributing responsibility across many hands under a new governance. We are committed to transparency, collective authorship, and collective decision-making via a spokes council as this new formation takes shape. We welcome feedback and intend for this process to remain adaptive and inclusive.

By September 30, 2025 (end of Q3):

We will develop a written **Transitional Stewardship Plan** in collaboration as needed with the current directorship. This plan will include:

- Lease responsibility and legal structures clearly outlined
- Establish governance models (both a transitional structure and longer-term implementation of the spokes model) and accountability
- Utilities, finances, and shared resources e.g. develop budget and system for shared dues/fundraising
- Funding and partnerships
- Programming, hosting, and scheduling systems
- Community safety and conflict processes

In addition, we collectively aim to:

- Complete lease transfer
- Transition of funds and funding streams
 - communication to patreon donors (e.g. coworkers) and other donor streams (e.g. reroute CSA funds, gym funds, basement donations)

- Set timeline for receiving seed runaway funding, and any other funds promised to the upkeep and improvement of 585 (like the stove, asbestos, etc)
- Complete operational knowledge transfer
- Finalize calendars, booking systems, etc
- Publish new community agreements and onboarding process

Finally, initial charters for all working groups and committees will be drafted.

By December 31, 2025 (end of Q4/ year):

The collective will assume full logistical and fiscal responsibility for the 585 space, per the plan outlined and agreed upon during the transition process. Governance structures will be fully operational, tested, and refined with open participation

5. Governance Model: Spokescouncil + Admin Collective

The new structure will be based on a **spokescouncil model** in which autonomous working groups or project “spokes” coordinate through a regular **spokescouncil meetingsGeneral Assembly (GA)**. The spokes council spokescouncil GAs will serve as the central space for decision-making, conflict resolution, and resource allocation. Spokes are empowered to manage their domains autonomously while remaining accountable to the spokes council

Two-Wheel Model:

We propose a hybrid governance structure combining:

1. **Spokescouncil ("front wheel")** consisting of representatives from autonomous working groups. Spokescouncil holds decision-making power over broad programmatic direction, finances, and collective policy. It also defines the charters for each admin committee, empowering them to make decisions on behalf of the space. Only the spokes council has the authority to revise and revoke these charters. Additionally, the spokes council has the authority to recall an admin committee point person if (after mediation) the council continues to find them unsuitable.

Current working groups include, but are not limited to: gym, basement, pantry, sunday dinner, kids programming, reading group, writing group, etc. Working groups self-identify

2. **Admin Collective ("rear wheel")** responsible for daily operations, finance, rentals, maintenance, and legal liability. Admin Collective handles the continuous material reproduction of the space.

Each committee has one bottom-liner (point person) with redundancy and support built through mentorship and rotation. Point people serve 6-month terms, reviewed and rotated as capacity allows.

Initial* Admin Committees & Bottom-Liners:

- **Finance** (Natalie, Calvin, Dora)
- **Rentals** (Johnny)
- **Fundraising/Grants** (Vanessa, Natalie)
- **Programming** (To be filled)
- **Locations (Facilities/Repairs)** (Iris)
- **Legal/Liability** (Johnny, Vanessa, legal advisor to be recruited)
- **Conflict Support** (Ash; separate spoke supporting care, accountability, and conflict resolution)
- **Comms / Tech Admin** (To be filled)

*Committees and names presented here are for the transition period only (June-December 2025) and to be rotated/ revised/ per the spokescouncil model

Emergency Decision-Making:

- Admin Collective empowered to make immediate safety, liability, and legal decisions.
- Spokescouncil retains review authority for major financial or programmatic decisions.
- Defined "non-starters" and safety protocols will be created to support leaseholders' legal responsibility.

Charter Development

- Each Admin Committee and Working Group will draft a Charter defining roles, authority, and expectations.
- Charters to be reviewed and ratified by Spokescouncil.
- Initial drafts due by August 2025; full charter system operational by Q4 2025

6. Financial & Fiscal Sponsorship

Current:

- 3-month seed money is secured.

- Working Groups' independent fundraising efforts remain autonomous but are encouraged to contribute to shared expenses when able.

Future:

- Exploring partnerships with EVLoves (trusted partner) to serve as fiscal sponsor.
- Autonomedia remains an umbrella for certain projects but will not house main fiscal accounts.
- Goal: Establish independent bank account and financial identity for 585 as a collective entity.

Budget Targets:

- Monthly operating overhead: \$6-7k minimum
 - Target buffer for renovations and compliance: \$8-9k monthly
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7. Conflict resolution and points of unity

We recognize that past power dynamics, cultural shifts, and changing community composition require intentional conflict support structures.

The Conflict Support Spoke will hold ongoing care work to ensure accountability, transparency, and trust-building across differences.

Points of Unity Development:

- A breakout group will draft initial Points of Unity reflecting shared commitments while recognizing historical tensions.
 - Emphasis on invitational, anti-authoritarian, anti-fascist, anti-capitalist ethos while leaving room for ongoing dialogue and amendment.
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8. Summary Immediate Action Items

By July 31, 2025:

- Complete basement cleaning and fire compliance
- Clarify financial structures and fiscal sponsor partnership
- Draft initial charters for all Admin Committees
- Begin onboarding process for Admin and Spokesouncil participants

By August 2025:

- Ratify first round of charters
- Conduct full operational dry-run of new governance structure