

Dear Prospective Commoner,

We're happy that you're considering living at *The Commons*. If you genuinely enjoy interacting, collaborating and celebrating with the people around you, you just may be in the right place!

We'd like to share a few things about our community so you can be fully informed and enjoy participating in life at *The Commons* if you choose to live here.

Before signing a rental lease or binding document, we want to strongly encourage you to read our informative *Blue Book: Life at The Commons*. If you're considering purchasing a home, we recommend that you also read our *Declarations, Bylaws and Regulations*. The *Blue Book* is chock full of information about our community's history, core values and day-to-day working agreements. Our *Declarations, Bylaws and Regulations* represent the legal framework of *The Commons*.

Given the distinct nature of this community, we ask all of our residents to share this document with potential buyers and renters. *The Commons* is a participatory community, and ideally all residents are fully committed to the everyday work of bringing to life our mission and values. The purpose of this document is to give you the necessary information for deciding if you want to make this kind of commitment. (If you haven't been given a *Blue Book* to look through, there's a copy on *The Commons* website as well as a printed copy in the Common House Parlor Library.)

Our Vision Statement

*The purpose of The Commons on the Alameda is to enrich our lives through a shared intention
to cultivate positive interactions
within a multigenerational co-housing community;
to encourage social and ecological responsibility;
to draw upon our talents, resources and ideas;
to strengthen our connections; to share in meals, service and celebration;
to build and sustain our community and to design the buildings and grounds
to reflect our commitment to work together harmoniously as neighbors,
balancing needs for privacy with those for relationship.*

The People in Your Community

One of the best gifts *The Commons* has to offer is the opportunity to participate in a lively, creative and caring community. Some of our core values include cooperation, compassion and constructive communication. While we each have our unique place on the introversion/extroversion continuum, most of us genuinely enjoy finding authentic ways to connect with community members and contribute to each other's shared well-being.

Fortunately, we've got lots of options, enough to suit most personalities. You might, for example, enjoy the simple pleasure of stopping and saying "hello" to a Commoner while heading down a pathway, playing chess with someone in the Parlor Room, or having a lively discussion while cooking or eating a meal. You might participate in an Open Mic Night, a birthday celebration, or a weekly yoga or Qigong class. You might choose to work on the newsletter, or to join a book group, parent group, dance, music, singing or knitting group! You might want to start your own group, offer a workshop, or host an inspiring event that includes the larger Santa Fe community. And that's just the tip of the iceberg!

Decision-Making

At *The Commons*, many decisions are made through consensus. We recommend that you read more about the way consensus works on our website, in the *Blue Book*, and/or that you discuss the concept with Commoners. The process of reaching consensus can be challenging. Sometimes it takes longer to get things done. But in the end, the results tend to be more satisfying, and we Commoners generally feel it is worth the effort. (As our community is continually evolving, aspects of this process may be adjusted or fine-tuned according to the community's changing needs.)

Meetings

The Commons is governed by participatory management; every resident has a voice in how we live here. All are welcome to attend **Board Meetings** once a month. We all meet once a month for a **Business Meeting** in the Dining Room. Each **Business Meeting** has an agenda, in which proposals are shared, considered and ultimately decided upon.

We also hold **Community Meetings** once a month from 6:30-8 p.m. These gatherings are not for decision-making; they are for listening to each other and getting to know each other better. We continually find that strong personal bonds make everything else we do together go much more smoothly!

Committees

All Commoners are expected to join at least one committee. Committees focus on the nuts and bolts of keeping *The Commons* running smoothly on a daily basis, and enriching our lives. A few examples of committees are: The Common House Committee, the Grounds Committee, the Kitchen Committee, the Green Team, the Product Safety Committee, the Creativity Committee, the Strengthening Community Committee, and the Celebrations Committee.

Common Meals

Sharing meals is one of the most effective ways of building and nourishing community. Dinner is served in the Common House every Monday and Thursday night at 6:00 p.m. Residents who wish to dine sign themselves up and any guests they've invited. Charges for each Commoner

who signs up for a meal are included in the monthly homeowner's assessment bill. We serve organic meals as much as possible, and there are usually vegetarian, gluten-free and dairy-free options.

A crew of six or seven Commoners cooks, serves and cleans up each meal. Every adult resident is expected to work at least one kitchen shift per month, signing up as Head Chef, Assistant Chef, Set-Up, Clean-Up or Mop-up.

Community Service Contribution (Work Hours!)

The healthy heart of any co-housing community depends on the enthusiastic and generous participation of its residents. Adult homeowners are required to contribute a minimum of 8 hours/month. Renters are required to do 6 hours/month. Work hours are calculated every six months, and work hours that aren't completed are currently assessed at the rate of \$15.98 per hour. (Each year, this rate is adjusted for inflation.) Helping out with meals in the kitchen and tending to the grounds count as work hours.

We also encourage residents to contribute in ways that reflect their unique passions and skills. Although all contributions are appreciated, not all activities that benefit the community are counted as work hours.

A Healthy Environment

Our intention is to protect the health of our residents and to fulfill our vision of ecological responsibility.

We strive to fulfill these intentions in many ways, such as:

- We intend to use safe products in the common areas of the community, including the Laundry Room, that do not harm the environment and that are not hazardous to human and pet health. Residents are encouraged to do the same in their homes.
- We have robust recycling and composting systems which we strongly encourage everyone to use.
- We do our best to refrain from using fragrance and scents in the Common House, Laundry Room and Guest Rooms.
- Smoking is not permitted in common areas.
- Exploring ways to protect the health of everyone and the environment, while honoring the sovereignty of each person, is an ongoing conversation. The community is working on a more detailed agreement about how we choose and use safe products in the common areas. While we have not yet reached consensus on a more detailed process for making these decisions, we give a high priority to this worthy discussion... and each other.

Pets

There are many animal lovers at *The Commons*. We welcome furry and feathered residents and consider them part of our community. Because we want all of our residents and guests to feel safe and comfortable strolling through and enjoying our shared environment, we have a Pet Committee that focuses on ensuring healthy, safe and poop-tidy inter-species relationships. All pet owners are considered members of the Pet Committee.

Remodeling

If you are considering purchasing a home and have remodeling plans that could impact the exterior of the house, including the roof, we ask that you reach out to the Architectural Committee **before signing an offer to purchase or any other contracts**. The Architectural Committee is required to review and approve any changes before they are made. We strive to support homeowners who wish to improve their homes, but there are some projects that we are not able to support. Best to know what those are beforehand!

Rentals

Here at *The Commons* we embrace all of our tenants as valued community members. If you live here as a renter, you are welcome to meals and meetings, and even encouraged to be on the Board. All rentals—whether roommate situations, main house or casita rentals—require a lease, which must be a minimum of one month. All renters are required to do work hours and expected to participate in one or more committees.

Recommendations

Choosing to move into a co-housing community is a big decision. Not all communities are alike. The more informed you are when you make your decision, the better. In addition to reading the *Blue Book*, we request that you attend meals at *The Commons*, as well as at least one **Business Meeting** and one **Community Meeting** before you sign a written commitment. You can also chat with some Commoners to get various perspectives on what it's like to live here. Doing these things is the best way to get to know us, and to know whether we're a good fit for you.

We also encourage you to trust your gut. If anything in this document, the *Blue Book* or at a Commons gathering makes you uncomfortable, please ask us more about it. If you still feel uncomfortable, you might want to reconsider whether we are the right co-housing community for you. **If you end up living here, we want you to be happy!**

Thanks so much for taking the time to get to know us better.

Residents of *The Commons* (February 25, 2020)