

*This is an expression of the shared values of the residents of Island Cohousing. It is a living document that is expected to change as the community evolves.*

### **Purpose**

Island Cohousing is a small neighborhood of 16 private households and shared common facilities. Through the balance of individual autonomy and group opportunities and participation, we hope to enhance the social and economic quality of the life of the residents and have a safe and beautiful place to live.

### **Guiding Principles**

- 1) **Process**: The community was developed with the active participation of many of the current residents. All members participate in the governance of Island Cohousing to ensure that the community reflects the values of the residents.
- 2) **Design**: Island Cohousing was designed to be an aesthetically uplifting and culturally rich setting that nurtures and inspires its members, provides individual and household privacy, and respects abutters and neighbors. Improvements and changes will continue this tradition and respect the original design objectives except when there is a conscious consensus of the community that the objectives should change.
- 3) **Affordability**: Island Cohousing was designed to allow for diverse incomes and financial abilities. This will be recognized and continued.
- 4) **Ecology**: We strive to employ ecological design principles, cause minimal environmental impact, use resources and energy wisely, and support ecologically benign living as best we can.
- 5) **Common facilities**: The Common Facilities and Common House are to be used, enjoyed, and maintained by all without infringing on the rights of others.
- 6) **Diversity**: We encourage diversity. We seek to accommodate the varying needs of different ages, disabilities, cultures, and viewpoints.
- 7) **Community integration**: It is our intent to integrate and interact comfortably and responsibly with the surrounding neighborhood and region.
- 8) **Decision-Making**: Decisions are made by unanimous agreement (consensus). In case of deadlock, we use a 75% majority voting mechanism. All meetings are facilitated to insure maximum effectiveness and responsiveness to all members' points of view. Nothing that has been previously agreed upon by consensus of the community will be changed without a new consensus (or 75% majority vote if called for).
- 9) **Structure and Management**: The Island Cohousing Community Association is a Massachusetts corporation. All households are members and are responsible for upholding the requirements of the by-laws and the Community Policies and have the right to take advantage of the benefits contained therein. The Association has officers and an Administration Committee to conduct its business, but its policies are set by the General Meeting.
- 10) **Getting Things Done**: We employ a careful mix of participatory group decision-making and delegated responsibility. When we delegate, we expect to empower trustworthy people and empower them to do a good job by combining reasonable oversight with minimal interference.
- 11) **Year Round Community**: This is a neighborhood of year round residents. We will do everything within our power to keep it that way over time.

## **Island Cohousing - Who We Are and What We Are Doing -2**

12) Model: We hope this will continue to be an exemplary housing model for others to emulate: a sensible and sustainable approach to housing for our small island community.

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