

Beacon Hill Friends House

# Resident Handbook 2017

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# INTRODUCTION

## ***Welcome to the Beacon Hill Friends House!***

As a new resident you are now part of an intentional residential community. Here at the Beacon Hill Friends House, we seek to live together in community, to practice the values of tolerance, simplicity and respect, and to learn from one another, from the teachings and traditions of the Religious Society of Friends, and from the traditions of other communities. These “other communities” include the groups from which we come (families, spiritual groups, cultures) and other intentional communities from which we may choose to draw ideas and inspiration.

This handbook is meant to answer most of your questions about life here in the House, though other important sources of information can be found in various places:

- The white refrigerator door is where residents and staff post important in-house announcements, including when they’re going away or hosting visitors.
- The wall next to the kitchen message boxes has information, checklists, and sign-up sheets related to chores, meals, and dish crew.
- The chore handbook and dish crew handbook both live on the shelf next to the the message boxes.
- Calendars that list who is staying in the guest rooms, as well as meetings and other House events, are posted in the office and the kitchen.

We expect you to become familiar with the information in this handbook, as well as regularly checking your email, mailboxes, the fridge, and House Meeting minutes. Please don't hesitate to ask residents or staff if you have questions.

We’re glad to have you here!

## ***The BHFH Mission***

The mission of Beacon Hill Friends House is to embody the Quaker principles of faith, simplicity, integrity, community, and social responsibility in order to nurture and call forth the Light in all of us.

BHFH fulfills its mission by:

- Providing a center where Friends and others can meet, worship, and study.
- Advancing and fostering the principles of the Religious Society of Friends.
- Offering opportunities for the development of leadership.
- Maintaining a diverse, ecumenical, residential community guided by Friends principles.

## ***History of the Beacon Hill Friends House***

What is now Beacon Hill Friends House was donated in 1957 by the Greene family to the Society of Friends, who were free to use it as they saw fit. They decided to set up a house that would not only support a Meeting, but also provide a space in which a group of residents would have the opportunity to learn about Quakerism. A limit on residency was imposed as a way to allow the largest number of people to benefit from a quality exposure to the principles that have sustained this religious movement. To ensure that this objective was met, the founders set up a governing board constituted of Quakers from New England Yearly Meeting and also formed standing committees that would address specific issues facing this kind of operation.

## ***Shared Understandings***

As members of this house, we agree to the shared understandings below. We know that we can return to these whenever we need to clarify our purpose, make changes in our House practice, or resolve a conflict among members.

1. We respect ourselves and others in our community. We value the safety and well-being of ourselves and others, and seek to prevent harm to members of our community.
2. We understand that addressing conflict is critical to the well- being of intra-house relationships, and that our goal is to help these relationships work better.
3. We believe that honesty is important to healthy relationships and to a strong community. Through honest communication we enter into a deeper connection with others and open ourselves to learning and growth.
4. We understand that conflict can be a positive challenge that benefits those involved. Similarly, we don't assume that the absence of conflict means that everyone is in agreement, the community is healthy, or that everyone is happy.
5. We seek solutions that take into account everyone's needs. To accomplish this we are committed to a consensus based decision-making process.
6. We acknowledge that the process of reaching a decision is important in itself and affects whether the decision works, so we try to make the process thoughtful and intentional. We seek to understand the consensus process and review it and our own practice of it periodically.
7. We seek to understand the balance of power between the parts of our community: residents, staff, and board, and keep communication among these bodies open.
8. We believe that coercion in all its forms is negative and we try to avoid it.

9. We understand that we have responsibility for the care of our community environment. This includes contributing to the physical care and upkeep of the house, respecting others' possessions and using our shared resources wisely.

## QUERIES, ADVICES & POLICIES

*"Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of light which is pure and holy, may be guided..."*

-Postscript to an epistle issued in 1656 by a meeting of Quaker elders at Balby, England

In the spirit of the early Quakers, we of Beacon Hill Friends House have developed this set of queries, advices and policies based on themes relevant to our lives in community.

- Queries are provocative and open-ended questions designed to encourage reflection on a topic, thereby promoting clarity of purpose and understanding.
- Advices arise from the experience and aspirations of successive generations of residents, and are specific suggestions to guide us through life in the House.
- Policies are explicit expectations that protect the safety and well-being of residents and the sustainability of the House as a whole. Some policies are set by the Board and cannot be changed.

In big picture terms, the Quaker principles that inform personal and group conduct reflect the belief that we are accountable to one another, and that authority originates not in the rule of officials but in a common commitment to the principles of integrity and mutual respect. The queries, advices, and policies are intended not to govern but to guide residents, individually and communally, as we seek to shape the life of our community.

### Shared Responsibility

Queries:

- How will you be accountable to the community for maintaining the house, helping with meals, and participating in house meetings?
- How will you express your needs and concerns to the community?
- How familiar are you with the systems that govern life in the house, and how engaged are you in keeping those systems current and relevant?

Advices:

- Living in community requires that residents hold themselves and each other responsible for honoring their commitments to the House, completing them in a complete and timely manner and arranging for substitutions when necessary.
- Making your needs and concerns known is an essential piece of living in community; otherwise they cannot be addressed, and may lead to conflict or resentment. It is important, however, to do this in a respectful and compassionate manner.
- More helpful information about house systems can be found in the Residency Handbook, house e-mails, and the experience of other residents.

## Hospitality

### Queries:

- How will you help make our home a place of hospitality, friendliness and peace, where the spirit of community may become real to residents and to all who visit here?
- How will you account for your guests so that they are able both to enjoy our community and contribute positively to it?
- How will you help to engage dinner guests who may be visiting us for the first time and may know no one at the table?

### Advices:

- When you are hosting a guest, you can introduce them to the House by email, via fridge notes, or in person (e.g. at dinner). Even if your guest may be familiar to many residents, all residents may wish to know who they are and who is hosting them.
- When planning a guest visit, we should keep in mind that the public and guest spaces of BHFH are a shared resource. When visiting with guests, we should be sensitive to issues such as noise, excluding residents in common spaces, and roommates' concerns.

### Policies:

- We as a community welcome guests and wish to help make them feel at home. Residents should tell guests and visitors about Beacon Hill Friends House, including House policies relevant to their interactions with the House.
- Overnight guests may stay for up to two weeks (any requests for exceptions to this should be approved by House Meeting or Residency Committee, as appropriate or Res Com, as appropriate). If you have a visitor staying over frequently or for multiple nights, be sure to introduce them to the House. In cases where your guest may be spending time in the house without you, make sure the community knows who they are and that you are their host.
- Pets are not allowed, though the Residency Committee may make exceptions for pets that will not disrupt the community.\*

## Recreations

### Queries:

- Are your recreations those that will renew your physical, mental and spiritual strength without causing harm to yourself or others?
- Will you help create an environment that will be comfortable for individuals who wish to avoid contact with alcohol and tobacco?
- How do you take care of yourself physically, spiritually, and emotionally? How does that affect the community?

### Advices:

- Being a whole person in community makes the individual and the community stronger. To that end, we seek recreations that support and nourish our whole selves.
- We are an inclusive community that is accessible to those who wish to avoid alcohol and/or intoxication as well as those who wish to enjoy alcohol in moderation. We

should uphold our standards lovingly, so we can be in harmonious relationships with those whose choices are different from our own.

Policies:

- Recreations that are disruptive to the community or make others feel unsafe are not acceptable.
- Alcohol is permitted in the house, but is prohibited from the kitchen (except for cooking), from public food storage areas, and from all official house events, including house dinner. Residents may have parties with alcohol, with prior approval from House Meeting.
- Smoking is limited to the sidewalk in front of the house, with an effort to avoid smoke entering open windows.
- The illegal use of drugs or alcohol is prohibited and can result in immediate expulsion from the house.\*

Diversity and Equality

Queries:

- What actions can you take to make our community a comfortable and supportive one for people of all backgrounds and personal identities?
- Are you willing to challenge your own assumptions and step out of your comfort zone in order to help others feel supported and respected?
- How can we support ourselves and one another in expressing all facets of who we are?

Advices:

- Behavior that one person finds comfortable may make someone else feel uncomfortable. We seek to work through these tensions, which inevitably arise in a close community, in a loving and respectful manner.
- We recognize that examining our own places in systems of privilege and oppression is crucial to building a community that upholds the equality of all.
- BHFH promotes diversity in many forms, including but not limited to age, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, gender, sexual preference or orientation, gender identity, relationship status, and (dis)ability.

\* These policies are set by the Board and cannot be changed by House Meeting alone.

## **BASIC EXPECTATIONS**

### ***Regular Commitments***

Every resident is assigned a task to help keep the House going. These CHORES are done one to three times a week and take about an hour to complete. Chores are rotated every five weeks, and residents may swap among themselves as long as they notify the Residency Manager. Those on vacation are expected to find other residents to do their chores in their absence. Detailed descriptions of chores, dish crew, what to do about these when you go



away on vacation, and other ways to be helpful around the House are available in the chore handbook and dish crew handbook in the kitchen.

Attendance at HOUSE MEETING is another main responsibility of residents. We meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month to discuss issues of concern to the community, alternating between meetings for business and meetings for reflection. The House clerks post the agenda for business meetings on the refrigerator a few days ahead of time, which typically includes committee reports, action items, general announcements, and discussion topics. Meetings for reflection are programmed meetings that provide a more in-depth opportunity for discussion of issues related to life in the House.

In addition, everyone is required to participate in the twice-yearly WORK DAYS, which prepare the House for winter and summer. We hope residents will also volunteer to help in other ways, such as welcoming outside guests or setting up for events. A willingness to pay attention to small things that need doing -- such as changing hall light bulbs, shoveling snow, or distributing mail -- is always helpful. Try to take care of it yourself first, and if you need help, ask for it!

In the fall and spring, the whole House gets together from a Friday evening through Saturday afternoon on RETREAT in order for us to get to know one another better and to help build community. Residents form an ad hoc committee to plan these retreats.

### ***House Meeting***

House Meeting is one of the few opportunities the community has to spend time all together, and we expect residents to hold themselves to a high standard of attendance. Yet it is also important to recognize that residents have responsibilities and relationships outside of the community that may prevent attending every meeting. While attendance at all meetings may not be possible, you may not miss more than four meetings per year.

Quakers have a unique approach to decision making, which may be new to you. Over time, Friends have developed a special process to help them listen for their sense of what God calls them to do or decide as a community. At Beacon Hill Friends House, we use these techniques to help us listen better to each other, and to a deeper sense of what is right for our community. These guidelines are useful for all meetings, not just House Meetings (more information about Quaker process is in Appendix B).

If you are interested in learning more about the Quaker decision-making process, or other aspects of Quakerism, you might consider attending a Quaker-related retreat or conference such as Beacon Hill Friends Meeting retreat, New England Yearly Meeting, or Friends General Conference Gathering. If you do, half of your registration fee (up to \$50, and not including room and board charges) can be paid by the house.

### ***Guidelines for Meetings in the Manner of Friends***

1. Begin and end your meetings with silence.

- a. In the silence, clear your mind and prepare for the work ahead.
  - b. What thoughts might interfere with doing good work? Set them aside.
  - c. Are you aware of the other people in the meeting? Are you ready to work cooperatively with them?
  - d. Are you carrying a personal agenda? Try to detach from your expected outcomes, and be prepared to embrace the work that emerges from your collective work.
2. Make sure that everyone agrees about the purpose of the meeting.
  - a. This may mean going over an agenda.
  - b. This may mean making sure everyone is sharing the same goals for the meeting.
3. The clerk's job is to get the "sense of the meeting"—to name what decisions or truths seem to be emerging for the group.
  - a. The clerk can intermittently stop the discussion to reflect back to the group what decisions have been made, or to test what they think the group agrees on (e.g., "What I'm hearing is that we want to go ahead with plans for a garden on the deck, but we don't yet have unity on whether to plant flowers or vegetables").
  - b. The clerk, or a designated recording clerk, should also record the decisions and ideas that have been agreed upon by the group.
  - c. If the clerk states the sense of the meeting inaccurately, those present tell the clerk and help to get the sense stated more accurately.
  - d. The Quaker process relies on the group "coming to unity" with the sense of the meeting. Everyone must listen carefully to what is spoken, as well as to the motions of their hearts.
4. Make sure everyone is heard.
  - a. Try having one person speak at a time, and avoid interrupting.
  - b. Try speaking only when recognized by the clerk.
  - c. Encourage those who talk more to leave more space for those who talk less. encourage those who seldom speak to consider whether they have something to share with the group.
  - d. Clerks or others may ask to hear from those who have not been as active in the meeting.
5. If the process becomes muddled or tense, the clerk or someone else present should call for a period of silence to help get back on track. People can use this time to:
  - a. remember what the objectives of the discussion are.
  - b. reconsider how what they feel passionately about fits with others' sense of the community needs at that time.
  - c. see whether they have any new ideas forming that just needed a little more quiet time to emerge.
6. When there is still disagreement about how to proceed...
  - a. If unity can't be reached, record what unity there is, set another meeting time, and come back to the item then.

- b. Unity is different than unanimous consent. There can be a deep sense that a decision is the right one for the group at that time, even though individuals may feel differently.
  - c. Sometimes you may want to set aside your opinions about what is best for the group, in order to support the group's sense that a different way is best. Ask yourself sincerely and humbly, "Is this about my ego, or is this about what's important for the community?"
  - d. Be tender to dissenters in the group, listening fully to the truth they have to offer. Proceeding without unanimous consent or unity should only be done with great care and consideration.
- 7. Bring closure to the meeting.
  - a. At the end of the meeting, record and read the tasks that people have agreed to do.
  - b. Set a date for your next meeting.
  - c. Close with a moment of silence, reflecting on how the work as a group has drawn you closer together.
  - d. At future meetings, refer back to past notes to ensure you are faithfully carrying out the work as discerned in earlier meetings.

## HOUSE SAFETY

### *Fire Safety*

The house has three different types of fire alarms:

**Central Smoke Alarm System:** This alarm has a very loud buzzer sound, is hard-wired throughout the house, and is controlled by the panel by the elevator on the basement level.

If it goes off:

1. Evacuate the building.
2. Gather at the corner of Chestnut and Walnut by the fire post.
3. If there are clear signs of fire, or if no staff are present, call 9-1-1.
4. If staff are present, follow their instructions.
5. Contact any residents who are not present, to make sure they are not in the house.

**Room Smoke Detectors:** These make a high-pitched beeping sound, and are battery operated. Residents should test the units in their rooms monthly.

If it goes off:

1. If there is a small, manageable fire, try to put it out.
2. If there is an uncontrollable fire, trigger the central alarm system from one of the pull switches located at each building exit, then follow the instructions listed above.
3. If there is no fire, push the button on the alarm to silence it, and notify staff.

**Sprinkler System:** The sprinkler system is heat activated, and triggers a bell at the front of the house and one at the top of the cellar stairs (which may not be audible everywhere) – as well as spraying water everywhere.

If it goes off: Follow the instructions for the central fire alarm system.

### **Evacuation Guidelines**

1. Leave the building as soon as you hear the alarm.
2. Feel closed doors for heat before opening them. If it's hot, look for an alternate route (each bedroom has at least two exits, including windows onto rooftops or fire escapes).
3. If there is smoke, stay as low to the floor as possible, and cover your nose and mouth.
4. Use fire escapes only if your door feels hot or the smoke is too heavy for you to safely use the hallways. Do not use the elevator.
5. If you know where the fire is, go to the stairs furthest from it before going down.
6. Close any open doors you pass as you are leaving.
7. Take the emergency contact list from under the foyer table.
8. Do not re-enter the house unless staff or the fire department say that it is safe.

**Fire Doors:** These should remain closed by default, to prevent the spread of fire and smoke.

**Carbon Monoxide Detectors:** These are mounted on the wall throughout the house. If it goes off, follow the instructions posted on the wall next to the unit.

**Fire Extinguishers:** Familiarize yourself with where these live and how they work. Only attempt to use them on small, contained fires. Fire extinguisher locations include:

- Cellar: by the fire door between #6 and #8, in the elevator room
- Basement: by the doors to both courtyards
- 1<sup>st</sup> Floor: by the #6 front door
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor: outside the library, outside room #1
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor: outside room #10
- 4<sup>th</sup> Floor: by the elevator

*Please take these guidelines seriously, whether in the case of a drill or a real fire. Your own safety and that of your housemates may depend on it.*

### **Security**

We are our own security system. If you open windows or doors in a public area of the House, be sure to close and lock them when you leave the room. In summer, pay special attention to see that windows are not left open all night. Security is everyone's responsibility.

If someone you do not know comes to the front door, ask who they are coming to see and beep that person. If it is an overnight guest staying in one of the guest rooms, beep the

Residency Manager or the person in charge of welcoming the guest (check the guest calendar in the office.)

The House is not responsible for loss or damage to computers, electronic equipment, etc. If you would like insurance for your personal property, you are responsible for getting it yourself.

### ***Other Emergency Information***

There is a first aid kit in the kitchen drawer under the toasters. Please let the Kitchen Manager know when supplies are used, so that they can keep it stocked.

There is also a document called “When Staff Are Away” hanging near the dish crew sign-up with information on how to respond to various emergencies if the staff are away. Be familiar with this before an emergency actually arises!

### ***Bedbug Precautions***

All mattresses and box springs in the House should be covered with a bedbug encasement (if you bring your own mattress, get an encasement from the Residency Manager). Once a month, check all surfaces, corners and seams of your bed for bugs, eggs, or black spotting. Remove all sheets and use a flashlight. To learn more about bedbugs and know what to look for on your bed, check out: <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef636.asp>

To avoid bringing bed bugs back to BHFH, check any new bed before you sleep in it. If you have reason to suspect you may have been exposed to bedbugs while traveling, please put your clothing in the dryer on high heat for 30 min when you return (do this with secondhand clothing too). You can also use the PackTite heating device, which is kept in a black duffel bag in the furniture room. Please do not bring any used furniture into the house that you found on the street.

Everyone, including guests, should only ever sleep in a bed.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

The Beacon Hill Friends House community is made up of a number of different groups, including the current residents, former residents, staff, committee members, board members, members of the Meeting, and other friends of the house. This large community contributes in many ways to keeping the house running smoothly and includes the following roles, which help to structure the House:

### ***Board of Managers***

The Beacon Hill Friends House is governed by the Corporation and the Board of Managers. The Corporation includes two representatives from each Quarterly Meeting of the New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, two representatives from the Beacon Hill Friends

Meeting, four at-large members, clerks of the standing Board committees, and two current residents of the House. The Corporation meets once a year to approve the budget, nominations, and other important business. The Board of Managers includes a mix of people whose skills and dedication are helpful to the house, and meets four times a year to set policies and make decisions. Residents are welcome to attend meetings of the Board and Corporation.

## ***Staff***

The Director, Residency Manager, and Kitchen Manager are responsible for the operation of the House as a Quaker resource center and vibrant residential community. The staff nurture the House by daily care of the ongoing needs of the House and especially of its residents, and by paying particular attention to how the House can best serve Friends' work. Among many other things, the staff are responsible for welcoming guests, financial management and record keeping, counseling residents, maintenance and chore assignments, resident recruitment, and food preparation.

## ***House Clerks***

The House Clerks are chosen by the residents (via the nominating committee) and serve six-month terms. The House works with a three-clerk system with staggered terms. The clerks are responsible for planning House meetings, facilitating and recording during the meetings, and helping to serve as a conduit for information exchange between Staff and Residents.

## ***Committees***

Committees are divided into Board committees and House committees. Each resident should serve on at least two committees at all times, and they can be board or house committees.

## ***Board Committees***

(Two resident representatives each)

**Building Oversight Committee** oversees the structural and functional integrity of the building. They plan major maintenance projects, advise staff on general upkeep and maintenance, and ensure that the building meets all legal codes. Members should have skills such as knowledge of buildings and building systems, experience dealing with contractors and other building professionals, familiarity with historic preservation and renovation, commitment to energy efficiency, and enthusiasm for improving the physical structure of BHFH. The committee meets about every two months.

**Development Committee** communicates the activities, passion, and mission of BHFH while making the case for financial support. They send regular emails to constituents, maintain the house website, set fundraising goals, and make direct financial appeals. Skills that make a good committee member include writing and editing, web communication,

data analysis, and an ability to talk plainly and directly about money and the BHFH mission. The committee meets monthly.

**Finance Committee** is responsible for overseeing the financial sustainability of Beacon Hill Friends House. They prepare the annual budget, review all financial reports, set room and board rates, review house contracts and investments, and engage in long-term financial planning. Members need not be financial professionals, but should have a commitment to the Quaker testimony of stewardship, and an ability to communicate clearly about financial issues to a wider audience. The committee meets monthly from January to March, and quarterly for the rest of the year.

**Nominating Committee** identifies people to serve in various roles on the Board, and presents these recommendations to the Board and/or Corporation for approval. They seek out people who have a connection to the house, as well as experience with Quakerism, board service, or nonprofit work. Members should have a good network of people to nominate, and should be able to suggest names and ask people to serve. The committee meets about every two months, though sometimes more often in the spring.

**Personnel Committee** advises the Board on matters of policy and procedure relating to the employment of staff, is responsible for conducting an annual review of the Director, receives regular reports from staff members, and addresses questions or concerns that may arise. In consultation with Finance Committee, they make recommendations regarding staff compensation and benefits. They also function as advisors to the Director, providing counsel and support regarding the Director's job responsibilities. The committee meets 4-5 times a year.

**Program Committee** plans programs for both the internal community and the larger community. This includes workshops (on topics such as conflict resolution and Quaker decision making) that facilitate the development of community and bring community members an increased awareness of concerns that the Board feels it is the Friends House's purpose to foster (non-violence, spiritual growth, etc.). The committee also facilitates (with funds, ideas, etc.) resident attempts to develop programs that are consistent with the purpose of the Friends House. Programs for the larger community include the annual Weed Lecture and Good Friday Witness for Peace vigil. Committee members generate ideas for programs, contact resource people, help with mailings and hospitality, and reflect in an ongoing way on the Friends House purpose and how the programs fulfill it. The committee meets 4-5 times a year.

***House Committees***  
(Only house residents)

**Clerks of the House Meeting** (described above) are considered their own committee.

**Housie Activities Committee (HAC)** plans fun events for residents, aiming to organize a variety of activities to spark interest in as many residents as possible. Members should have

a passion for engaging the community and participating in the process of making these events happen: bringing ideas to the committee, planning and publicizing, and running the events they take primary responsibility for. The committee meets monthly.

**Kitchen Committee** works with the Kitchen Manager to address residents' concerns and needs about food, equipment, and kitchen hygiene. They also help the Kitchen Manager with food purchasing decisions, food questionnaires, and other specific needs as they arise. Residents on the committee take a greater responsibility in cooking or finding substitutes on the Kitchen Manager's sick and personal days. The Kitchen Committee meets approximately once a month.

**Nominating Committee** is responsible for bringing a slate of nominees to the House meeting for business when there is an opening on any of the Board or House committees. They also ensure that each resident always serves on at least two committees. The nominating committee members are expected to meet with residents to discuss their interests and inclinations regarding committee membership, and balance that with the needs of each committee. After residents have been nominated to a committee, the House has the opportunity to season their nomination before it comes up for approval at the next House meeting for business. This committee meets on an as-needed basis, most frequently around resident transition times.

**Residency Committee** is made up of the Director, Residency Manager and three or four resident representatives, and works to fill vacancies in the house. Committee members participate in the interviews of prospective residents and thus have a great influence on the selection process. On occasion, additional house residents are recruited to sit in when there are not enough committee members available at the time of the interview. Because of the large numbers of meetings required to select residents, this is a very demanding committee.

### ***Ad Hoc Committees***

Search committees are appointed by the Board when one of the staff resigns, and meet only until the position has been filled. Committees are also formed to plan each Work Day, Retreat, Midsummer Barbecue, and Holiday Party. Other ad hoc committees may be formed by the Board or by the House Meeting as needed.

## **RESIDENCY POLICIES**

### ***Admissions***

The Residency Committee admits those applicants who they feel would provide the most healthy and well-balanced residential community. For legal reasons, their discussions and impressions concerning specific candidates must be confidential, and those residents who are not accepted receive a very general 'rejection' letter. Residents should, however, express their opinions regarding potential applicants to members of the Residency Committee.



## ***Security Deposits and Giving Notice***

A security deposit is required at the time you are admitted to the House. The security deposit is refunded at the end of your stay, provided one month's notice of departure has been given in writing and your room is left in good condition. Because it can easily take more than one month to fill vacancies, however, we ask that you give two month's notice or more if you can.

## ***Room Assignments***

When a room opens up, it is offered to other residents in order of seniority (based on the receipt of your security deposit, then by move-in date). Moves from one room to another of the same size are generally not permitted, though staff may make exceptions to this rule.

## ***Billing***

When residents move in, they are billed for the current month at a daily rate. After that, bills are issued on the first of the month, payable by the fifth. Charges for room and board are for the month ahead, while other charges and credits (guest meals, food credit, etc.) are for the previous month. Room and board are adjusted every July 1<sup>st</sup> to account for increasing costs.

## ***Financial Aid***

The house offers financial aid in the form of a hardship fund, available to residents who are struggling to pay their monthly bills. Any resident may apply for assistance from the hardship fund after living in the house for three months. Grants are made by the Financial Aid Committee in amounts up to \$500, to be applied to the resident's monthly bill. To find out more about how to apply for financial aid, please speak to a member of staff.

## ***Time Limit***

The House currently has a four-year limit on residency. Residents who have been in the house for two years and would like to stay for a third year must go through an evaluation and discernment process with staff. This process is repeated for residents requesting a fourth year. Evaluation criteria are listed in Appendix C.

## ***Drugs and Alcohol***

Underage drinking is not allowed in the house. Consumption of alcohol for people 21 or older is allowed in the house, except in the kitchen and during house events (including dinner). Large parties need to be approved at house meeting. *For parties that are scheduled to take place before the possibility of approval at a House Meeting, the organizer must seek guidance from the clerks of House Meeting about an alternative method of approval.* People in the house have a range of experiences and feelings about alcohol, so please be considerate and aware of how your behavior may affect others.

The use of illegal drugs is prohibited and can result in immediate expulsion from the house.

## ***Smoking***

Smoking is not allowed anywhere in the house. Smoking is only allowed outside in front of the house, on the street side of the metal fence. Several residents have sensitivities to second hand smoke and are concerned about its negative health effects. Before lighting up, please check with the people near you, and be aware of how your smoke might affect them. Please also be considerate of open windows and choose your smoking location accordingly; consider going for a walk around the block while you smoke when possible or necessary. By choosing to smoke, you also take responsibility for cleaning up your ashtray and disposing of cigarette butts immediately. We expect all residents to communicate with each other and to be flexible – both those who smoke and those who do not. If you need guidance communicating about this issue, you can reference Appendix A: The BHFH Conflict Resolution Toolbox of the Resident Handbook or talk with staff.

## ***Probation & Expulsion***

All residents struggle in some ways to meet the expectations of living in community, and we like to think of these struggles and conflicts as opportunities for the community to grow stronger. In some instances, however, staff may determine that either financial or behavioral probation is necessary.

If a resident does not pay rent within the month that it is due, they are placed on a 30-day financial probation. The Director and Residency Manager meet with the resident to develop a plan for paying off the money owed. Those goals must be met within the 30-day probationary period. If the resident meets the goals, then the probation is lifted.

Behavioral probation is necessary when a resident continually acts in a way that undermines the Quaker principles of cooperation, inclusiveness, truthfulness and peace. This kind of behavior disrupts the residential community and can interfere with the staff's ability to do their jobs. When a resident is placed on behavioral probation, they meet with the Director and Residency Manager to discuss goals to be met during a 60-day period. If the resident meets the goals, then the probation is lifted; if not, they are asked to leave the community.

The Director has the authority to ask a resident to leave the community immediately, without a probationary period, if the person's behavior presents an immediate threat to others in the community or exhibits behavior so severe that the overall health of the community is at risk.

## **HOUSE LOGISTICS**

### ***Keys***

A \$2 deposit is required for your house key, which will be returned when you move out and give back your key. If you lose your key, you'll be charged \$2 to replace it.

It is important to keep track of who has keys to the house. Please do not make copies of your key, or give out guest room keys to those not staying in one of the guest rooms. If a visiting friend or family member needs a key, you can sign them out a spare key from the rack next to the mailboxes.

### ***Beeper System***

Beeper boxes are located throughout the house for internal communication. This system is used to notify you when a guest of yours has arrived, or if someone needs to find you for some other reason. If you don't know why you are being beeped, check the kitchen, front door, and office. Instructions and lists of residents' beep codes (along with phone numbers and email addresses) are posted next to each beeper.

### ***Mailboxes***

Each resident is assigned two mailboxes: one in the office near the front door for official USPS and House mail and one in the kitchen for resident communication.

### ***Doorbell***

Please answer the doorbell when you can, especially if you are expecting a guest. Any time you go to answer the door, please make a short beep on one of the beepers to let the House know that someone has got it.

### ***Quiet***

We have quiet hours from 10:30pm to 8:00am (9:00am on weekends and holidays). Try to be aware of how much noise you are making during these times. In particular, please do not vacuum, play loud music, or use the beepers.

Additional quiet hours are from 10:15 to 11:45am on Sundays, during Meeting for Worship. At these times, please do not use the washer and dryer or the wooden stairs and elevator on the #8 side of the house, and maintain silence on the deck. The doorbell on the #8 side is also switched off.

### ***Heating and Cooling***

Residents must supply their own blankets; House blankets are for guests. Space heaters are not allowed in resident rooms, for safety and economic reasons. Our House is expensive to heat, so if you must open a window in cold weather to air your room, please be sure that your door is closed. Also, please let staff know right away if your radiator is malfunctioning or something is wrong with your window. The double doors on either side of the foyer should be kept closed to keep warm air from flooding out of the House every time someone opens the front door.

Fans are permitted in residents' rooms, but not air conditioners. House fans are provided only for use in guest rooms and for residents on the fourth floor.

## ***Furniture***

Each room is furnished with a bed, bureau, desk, and desk chair for each person. If you'd like different furniture from what is already in your room, feel free to swap around with anything you find in the furniture room in the cellar, after checking with the Residency Manager. Be aware, however, that you will be responsible for returning appropriate furniture to your room when you move to different room or move out of the house.

## ***Office***

At least one staff member is generally in the office between 9am and 5pm, though there are occasional times or whole days when all staff are off or away.

Please try not to trouble staff during their off time (after hours, or on their days off) except in emergencies. It can be stressful for them to feel "on-call" constantly. In case of emergency, refer to the blue list on the side of the fridge that indicates who you should call. You can also use the "When Staff are Away" guide, which hangs nearby.

Residents may use the printer/copy machine, but are encouraged to take large printing jobs elsewhere, as it is time consuming for staff to replace supplies. Please log all of your printed or copied pages in the black binder next to the machine, which also contains instructions. You will be billed \$0.10 per page.

## ***Guests***

Visiting friends and family are welcome to stay in your room, in a friend's room, or in the Bulfinch Garret (sign up on the calendar posted on the door). You are responsible for providing linens yourself or using ones from the closet next to the Garret (if you do, wash and return them when you are done).

Personal guests can also stay in a guest room if it is available, and if you reserve it with the Residency Manager ahead of time. Each resident has five free nights' use of the guest rooms per year; beyond this, they are charged half price.

Please refer to the Queries, Advices and Policies for guidance about hosting personal guests in the house. In particular, be sure to introduce your guest to the community and to explain all relevant house systems and policies (kitchen use, quiet, alcohol, etc.).

For House dinners, please sign your guest in on the dish crew sheet (ideally before 3pm). Also record breakfasts, lunches, and weekend dinners on the separate "Guest Meals" sheet. You will be charged for these meals on your next monthly bill.

## **FOOD AND KITCHEN USE**

Shared meals are at the heart of the BHFH experience, and give us a place to build community. House dinners are especially important because they are a time when we come together to share our lives and share nourishment. For this reason, we ask that residents attend at least three house dinners per week, and fulfill other kitchen responsibilities. Our responsibilities in the kitchen are a way of expressing love for community and for each other.

Kitchen cleanliness is very important. Cleaning up after yourself immediately is not just a matter of washing your dishes -- please wipe up your spills and crumbs, put away condiments and newspapers, and generally try to leave the kitchen cleaner than you found it.

### ***Dish Crew***

Residents and staff (except the Kitchen Manager) serve on dish crew once each week. This involves setting the dinner table, serving dinner, and cleaning up afterwards. Please familiarize yourself with the dish crew handbook, which contains detailed descriptions of tasks as well as instructions about how to sign up and find substitutes when necessary.

### ***Dinner Sign-Up***

On the dish crew sign-up sheet, note any days you will not be home for dinner, and whether or not you want food saved for you. Not signing out, or signing up for “saves” when you don't eat them, leads to wasted food and is inconvenient for dish crew.

### ***Food Credit***

If you are away for seven days or more, you may get food credit by notifying the Residency Manager. You can only get food credit if you sign out from dinner and find any needed substitutes for chores and dish crew.

### ***Residents' Refrigerator and Storage Space***

The refrigerator in the laundry room (nearest the kitchen door), the shelf above the message boxes, and the left-hand mirrored cabinet in the dining room are for food you have bought on your own. Please label and date your items. Unlabeled items are periodically thrown out. Because everyone shares these spaces, try to take up no more than your share of the space, and do not eat food that doesn't belong to you.

## **PUBLIC SPACES**

### ***Meeting Room***

Friends Meeting for Worship is held from 10:30 to 11:30am every Sunday, and residents are always welcome to attend. Please respect the silence of the Meeting by following the quiet hours policies during this time.

## ***Libraries***

The library on the second floor is a shared common area often used for both studying and reading, but is not limited in this capacity. Residents also may enjoy: using the Library for hosting visitors, simply having an open and quiet space outside of one's room, using the public computers, or even participating in group activities. Please be mindful of how your presence in the library impacts others in the house. If you remove books from the second-floor library shelves, be sure to note where you got them and return them to the same place. Items for everyone's use may be stored in the hope chest, the shelves under the table, or the shelves to the left of the map chest, and should be returned neatly after each use. House meeting may allocate a small area of the library for a resident's workspace, if a resident needs the workspace for an extended period of time. Other than that, personal items should not be left in the library. During quiet hours, keep the doors to the library closed, and please take special care to keep noise in the library to a quiet, conversational level, as loud sounds may travel to adjoining rooms. The library on the ground floor houses the Quaker collection. Residents are welcome to borrow books from the Quaker library using the posted sign-out system.

*Approved at House Meeting 5/17/09*

## ***Music Room and Parlor***

While these rooms are also common areas meant for the enjoyment of residents and guests, they are also often used for private meetings. Please also note that food and drinks are only allowed in the music room or parlor with previous staff permission. Anyone can play the piano, as long as it's outside of quiet hours.

## ***Group Events in Public Rooms***

We rent out the public rooms in the house (usually the parlor or Meeting Room) to outside groups for concerts, classes, workshops, etc. The calendars in the kitchen the office will tell you when events are scheduled.

If you'd like to use one of the public rooms for a large event of your own, please consider whether the event is something you would normally do in your own home, or if it is something you want to do here because of the large spaces available. For ordinary sorts of things you would host (for example, have a dozen people for a dinner party, or for a small/medium meeting) you should feel free to use the space free of charge. Just check with the Residency Manager for space availability. If it is something you wouldn't normally do in your own home, please consider making a nominal donation of \$5-10 per hour to the house for use of the space. If you are reserving on behalf of a group that would otherwise be paying to rent, we can offer you a 50% discount on the regular rental fee.

## ***Beacon Hill Friends Meeting***

Shortly after the Beacon Hill Friends House was established in 1957, a small group of people gathered regularly to worship in the House. In the beginning, there were only a few

people attending this worship group, but over the years it gradually grew to about 70 members.

On First Day (Sunday), Friends and visitors arrive for a 10:30 a.m. meeting. They settle into silent worship on the benches in the meeting room, with occasional messages inspired by the Spirit. Children who attend the First Day School leave the meeting after the first fifteen minutes and move into the childcare area, dining room and parlor in small groups according to age. Families come together again for announcements, introductions and refreshments at the rise of meeting at 11:30. On the first Sunday of each month, Meeting has a Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. This can run until 2 or 3pm sometimes.

Residents are invited to attend BHFM Meeting for Worship and Business. Several visits plus reading in *Faith and Practice* or other books in the Quaker Library will help you to begin to understand what a Quaker meeting is all about.

The Beacon Hill Friends Meeting (BHFM) pays rent to the House for use of various spaces on Sundays and during the week for committee meetings and special events. The House and Meeting communities come together under one roof and are both led by the same Spirit. Each community needs the understanding of the other as they both aspire to simplicity, clarity and peace.

### ***Parties***

Residents may have planned parties in the parlor, dining room (outside of meal times), Meeting Room, or on the deck. Please check with staff to make sure the space is not already booked. In order to reserve the room and let others know of a planned party, residents should give a minimum of 48 hours notice by posting a notice on the refrigerator door. For large parties, please present your plans at house meeting. *For parties that are scheduled to take place before the possibility of approval at a House Meeting, the organizer must seek guidance from the clerks of House Meeting about an alternative method of approval.*

### ***Storage***

There is storage space in the cellar (plus a limited amount on the fourth floor, for fourth floor residents only). Please be mindful of how much space you are taking up, and label all items with your name. Bicycles should be kept in the cellar or bike shed. In general, personal items should be kept in one of these spaces or in your room -- anything kept in a public space is assumed to be for public use, and the House cannot be held responsible for unauthorized use or damage to personal property.

### ***Laundry***

The washing machine and dryer currently cost \$1.50 each per load. The House supplies basic detergent. Residents use their own quarters for their personal laundry, which they can get at a laundromat or bank, or by requesting them from the Residency Manager, who will put the charge on their monthly bill.





# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: The BHFH Conflict Resolution Toolbox

This Conflict Resolution Toolbox was created by House residents of 2001 in response to the question, "How do we deal with conflict within the House?" Discussions over the following months resulted in this Toolbox, which is meant to describe different options for conflict resolution that are available to residents.

### ***Gospel Order***

The tradition of the Gospel Order reflects all three stages of the conflict resolution tools represented in this Toolbox.

During their early development, Friends, like many other Christian groups, adopted a procedure called Gospel Order as their rule for mediating disagreement within the community. Gospel Order is derived from a text in the Gospel of Matthew which itself has roots as far back as the beginning of the people of Israel in the Sinai desert. The Israelites had been slaves and Moses had the task of teaching them how to be a free people and a community during that long sojourn. The passage that described the Gospel Order is based on ancient teachings from the desert found in Deuteronomy and Leviticus.

In Matthew's time, the new church faced a similar problem. It was the third generation after the days when Jesus walked the road from Galilee to Jerusalem; the second generation after the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. The last of the "synoptic" gospels, Matthew was written to instruct people who had no first, second or third generation eye witnesses to Jesus' ministry: people creating their community in the midst of a hostile and increasingly fragmented society. Matthew offers a saying of Jesus that expands on other Christian texts about brotherhood to offer a way to handle disputes within the family of faith.

*If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. (Matthew 18:15-17)*

We find ourselves in a similar situation to that of our forebears, the first century Christians and reformers. Our society, too, is polyvalent and loosely bounded. We come from different traditions and cultures and we may have different and conflicting norms for levels of intimacy and friendship, personal style of interaction, or even standards of behavior. The Gospel Order is a straightforward and time-proven way to handle the tensions arising from these differences - and in the process strengthening rather than weakening the bonds of community. Members agree to respectfully work together to find common ground from which to build reconciliation.

1. When a member finds s/he is in disagreement, dispute or other disharmony with another member of the community, that member agrees to seek out the other person first, in a mutually comfortable setting, to describe the disjuncture and seek together to work out a reconciling solution. The goal is to resolve conflict at this level, thereby preventing gossip from spreading to other members of the community and offering the best forum for growth and forgiveness for each party involved.

2. If the two parties cannot find a center from which to work, or if there is disagreement about the solution, the member who still feels aggrieved will ask one or two friends to join in meeting with the other person and again confront the issue - with these witnesses from the community present. The witnessing friends may facilitate discussion.

3. Finally, if there is still disagreement between the two parties, the disagreement is brought before the whole community. If the parties still cannot be reconciled, especially when the aggrieving member refuses to listen, be corrected, or change the unhealthy behavior, further measures may be taken.

#### Forgiveness and Letting Go

True forgiveness is rooted in self-knowledge. Only when we are able to recognize and embrace our own human frailty are we able to recognize and forgive the frailties and falls of others. Letting go is a natural fruit of forgiveness - a freedom born of our own awareness and acceptance that shadow is as common to all as Light.

### ***Personal Queries***

These queries were one of the outcomes of a workshop "Digging Deeper Spiritually through Conflict in our Meetings" which were reported in the October 1989 Friends Bulletin.

Friends were reminded that, in conflict, we must be more open to the Spirit to allow us to be "more directly and intensely open, imaginative, vulnerable, and flexible."

#### Personal Queries

- Am I dealing with reality in my view of this conflict?
- Am I willing to walk a mile in the other person's shoes?
- Am I answering that of God in the person with whom I'm in conflict?
- Am I tender toward the persons with whom I'm in conflict?
- What is it about my personality which contributes to this conflict?
- What is it about my behavior in this conflict which contributes to it?
- Am I acting with enough or too much constraint?
- Am I acting in retaliation?
- Am I acting with profound respect for the other person?
- Am I seeking the relationship which might emerge beyond the conflict?
- Is there anything in my past to make it difficult for me to be flexible in this conflict?
- Does the conflict bring into the open some area of ambivalence on which I need to seek personal clarity?
- Am I being too judgmental?

- Do I trust the Spirit to work in this conflict?
- Am I willing to admit I am wrong?
- Am I using the transformational tools including process we have as Friends?
- Are there issues I am avoiding?
- Am I communicating honestly with other people?
- Do I use process to avoid conflict?
- Am I willing to undergo the discipline of process?

## ***Clearness Committee***

### *Clearness Committee for Discernment*

The clearness committee for discernment sets up a dialogue among friends to discern the will of God in their lives. The person desiring clearness asks friends to meet with him/her. The gathered friends serve as intermediaries for God. At the time of the meeting the friend desiring clearness states the problem, issue or concern about which s/he desires clearness. Committee members do not add input or offer opinions, they ask questions designed to lead the friend to reflect on various aspects or concerns that may lead him/her to clearness. The friend may or may not answer the questions in the meeting.

### *Clearness Committee for Resolving Conflict within the Community*

When there is a conflict between friends or between a friend and the community - when they both reach a point where they cannot or will not resolve it by themselves - a clearness committee may be gathered by either or both friends in conflict or by a third community member. One or both friends brings the need for a clearness committee to the community and the community appoints a convener and one to three other trusted community members to be part of the committee. In addition, each party asks a friend to be present as support and/or advocate.

The roles are as follows:

- Troubled friends/"Conflictees" - the people hoping to come to a common understanding.
- Convener - supports the process.
- Supporters/Advocates - support their respective people, ensure that they are not railroaded, and that the important issues are addressed.
- Other people/"Questioners" - ask questions of both sides to facilitate understanding of the conflict and possible solutions.

Two to three hours should be allowed for the meeting, although it may not take that long. The meeting begins and ends with silence, and if the convener calls a break in the session, the break also begins and ends in silence. The more people involved in the conflict, the more directive the convener will need to be in making sure that the pattern of taking turns is followed.

At the right time, the convener begins the dialogue by asking one of the "conflictees" to state his or her understanding of the conflict. Then the friends called to be part of the committee take turns asking questions that the friends in conflict cannot or will not ask one another and which are designed to draw out the problem and the issues or concerns of the troubled friend(s). The troubled friend being addressed may answer or reserve the questions for reflection, but if s/he refuses to consider the question s/he may be choosing not to be a part of the community. As the meeting evolves, the troubled friends may ask questions of one another - or if they cannot, their advocates may do so on their behalf. The advocate's specific role is to be a support for the troubled friend, so that the friend will feel safe.

At some point the convener may see that common ground has been established. At that point the troubled friends may ask one another questions to reinforce their common ground (E.g.: How would you feel if I changed my behavior this way...?). When the convener feels that as much progress as possible has been made toward resolution at that session s/he may adjourn the meeting altogether, or schedule to reconvene at another time.

Possible outcomes are:

1. A resolution is reached. The committee reports the resolutions to the meeting.
2. Some progress has been made. Another session of the clearness committee is scheduled and this outcome is reported.
3. No progress has been made. The matter should be given to the larger community to deal with.

In general the resolutions should be documented, but the proceedings should not.

### ***Care of Community Committee***

The Care of Community Committee (CCC) can help with conflicts that do not seem easily resolved by direct approaches to the individuals involved or through the help of the house Staff.

Sometimes what seems to be a personal conflict can partly or fully be a symptom of a deeper community issue that involves a challenge going beyond the people who appear directly involved. This means a resolution of the conflict at an individual level will not solve the part of the conflict which has its roots in the way community relationships are maintained. These deeper roots of conflict are best reflected upon by a larger group of community members, like the care of community committee, who can bring their collective and synergistic wisdom to bear.

Although the Staff of the house are a very important and cherished part of our community, there are times when the dynamics of power may present an obstacle to reflection on conflicts that occur. Thus, it may be helpful to have a space where residents can meet in a respectful, compassionate and spiritual manner without the presence of Staff to reflect on conflicts or issues in the house. The care of community committee provides such a space.

The wisdom gleaned from these CCC discussions can then be presented to the Staff and/or the full community in meetings for business.

Conflicts that need full community attention often need to be thoughtfully defined through strategic questions before they are brought before the meeting for business or the meeting for reflection. The community meetings for business and reflection often are constrained by time: there may be only a half hour or so to reflect on a conflict because of other business at hand. The care of community meeting is a place where community members can reflect on how the community can best address a conflict or challenge during meetings for business or meetings for reflection.

Sometimes there are warning signs that conflict lies just beneath the surface of community life. The care of community committee can be a place where a group of residents can reflect on the health of the community and try to overtly or more casually address challenges and issues before they erupt into full conflict. For instance, if a community member seems troubled, a member of the CCC can volunteer to have a casual conversation to try to see if there is anything that the community can do to help.

The CCC is an informal group meeting that takes place once a month (or intermittently) to reflect on the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the house community. In the first year there was one person who convened and facilitated the CCC. The role of the convener is to listen and watch the community to see if there are issues not being addressed by the Staff, or in the meetings for business and reflection. Commonly, it has been convened on a weekend afternoon and has lasted between one and three hours. Sometimes it is helpful to convene the CCC just to "hold the community in the light" to see what surfaces, even when there is no articulated agenda for the meeting. It is important for the conveners to set a tone to meetings that is much like what Quakers call "worship sharing." The purpose of this meeting is not to vent complaints, but to bring spiritual and compassionate listening and reflection to issues.

### ***Role of House Meeting***

The role of the clerks in facilitating the House Meeting includes making sure that conflicts are brought to House Meeting only after other avenues have been pursued. Conflicts between individual house members are the responsibility of these house members to work out on their own, so house meeting should only be used as a venue for working out individual conflicts as a last resort. Sometimes the clerks may also ask a resident to "season" a concern before bringing it to the house meeting. "Seasoning" means clarifying intentions about a concern, especially when it is a new or contentious issue. Often, seasoning involves taking time to sort out true feelings from immediate reactions, letting it "sit with you" over a period of time until a course of action becomes clearer. Other times, it may mean exploring the concern with other members of the house through informal discussions, so that new perspectives can help develop deeper understanding.

### ***Role of Staff***

Staff play two roles which are in tension with one another. One is to engage in mediation (or find someone else to do it) when it is appropriate. The other is to stand back and encourage parties to engage themselves, when for instance they seem to be coming to Staff as a way of avoiding their own issues.

Some of the official roles of the Staff include:

- Laying the groundwork: making sure residents understand the community's expectations at the beginning of their residency, reminding the community of these at appropriate times, and helping to establish a vocabulary within the community for later discussions.
- Programming: inviting people to come to House meeting and/or dinner who can be good resources or role models. This need not necessarily be in response to specific issues or problems, but as a general support for the community.
- Serving as a sort of "safety valve": if things get really out of hand, staff's job is to exercise authority or enough persuasion to re-channel the path of the conflict toward resolution.
- Keeping their eyes and ears open: voluntarily or not, and explicitly or not, many resident issues are exposed in staff presence, and it is their job to be sensitive to these messages when they see them.

Ultimately, staff's responsibility is for the welfare of the community, acting for the board of managers and under the board's authority. Staff has executive power to ensure this welfare, using their own judgment and interacting with residents, board members, or others as appropriate. This may lead to more or less one-sided intervention, based on the authority of the board.

Five obvious principles apply:

1. Responsibility for the welfare of the community, as mentioned above.
2. Responsibility for the welfare of individuals concerned, respecting individuals' dignity and opinions while safeguarding the security of all.
3. Judgment and sensitivity are paramount, even if they are fallible. The board expects us to exercise these as their agents.
4. Discretion and confidentiality are expected from Staff in ways that do not apply to residents.
5. Staff are expected to model conflict resolution behavior, or at least to recognize it when they see it and to be able to access resources that exist in the communities of the House, Meeting, and city.

### ***External Mediation Options***

If the House community is unable to resolve conflicts on its own, the following organizations in the Boston area specialize in conflict resolution:

Mediation Works, Inc., Boston <http://www.mwi.org/>

Metropolitan Mediation Services, Brookline <http://www.metromediation.com>

Community Dispute Settlement Center, Cambridge <http://www.communitydispute.org/>

## **APPENDIX B: Conducting Business in the Manner of Friends**

*Adapted from notes for a Beacon Hill Friends House Meeting held May 18, 2008*

When Quaker meetings have meeting for business, it is considered an extension of the meeting for worship: we are gathered together to hear (what I'll call) God's will for the meeting. We're looking for the truth that underlies all truth.

### **Beginning from Silence**

The silence with which we begin gives us an opportunity to leave behind whatever we brought with us to the meeting, and draw our loving attention to this community. We settle ourselves down into a deep attentiveness to what our community needs at this moment. We enter into silence when we gather together. Someone in the meeting can call us into another period of silence during the meeting if they feel we need to get centered again. This can be anyone, including a clerk. It can be ended by the clerk, by the person who started it, or by someone who has received clarity on something to say during the quiet.

### **Speaking and Listening**

When others speak, we pay close attention to hear how they might bring us closer to truth. We may pause to let their words settle in before listening to the next message. The clerk may slow us down so we can listen better.

### ***Sense of the meeting: Beyond Consensus***

When making decisions, we are looking for sense of the meeting: this is different from a "consensus."

"Consensus is an outward process in which a vote is taken without saying either yea or nay. It involves listening to all concerns, and then, through a negotiation process, finding the best solution. Sense of the meeting hears all of the concerns, then moves beyond the verbal expressions to hear the spirit of the concern in order to discern what is 'right' for the group."

"Consensus is a process in which adjustments and compromises are made for the purpose of reaching a decision that all of us can accept. It brings us to an intellectually satisfactory conclusion. But sense of the meeting reaches beyond that..."

"When we seek the sense of the meeting we allow ourselves to be directed to the solution that awaits us. It is a process of surrender to our highest natures, and a recognition that, even though each of us is possessed of light, there is only one Light. At the end of the process we reside in that Light. We have allowed ourselves to be led to a transcendent place of unmistakable harmony, peace, and tender love."

"If the process by which we discover the sense of the meeting is to work, we must be willing to lay aside personal needs and grievances; we must be willing to reach beyond what you or

I want. When I am able to set my ideas aside, and you are able to set your ideas aside, doors are opened which allow solutions to enter on a shaft of Light.

"The sense of the meeting is not discovered through competition of ideas. Outcomes should be determined neither by rhetorical skill, nor logical brilliance. The test of reason is not the test. Though compromise and moving toward consensus are tools which can assist early in the process, they must be laid aside as we reach for the Inward Presence." (The truth for the group. -- HB)

"Ideas should be offered and explained, rather than argued. They should be heard thoughtfully and respectfully, just as messages in meeting for worship are heard thoughtfully and respectfully. Sense of the meeting requires listening rather than contending, weighing, rather than reacting. It requires the kind of patience that understands that all things will work themselves out in due course."

*Quotes taken from Pendle Hill Pamphlet #307, Beyond Consensus: Salvaging Sense of the Meeting*

### **Unity Not Uniformity**

*(Adapted from George Selleck's "Principles of the Quaker Business Meeting," Friends United Press, 1986)*

It will be noted that what Friends strive to achieve is unity, not uniformity. As Friends have a wide divergence of views on many issues, it is clear that such unity is not the product of like-mindedness.

The unity Friends seek and hope to capture is God's will in relation to the matter under consideration as understood by the group assembled to listen for the Truth. We seek not for everyone to leave with identical perspective, but rather for the whole group to seek the True course they are being led to.

With patient waiting and listening to the silence and to Friends, we will be alert to find the Truth even in a previously unacceptable point of view. Frequently, a third way, an entirely new solution may arise which incorporates many points of view and which is new thought in and of itself. Everyone present can say That is what I really wanted, but did not realize it.

There may still be Friends who wish the group would move more adventurously, and others who fear what seems a dangerous experiment. Each might have wished the meeting to take a different course than agreed upon. But each will consider what is right for the group with these differences of judgment sincerely held and will give assent to a minute which seems to reflect the sense of the meeting, even if not wholly acceptable to oneself.

### **TIPS for participants:**

- Use the silence to enter into a special way of being, listening for truth.
- Open your heart to the unexpected.



- Listen to others, and allow yourself to hear the truth of their words- even if you disagree. Especially when you disagree.
- Let your words be offerings, rather than arguments.
- If something feels too hard, or if you think we are not listening as a group, ask for more silence.
- Be tender with your clerk(s): their job to hold this process together is a difficult one.

#### **Queries:**

- Will the words I wish to speak bring us closer to the truth for the group?
- Am I open to new possibilities?
- Is this thing that I want/believe true for the group or just for me?

#### ***Behaviors that Facilitate the Quaker Decision-Making Process***

1. Avoid arguing for your own position. Present it as lucidly and logically as possible, but be sensitive to and consider seriously the reactions of the group in any subsequent presentations of the same point.
2. Avoid 'win-lose' stalemates in the discussion of opinions. Discard the notion that someone must win and someone must lose in the discussion; when impasses occur, look for the next most acceptable alternative for all the parties involved.
3. Avoid changing your mind only in order to avoid conflict and to reach agreement and harmony. Withstand pressures to yield which have no objective or logically sound foundation. Strive for enlightened flexibility; but avoid outright capitulation.
4. Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as the majority vote, averaging, bargaining, coin-flipping, trading out, and the like. Treat differences of opinion as indicative of an incomplete sharing of relevant information on someone's part, either about task issues, emotional data, or 'gut level' intuitions.
5. View differences of opinion as both natural and helpful rather than a hindrance in decision-making. Generally the more ideas expressed, the greater the likelihood of conflict will be; but the richer the array of resources will be as well.
6. View initial agreement as suspect. Explore the reasons underlying apparent agreements; make sure people have arrived at the same conclusions for either the same basic reasons or for complementary reasons before incorporating such opinions into the group decision.
7. Avoid subtle forms of influence and decision modification: e.g. when a dissenting member finally agrees, don't feel that he [or she] must be 'rewarded' by having his [or her] own way on some subsequent point.
8. Be willing to entertain the possibility that your group can achieve all the foregoing and actually excel at its task; avoid doom saying and negative predictions for group potential.

## APPENDIX C: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Year Residency Considerations

*Approved by House Meeting, June 17, 2012*

When we admit folks to live at BHFH, they are offered a two-year residency. A 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year of residency is not automatic, but rather a privilege for residents who are good mentors and leaders in the community. We encourage these residents to stay and help show newer residents "how it's done."

We believe there are four key areas that should help 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year applicants, along with staff and clearness committees, discern whether or not remaining on as a resident is good for them and good for the community. Recognizing that it is unrealistic to expect each and every item listed below to be completed to perfection 100% of the time, these are important guidelines to follow in this process. The key areas are: **Leadership, Responsibility, Social Engagement, and Commitment to BHFH.**

To exhibit **Leadership** necessary for 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year residency, an applicant must:

1. Serve on two committees;
2. Be helpful and available when the need arises;
3. Engage in healthy conflict management;
4. Show initiative to make positive changes in the House;
5. Have an attitude valued by other residents; and
6. Have good communication skills.

To have **Responsibility** necessary for 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year residency, an applicant must:

1. Be financially responsible and accountable (i.e., pays rent on time & checks in when there are issues that might prevent that);
2. Complete chores and find subs when necessary;
3. Be present for all dish crews assigned and find subs when necessary; and
4. Attend all workdays and retreats.

To be **Socially Engaged** in a way necessary for 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year residency, an applicant must:

1. Connect with many residents equally and across their many differences (i.e., participates in house activities and makes an effort to get to know other housies);
2. Add to the social life of BHFH in a positive way;
3. Be attentive to communicated needs and boundaries of other residents;
4. Show sensitivity to the needs of new residents and guests; and
5. Have an awareness of inclusive behavior.

To show a **Commitment to BHFH** necessary for 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> year residency, an applicant must:

1. Desire to live in community;

2. Be present at house dinners on a regular and consistent basis;
3. Be absent no more than four (4) times from scheduled House Meetings per year; and
4. Indicate by words/actions that BHFH and the Quaker values it upholds are a priority.

## **APPENDIX D: Things Roommates May Want to Discuss**

1. What time do they prefer to get up and go to bed? If you are awake while they are asleep, do they want you to be absolutely quiet in darkness, or are they flexible to a little light and shuffling, within reason? (Perhaps the light sleeper should situate their bed away from the door and window). Does either of you plan to sleep in on weekends? How late?
2. How do they feel about you having friends to spend the night (in the room)? Do they plan to have friends spend the night often?
3. How do they feel about you having friends over while they're in the room? Do they plan to entertain in the room? If one of you is entertaining and the other walks in, do you want the newcomer to leave, join in, or should the roommate entertaining go elsewhere?
4. How do they feel about you touching any of their possessions, both the impersonal possessions (books, pens) and the more personal ones (clothes, toiletries)? Do they intend or want to borrow any of yours? Will you always ask each other ahead of time? Do some things have more of an informal policy?
5. Do they intend to play music while you are in the room? Do you like their taste in music and decibel level? Do they mind you playing your music?
6. How many hours a day do they spend in the room, and usually what time of day? Do they get out of the house much, how often, and if they are home will they spend most of their time in the room? If they are a student, will they study only in the room? Can they or you arrange to work in the house or school library?
7. How cold or warm do they like the room? Do they like the windows, curtains, and door generally open or shut?
8. Do they have many local friends already and consider the roommate situation a "business relationship" only, or are they looking to get to know their roommate on more of a friendship level? Are they introverted with a high value on their privacy, or extroverted with a tendency to share their daily events?
9. If they are undergoing stress of any kind will they tell you? In general, will they want you to leave them alone, or will they need to talk about it? How do they prefer to handle conflict? What roommate conflicts have they had in the past that might have an impact on the present situation?
10. Will they be leaving town many weekends for business trips or trips home? Do they spend a lot of nights away from the house?
11. If you are in your room, do you generally expect them to knock before entering? Do they want you to knock?
12. How do you feel about your roommate having phone conversations in the room? What about working on the computer or watching videos, especially late at night?
13. What are the "boundaries" of the room, in regard to closet, wall, and shelf space? Do you both want the room equally divided? Can your possessions mix together or do you

want specific sides? What are the cleanliness standards? Do those standards apply to both roommates? Be aware that vague standards like “I like it clean” don’t mean much when it comes down to logistics. Be more specific (frequency of vacuuming, etc.) Will you share equally in the room cleaning? Is the neater of the two willing to do extra cleaning work to keep it up to their standard? If one person is in flux, i.e. suitcases and boxes scattered about while packing or unpacking, will it bother the other one?

14. If a roommate doesn’t come home one night unexpectedly, should they call? Do they want you to call?

15. Does either of you have room habits that would potentially be annoying to the other? These might include: incense burning, eating in the room, watching TV, drying laundry, having parties with loud music/drinking, having jam sessions. Do either of you have planned room activities that require absolute silence, such as prayer or meditation? Does either of you plan to exercise in the room? Has either of you been told that you snore?

16. Do you want the door left open or closed when neither of you is in the room? Is it important?

17. Try to think of what you consider your room’s main uses to be. For some, the room is just a place to sleep, while for others it is an entertainment center, etc. What is your top priority for room use?

18. How much alone time do each of you need? How much talking do you want to do in the room? When you’re in the room together, do you want to be social? How will you communicate when you want to be social and when you need to be left alone?

### Additional Comments

Often roommate tensions have arisen because one or both are accustomed to having their own room, and because one or both are inflexible at some point. Realize that living together involves daily compromise, and it may take more effort to compromise at this point in our lives than when we were younger (e.g. living in college dorms).

Talking everything out, with a third person if need be, is usually the most effective way of keeping peace. Telling everyone in the house except your roommate what an impossible person your roommate is may be the easiest, but it is the most destructive. Be aware that mechanisms already exist within the house for dealing with conflict, should you feel a need to talk with another person about it. The Director, house meeting clerks, and resident members of the Residency Committee are all excellent resources.

## **APPENDIX E: Why Participation is Mandatory**

### ***The Director’s View***

The Beacon Hill Friends House is more than a place to live. We are here to create something living and vital that is greater than the sum of its parts. We are here to create a community. Together, we must foster deep love, trust, respect for all within and all who visit. Our community is our witness to the world, an example of how we can make the Peaceable

Kingdom present here and now. Our community can support us as we strive to live lives of integrity and in the Spirit.

We come together in various ways over the days, weeks and years. We share meals and chores. We work together on committees of all sorts. We get together for fun, service and learning inside and outside the house. These activities, house sponsored or not, all serve to weave us a bit closer together in community.

But the bond that weaves us the tightest, the greatest opportunity to deepen our connections to one another—is in house meetings and retreats. These are times that we all set aside to come together. These are the only times that we commit to all being together. We do this so we can get to know one another deeply, so we can grow deeper as a community, so we can build a deeper level of respect and trust among one another.

Without all of us committing to spend these times together, we become just another place to live.

Yes, that's right: When just one person is missing from these gatherings, there is a hole. Everyone who is there grows closer. The absent person cannot "make up" that shared intimacy. They cannot grow closer to the group and individuals, and the group and individuals cannot grow closer to the missing person.

With full participation, there is a deep sense of commitment. With full participation, we feel the shared commitment. With full participation, morale rises. With full participation we all can grow much closer together.

Without full participation, the force of all of these is weakened. When some residents have given up or rescheduled other opportunities and commitments in their lives, it is disappointing when others have not done the same. The value of group participation drops. Morale drops with it.

Friends, we have an opportunity to grow together, to have a deeper sense of connection with each other, and to build something greater than our individual selves.

Please contribute to the fabric of our community with your whole self. Come to dinner. Come to house meeting. Come to retreats. This is why we are here.

## **APPENDIX F: Advice for Resident Transitions**

### **When a resident moves out**

Like entering the community, leaving Beacon Hill Friends House takes a little extra effort. By the time you move out, be it after one year or four, you have relationships with twenty or so people currently in the house. Maintaining those relationships and fulfilling the community involvement expectations of living at BHFH can take extra time and effort

towards the end of your stay here because when someone moves out, many of the remaining residents will be missing you. Please keep this in mind when you are ready to move on to the next step in your life and make space for the additional effort this community needs from you on your way out.

While each vacancy is an opportunity for a new amazing person to move into the house, there is often a feeling of loss as well when vacancies are created by housies moving out. In your time at the house, people you care about will move out; sometimes this will be more difficult than others but we can always find support from each other.

### **Advice for departing residents**

Different people will deal with your leaving in different ways. Some will distance themselves from you, others will try to spend as much time as possible with you. Don't take it personally, this is their way of coping with your move.

You are still part of this community. You are responsible for your chores and other resident duties till the day you move out, but you are also responsible for the community involvement expectations. Take a look at what projects you are in the middle of, be it committee work, chore cycle, building work etc. how can you help the transition of responsibility go as smoothly as possible? Neglecting these responsibilities can send the message you don't value the community and unintentionally hurt your fellow housies. While you gain more responsibilities outside the house preparing for your move, please continue to spend time with the house and communicate with housies if they will be seeing less of you. Whether you have been here one year or four, you have been an integral part of our lives and people in the house value your friendship. When residents reduce their commitment to the basic minimum, a lack of participation is more visible than most realize and it can damage relationships you have put work into building. Leaving the house gracefully is a lot of work, know your limits and ask for help when you need it.

Some things that have helped make moving out easier for residents in the past:

- Having a good-bye party at a designated time for final goodbyes.
- Repeatedly announcing your last day in the house and last dinner etc., so people know when they will last see you and do not miss their opportunity to say goodbye.
- Writing a note on the fridge thanking the community for what it has meant to you.
- Talking about it a lot. This gives an opportunity for reflection and also helps compensate for resident forgetfulness.

Some questions to think about:

What tone will you be leaving on? Are you maintaining relationships as you leave? When is the last time you will see certain residents? Is there anything you want to say to them before you go? When is your last house meeting? Have you forgotten to say good bye to anyone?

### **Advice for remaining residents**

It can be difficult when someone leaves our little family at BHFH. Some things to remember:

It's not personal, it is this person's time to move on. If the resident who is moving out is spending less time at the house, please remember they have additional responsibilities outside the house as they prepare for whatever is next in their life, such as moving, looking for a new home, etc. This may take them away from the house more often but does not mean they value the community any less.

With each vacancy comes an opportunity for a new amazing person to move into the house. While we say goodbye to a resident this is also a time to ready ourselves to welcome new residents. Remember, we are all mentors to each other as we learn the ways of this house.

Some questions to think about:

If you want to maintain a close relationship after this resident moves out, how can you ensure that? When is the last time you will see this resident? Is there anything you want to say before they move out? And remember, they are not dying, just moving out. You can still see or write everyone.

### **Things to remember when a new resident moves in**

While we're all excited a new resident is moving in, we also need to remember there is a learning curve whenever someone new joins our community. There is a lot to learn about the various systems in the house and it can often be overwhelming. Please be patient and ready to answer the many questions new residents have. Remember that we are all mentors. Although each resident has a designated mentor, we will all have opportunities to guide and help new residents learn the ways of the house.

Staff are often the familiar face new residents turn to with questions. Everyone can help staff as each new resident learns about the boundary between work and home for us. You can support staff by answering questions, even if they are directed at a staff member. As you know, this is a nuanced part of life at BHFH, we all (staff and residents alike) need help with these boundaries.