

Bloomcraft Agreements

Founded in 2015, the Bloomcraft Building, located at 460 Melwood Avenue in Pittsburgh, is the result of over a decade of shared projects, spaces, organizing, collaborations, and friendships. Like the butterflies taking wing on the front windows, Bloomcraft is the metamorphosis of this community into something more dynamic than before, with greater reach, visibility, accessibility, and utility to the neighborhoods and city we love, work to change, and call home.

The Bloomcraft Building is shared by many people doing many different things. This document is a way to make our methods of sharing space visible and transparent to everyone who uses the building. It seeks to capture our big picture aspirations and the foundational agreements that make the building safer and more accessible to all. Please consider its content carefully, and make sure you can personally support it before becoming part of Bloomcraft. It's our way of saying, *I'm in! Onward!* Please also expect that this document will change as Bloomcraft continues to evolve.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS:

We steer the Bloomcraft Building guided by four visions of what Bloomcraft can be. These may, at times, be in dynamic tension with each other; at other times, they may be elegantly aligned. Each contributes an essential element to the soul of the project.

1. Bloomcraft is a place that strives to leverage long-term economic and social stability to create a dense web of relationships based on trust and mutual aid between the people who share it.
2. Bloomcraft is a collection of resources to be shared with others as we seek to realize and support the struggle for social justice and resiliency in the communities around us.
3. Bloomcraft is an opportunity to develop new organizational structures that, while legible in the current economic and political systems, help us learn new and better ways of relating to each other.
4. Bloomcraft is a place where we can make the possibilities we imagine real through craft, creativity, and action.

BASIC AGREEMENTS:

1. ___ We strive to treat everyone in the building, including ourselves, with kindness and respect.
2. ___ Physical violence will not be tolerated. We work to prevent behavior that is aggressive, harmful, or damaging to others.
3. ___ When we cause harm, which we all do from time to time, we take responsibility and try to make things right.

CONFLICT COMMITMENTS: [see Appendix A for more details]

1. ___ We approach conflicts in the building through a transformative justice framework.
2. ___ We take responsibility for ourselves and the community we are a part of by attending to conflict as it arises.
3. ___ We understand that conflict in community affects other people, and we agree to help each other recognize conflicts as they are happening and encourage proactive solutions.

4. ___ We know that we can ask for help and support from our friends, the Conflict Working Group, the Stewards, and outside resources to solve conflicts in flexible, creative ways.
5. ___ We agree to participate in the Conflict Resolution Process if asked to do so by someone who has a conflict with us.
6. ___ The Conflict Resolution Process is a living experiment. We recognize that we can change it if it does not serve us.

VALUES & SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS:

___ We recognize and affirm that these evolving values and shared understandings guide Bloomcraft:

VALUE	SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS
Sharing & Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The benefits of Bloomcraft are magnified the more we are able to share it. ● We want Bloomcraft to be known as a community resource that can be accessed and enjoyed. ● We strive to make our shared spaces available and welcoming to community groups, organizers, and youth when possible, and encourage each other to find ways to make our projects more accessible and relevant, especially to marginalized people. ● We will continue to work toward making our shared spaces physically accessible for all bodies and abilities.
Social Awareness & Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We strive to understand the social, political, and economic patterns unfolding around us; to respect the deep roots of history and its impacts on us and our neighbors; and to resist the role “cultural creatives” are expected to play in racism and gentrification. ● We acknowledge structural oppressions within Bloomcraft and work towards eliminating them.
Respect & Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bloomcraft houses public, semi-public, shared, and private spaces. ● We respect each other’s privacy and autonomy. ● We are patient and generous with each other about the use of public and shared space.
Diversity in Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bloomcraft is a crossroads for people, practices, and projects that find common ground under one roof. We are creating an environment where multiple perspectives, priorities, and worldviews are valued. ● We value diversity in identity, background, experience, and temperament and appreciate our differences while abiding by agreements for daily life that make our shared values both visible and actionable. ● We value both autonomy and interconnection and understand this as a balancing act. ● We strive to see each other as whole people and question our assumptions about others.
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We seek strong relationships based on mutual trust as the basis for collaboration and organizing. ● We see Bloomcraft as an incubator for new projects, collaborations, and shared work. ● We encourage open doors and support skill-sharing, cross-pollination, and tightening the weave of our social fabric across our daily lives. ● We aren’t a cool kids club. We put ourselves and guests at ease.
Shared Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Our structure is flexible but has a strong, clear foundation of support via the Stewardship Crew, Tenant Meetings, and Working Groups. ● All tenants are invited to rise to their own level of desired participation in the work of steering Bloomcraft through working groups, tenant meetings, and stepping up to make things happen.
Interconnection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bloomcraft at its best is a node in a network of spaces, organizations, collectives, businesses, and communities that together are building a city that is genuinely liveable for all its residents.
Humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will try to hold Bloomcraft to realistic standards while working to evolve it to the best possible iteration of itself. ● We recognize our limitations and intentionally pick our priorities. ● We cannot accommodate all the hopes and dreams of our city under one roof, nor should we.
Aspirations & Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We’re brought together by a desire to create with words, hands, and actions. ● We seek to make our dreams, skills, and intentions known, and to share them with each other. ● Celebrations, parties, and joyous shenanigans are priorities. ● We understand that shared culture and making stuff together is part of building community resiliency!

ANTI-OPPRESSION COMMITMENTS:

The three rivers region has a rich history of social struggle through solidarity and mutual aid. To rise effectively to the economic, social, environmental, and political challenges of our time, we must continue to build on this legacy by cultivating well-networked, resilient communities committed to the struggle for justice. Bloomcraft provides a space for such long-term engagement, which requires a recognition of the historic patterns of oppression and exploitation upon which our foundation is laid.

Oppressive behavior comes in a wide variety of forms, from seemingly harmless jokes to threats of violence, from interrupting to verbal abuse, from unwanted touching to rape, from exclusion from spaces to loss of housing, from hitting to murder. Some forms of oppression are more extreme and irreparable than others, but all are significant. Oppressive behavior is any conduct that demeans, marginalizes, undermines, rejects, threatens or harms anyone on the basis of ability, age, class/income level, cultural background, education, ethnicity, gender, immigration status, language, nationality, physical appearance, race, religion, self-expression, sexual orientation, status as a parent or other such factors.

1. ___ Oppression exists. We recognize systems of oppression including racism, patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism that intersect in complex ways in our identities, relationships, projects, and everyday lives.
2. ___ We recognize that we have internalized the oppressive dynamics around us and replicate them in our communities.
3. ___ We take responsibility for trying to become increasingly aware of how oppression operates around us and within us, and we strive to create a safer, welcoming space for all Bloomcraft participants. We understand that unconscious biases cause real harm and are open to having our blind spots pointed out to us so that we can work to be more respectful in our speech and actions. We help each other with this when possible/appropriate, and emphasize personal responsibility, self-education, and self-care.
4. ___ While as individuals and formal or informal groups we can engage with the struggle to dismantle oppressive systems in many ways, we affirm that Bloomcraft's institutional strategy focuses on two modes:
 - Building relationships and sharing resources with communities, projects, or organizations led by people of color, poor people, youth and elders, immigrants, indigenous people, queer and trans people and all marginalized folks. We focus on supporting efforts to build or strengthen mutual aid, justice, and long-term resiliency in Pittsburgh.
 - Working towards a diverse tenant body, leadership structure, and web of relationships for Bloomcraft, centering people of color, women, queer folks, working class, and poor folks.

STRUCTURE & PROCESS COMMITMENTS: [see Appendix B for more details]

The Bloomcraft Building is an experiment that requires ongoing reflection, revision, attention, and care. The **Stewards, Working Groups, and Tenant Meetings** are intended to create feedback loops for assessment and reassessment so that we can all sail this ship soundly into the future. Participation in all governance activities is voluntary. While everyone can rise to their own ideal level of participation, no one should feel pressured to participate, nor should they stand in the way of the actions of the more participatory.

1. ___ It is inevitable that things will happen that we don't like. We recognize that we have the option and opportunity to engage with developing Bloomcraft through multiple channels and that it is our responsibility to do so if the project is not meeting our needs.
2. ___ We are invited to attend monthly meetings and participate in decisions that affect us. We can put items on the agenda, make proposals, share ideas, and help plan and facilitate discussions.
3. ___ We may form working groups to tackle chunks of work. Working groups can discuss ideas, develop proposals, and often act directly to make things happen.

4. ___ We can also organize voluntary discussion groups, trainings, or other kinds of spaces for tenants to come together.
5. ___ We can use listserves to keep up to date on the work of the building and to participate in discussions. If we need more information, we can always ask.
6. ___ We understand that the Stewardship Crew structure was designed to help Bloomcraft function smoothly:
 - a. by being responsive to and supportive of the needs of all current tenants;
 - b. by making space for all tenant voices to be heard, including those that choose not to participate and those that might otherwise be marginalized;
 - c. by being accountable to our values, the broader community, our neighbors, and future tenants;
 - d. by taking on financial and legal responsibility for what happens in the building;
 - e. and by doing the nitty-gritty work of facilitation, project management, accounting, maintenance, and communications.
7. ___ We recognize the complexity of the position of the Stewards in taking on the above responsibilities while also being co-tenants and community members and will do our best to treat them as collaborators and allies in making Bloomcraft a success.
8. ___ Both the Stewardship Crew model and the people involved can and will change as necessary.

BASIC GROUND RULES:

These basic ground rules are a starting place. The list can also be added to as we see how things go and what we need to harmoniously share space.

1. ___ No smoking or vaping anywhere in the building. Please go outside.
2. ___ Alcohol may not be consumed in public spaces except during designated events.
3. ___ Don't feed the pests! Put your food away.
4. ___ Sleeping in private spaces is okay as long as it doesn't disturb others; living in them is not.
5. ___ No guns are allowed in the building at any time.
6. ___ Don't damage or deface the building or its fixtures, fittings, decor, or furnishings, or compromise the facility or its protection from fire, flood, gas, electricity, or weather (i.e. please don't break stuff or burn the house down).
7. ___ Keep common areas clean and clear of personal clutter.
8. ___ You are responsible for your guests.
9. ___ Be environmentally responsible:
 - a. Deal with hazardous waste appropriately.
 - b. Turn off lights and other appliances when not in use.
 - c. Limit emissions and contaminants, and don't expose other people to toxins.
10. ___ Youth are welcome and encouraged in the building as long as they are with a parent or guardian or an educator with required clearances.
11. ___ Negotiate in good faith with other tenants about sound. There are no specific quiet hours.
12. ___ Well-behaved pets are allowed in Bloomcraft with companion people; i.e. with you at all times or in your own closed space. If pets turn to pests, we will problem solve and possibly ask pests to leave.

REGULAR BUILDING USERS

1. All building users including tenants, subletters, employees, collective members, bandmates, recurring guests, & collaborators are asked to do the following:
 - a. ___ Read and agree to Building Agreements.
 - b. ___ Return keys when project/sublet period/association ends.

2. Non-leaseholding users recognize the following:
 - a. ___ We can/will lose our space in the building if our leaseholder leaves for any reason.
 - b. ___ We are welcome to participate in building process.
 - c. ___ We can choose to be added to all building communication lists and calendars.

3. ___ Leaseholders who wish to sublet accept the following terms:
 - a. A written explanation of the proposed sublet agreement and the contact info of the subletter are shared with the Stewards in advance of any commitments;
 - b. Stewards have the right to veto if the sublet is not in the best interest of the building as a whole;
 - c. The term of a sublet agreement cannot be longer than the term of the leaseholder's current lease with the building;
 - d. Leaseholders are responsible for their subletter's conduct in the building;
 - e. Bloomcraft aims to provide space that is affordable over the long term. In general, it's not okay to take advantage of that by subletting your space at market rates. The Stewardship Crew will consider each situation individually, with the following guidelines:
 - i. Leaseholders should not charge more than 110% of their rent to a subletter;
 - ii. If a leaseholder chooses to share their space, they should not charge the studiomate more than 50% of the total rent.

FLEXIBILITY:

___ We understand that this project is an experiment that will continue to evolve and that that is one of our strengths!

By signing this document, I agree to uphold these aspirations and agreements in a spirit of goodwill, experimentation, humility, compassion, and personal responsibility.

Name

Date

Signature

Email Address

Phone Number

APPENDIX A : Conflict Resolution

conflict is something that happens in relationships and communities. it is a healthy part of life when addressed constructively.

we are all capable of causing harm. we are all capable of growth and change.

we work together and help each other resolve and transform from conflicts.



our goal is to use conflict as a chance to learn and evolve.

we take responsibility for ourselves and the community we are a part of by attending to conflict when it arises and asking for the help and support we need.

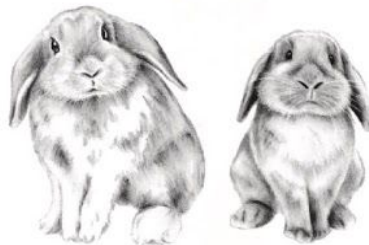
transformative justice framework

when we cause harm to others we also cause harm to ourselves

we resist the logic of the prison industrial complex that encourages us to reduce our conception of people to their worst deeds and to banish or punish them.

we rely on ourselves, each other, the potential security team, the conflict working group, and the stewardship crew to respond to threatening or harmful behavior with de-escalating techniques. for lots and lots of reasons, we make every effort to solve conflicts without ever calling the cops.

when harm happens, we listen closely to those who have experienced it and strive to create safe, supportive conditions for healing and repair.

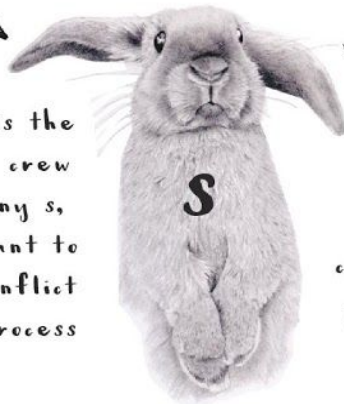


as long as someone is willing to engage with an accountability process, there are no accusations or actions that automatically preclude them from being part of the building.



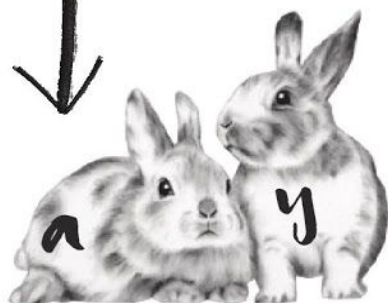
conflict resolution process

bunny a has an issue with bunny b that they feel they cannot resolve without help...



bunny a tells the stewardship crew liaison, bunny s, that they want to initiate a conflict resolution process

bunny s tells bunny b that a conflict resolution process has been initiated



bunny a and bunny b can each select a buddy to participate in the crp for support and advocacy... bunnies y and z.



bunnies s, y and z help bunnies a and b choose three neutral bunnies to round out the conflict resolution process team

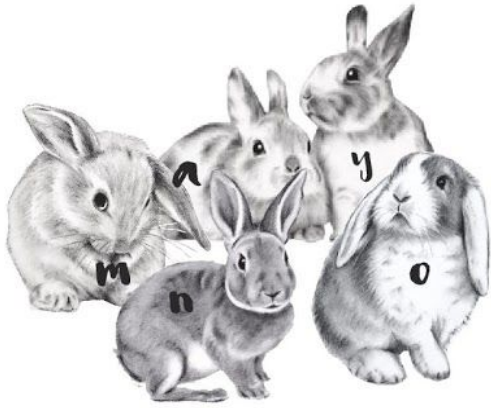


can get support and draw from...

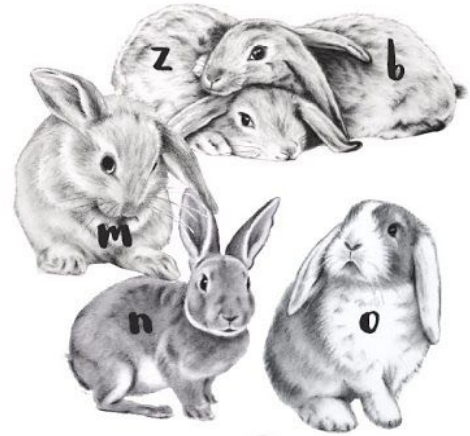
building agreements

conflict working group

stewardship crew



bunnies m n and o may meet with bunnies a and b separately to better understand the situation and help establish ground rules that make everyone feel safe enough to work on the conflict.



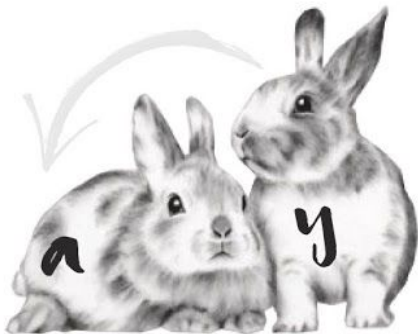
Whats up... bunnies a and b explain their points of view and deeply listen to each other

Own up... bunnies a and b take responsibility for their roles in the conflict

Whats next... bunnies a and b agree on a list of concrete steps towards accountability and healing and a timeline for completing them or initiating them.

next steps lists

both a and b may leave with time bound list of to dos



bunnies y and z continue to check in with a and b to provide support. any of these bunnies can also ask for additional support from m n and o.



after an agreed upon amount of time
the conflict team meets again...



bunnies
deliberate
and determine
outcome



this is a
last resort...

outcome
1

everyone
agrees next
steps lists
have been
completed



conflict resolution
process is

resolved

outcome
2


some but not
all of the next
steps have
been completed
or there is
disagreement
among the crp
bunnies

conflict resolution
process

continues

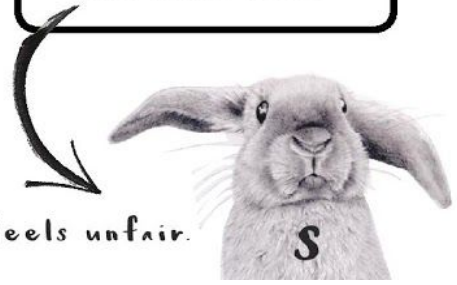
outcome
3

with consensus
of bunnies
m, n and o



**lease
termination**

for bunny b with
one month notice



bunnies can appeal to the stewards if the process feels unfair.

Note: This is intended to be a flexible framework for approaching conflict. If you are in a situation that needs a less formal intervention, feel free to ask the Conflict Working Group (CWG) for some help.

Conflict Resolution Process (CRP) Details:

- Both A & B need to approve all 3 neutral people (M, N, & O). In this context, neutral does not mean that people do not have relationships with each other, but simply that all parties believe that they can be unbiased in helping to determine the outcome of this particular situation.
- Ideally M, N, & O come from within the building, but if no one within the building is acceptable to both A & B, neutral parties from outside the space can be brought in.
- M, N & O's job is to hold brave space where everyone can speak their own truth and be heard; acknowledge multiple realities and perspectives and contexts; make sure each step of the process feels fair to everyone; refer back to Building Agreements and collective values; offer wisdom; and help seek innovative solutions that work for everyone, including the broader Bloomcraft community.
- Everyone who thinks they might be interested in helping out as a neutral party in future conflicts will go through a training, put together by the Conflict Working Group (CWG), and be on a list of potential participants.
- Each conflict will have its own unique team to make sure everyone is comfortable and to reduce burnout.
- No one from the Stewardship Crew is part of the CRP Team unless they have volunteered and been requested by A & B.
- Each CRP Team will establish its own standards for confidentiality.
- The CRP Team will meet as many times as necessary, depending on the situation and people involved.
- Examples of possible Next Steps List (NSL) items include not repeating trigger behavior(s), using new communication styles, repaying debts, anti-oppression training, therapy, self-care, apologizing, etc.)
- If B's commitment to their NSL is unclear or the CRP Team disagrees about its completion (Outcome 2), the CRP Team will hear B's explanations, discuss, and all come to consensus to either;
 - consider the process resolved;
 - initiate a second NSL; or if that is impossible;
 - M, N, & O come to consensus to:
 - initiate a second NSL;
 - offer another alternative for resolution;
 - terminate B's lease
- If B is asked to leave the CRP team helps negotiate B's ongoing relationship to the building.
- If B is a member of a lease-holding organization, the organization can avoid lease termination by terminating B's individual involvement in the building.
- At least early on, as many CRP Team members as possible debrief about process (not content) with CWG members so that the CRP can be refined.

APPENDIX B : Process & Structure

Bloomcraft Groups

This is a sketch of a structure for keeping the building going, ensuring people can rise to their chosen level of involvement, and making sure that nobody takes on more that they can handle, that the stewards are responsive to the building users, and the building users communicate effectively with the stewards and can self-organize as much as possible.

We think there are four types of groups that will work together to make Bloomcraft awesome. At the heart of everything are monthly meetings that everyone in the building is invited to attend. These Bloomcraft Monthly Meetings are a chance for everyone in the building to think about and discuss issues that have come up during the month, and to provide guidance to the stewardship crew. We expect that Working Groups will form out of these discussions to focus on specific areas of interest or concern. The Stewardship Crew is responsible for bottom lining the basic functioning of the building facilities, administration, community, and process. Finally, an Advisory Board of some kind will provide expertise and guidance to the stewardship crew, to help us achieve our long term goals.

Working Groups

- **Members** - Emergent groups self-organized by building users and supported by stewards.
- **Purpose** - Working groups may form around anything the building users think is important or want to work on, from decor, to conflict mediation, to researching lightbulb vendors, to planning a capital campaign or snowball fight. They may be standing groups with long term workloads, or emergent, project focused groups that expire and dissolve.
- **Meetings** - Meet as needed.
- **Process** - Internally structured however they prefer. Bring recommendations, suggestions, and proposals to the stewards and full building user body and take on their own projects. Stewards may be participants in some working groups, especially those related to their jobs.

Regular Building Users

- **Members** - Anyone who is connected to a project that rents a space can participate.
- **Purpose** - These meetings will be best used for face-time with each other, workshopping ideas, discussing issues, gathering information, and to get a “sense of the meeting” for where building users are coming from.
- **Meetings** - Monthly optional, open meetings.
- **Process** - Monthly building user meetings will always include a reportback from the stewards, and will often involve requests from stewards for feedback, information, or guidance. They will also include building user-requested agenda items. These meetings will be large.

Stewards

- **Members** - (Currently: Emily, Phip, Stuart & Zoë).
- **Purpose** - This group exists to balance a commitment to the (evolving) mission of Bloomcraft, the current building user body, future building users(ie. commitment to long-term thinking) and the community beyond the building. Stewards are holding the majority of the high-stakes work that makes the building go.
- **Meetings** - Weekly in person meetings
- **Process** - Stewards have individual jobs and work together as a fluid close team. Parts of their work may be passed off to working groups who self-organize from among the building users, or stewards may seek help for different duties from building users and ask for a working group to form.They are empowered to move work forward, and responsible for being transparent, responsive, and accountable to building users about that work through reports to monthly meetings.

Advisory Board

- **Purpose** - As yet unbuilt, this group will include folks whose expertise, leadership, and perspective can help Bloomcraft uphold its mission.
- **Process** - We don't know yet! We know it starts with a lot of outreach, networking, and relationship building.

Mechanisms for Change

As we move forward, nothing is set in stone. Each of these groups (the building users, the working groups, the stewards, and the advisory board) have regular meetings for assessment, revision, and steering. In addition, we will prioritize planning an annual meeting process that provides all of us with a time out from the daily life of the building to take stock of what's going on and whether it's working.

Ultimately, we have to be willing to try new stuff, and we have to be willing to make changes when we learn new things. "Praxis" is the cycle of guessing at a theory of what will work in a given scenario, trying stuff out, and then revising the theory about what will work based on the results of the trial. Bloomcraft is an experiment; we have some theories about what will work based on past experiences, research, and our aspiration and dreams, but once we start to put our theories into practice we will certainly find that we need to tweak and change our ideas and practices to better match reality.

Job Descriptions for the Stewards

Here's our best crack at starting to clarify roles and jobs. We imagine that each job has both core functions and aspirational dreamy goals attached to them; both of these are below. We also imagine that all this work needs to be somewhat fluid; stewards will need the flexibility to pass tasks among ourselves. Finally, as explained above, self-organized working groups may take on, grow, or semi-take on some of these elements; the steward is the backup person for working groups, and will make sure the working groups have the support they need to manage those pieces well.

PHIP: Facilities

CORE

- Ensure physical building meets basic building user needs
- Track and schedule
 - contracted work
 - routine maintenance items
 - inventory / supply orders
 - issues not in tracker [through observation & building user interactions]
 - volunteer labor (Coordinated with Zoë)
 - [cleaning, routine maintenance, projects, etc]
- Deploy and manage building systems
 - network infrastructure / QoS
 - access control
 - building issue tracker
 - calendar (online/offline)
 - on-call contact system [pagerduty?] for building emergencies
- Coordinate tenant move in / move out
 - keys & fobs to incoming building users / from outgoing building users
 - ensure spaces are cleaned and repaired for next occupant
 - explain use of issue tracker, access control, email lists, etc

REACH

- Develop documentation and training programs
- Organize inventory to be easily findable by all
- Research and planning of future building improvements

ZOË: Administration

CORE

- Scheduling support for common spaces (and developing a system for booking)
[including liaising with theater]
- Electronic billing for rent collection (and following up with people)
- Paying bills and maintaining preliminary records
- Collecting documentation for all income & expenses (and reconciling with bank statements)
- Maintaining electronic and paper filing systems
- Maintaining data (ie contact list of participants, notes and folders, etc)
- Moderating and managing communications infrastructure (googlegroups etc)
- Supporting internal process work, especially tracking the work of the stewards
- Supporting volunteer coordination with systems

REACH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping with decorating & organizing space • Helping to develop building culture / set tone (encouraging transparency, fluidity, participation) • Helping us live up to our mission • Thinking more about future buy-in process • Developing systems and documenting procedures

EMILY: Community Engagement
CORE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bottomline internal structure and process work & building user support • network with outside entities (other cultural spaces, foundations, organizations, the neighborhood) locally and regionally • focus on strategy, especially upholding anti-racism and anti-gentrification work • cultivate community advisory board • answer or direct incoming mail, email & calls • media & web, communications, print materials • support working groups & building user communications • bottomline tenant search process • coordinate decor, space organization & analog communications systems for common spaces
REACH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national networking • political education & training opportunities • coordinate volunteer opportunities with allied groups • plan parties and events

STUART: Legal & Finances
CORE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting & Allocation (spending triage) • Find & choose vendors • Process taxes • High level bookkeeping & developing accounting systems • Quarterly meeting with accountant to reconcile for taxes

- Lease updates
- Contracts
- Choosing and shopping for insurance policies
- Stewardship crew managing member: legal filings, risk management
- Legal counsel interface

REACH

- Organize social gatherings
- Work with maintenance and building users to plan and execute building upgrades
- Arrange financing for larger improvements
- Mortgage refinancing