



Cohousing in Corvallis

An E Newsletter from CoHo Cohousing
Corvallis, Oregon

Issue 29 December 2006



Remember when your best friend lived right next door?

CoHo in 2006—A Year of Challenges, Changes and Chuckles

Reviewing a year's worth of meeting minutes, email messages, [newsletters](#) and [photos](#) in order to capture some of the highlights of being a CoHoot during 2006 has been exhilarating. This month-by-month photo narrative gives you a glimpse of life in CoHo. We hope this year-in-review will become the traditional format for our final newsletter of each year. A CoHo time capsule is also in the works to preserve special mementos of the year we become next-door neighbors.

January

- CoHo launched the new year with a [Mock Home Selection session](#) to start the process of picking our homes. Members gained experience evaluating and expressing their housing needs and the community gained experience in the logistics of compiling and sharing that data.
- The [Wellness Retreat](#) was a blend of group sharing, activities, dining (with "stone soup"), and bonding...plus a light-hearted, but heartfelt tribute to [Bruce](#), our neighbor and project manager.
- Work continued on two policies—smoking and home businesses.
- Members kayaked and canoed on [Crystal Lake](#).
- CoHo welcomed new members [April and Craig](#); [Marcy, Nathan, and Robert](#).



February



- Although the winter was wet, we received assurances that CoHo would not be flooded during the rainy season via [Richard's careful analysis and confirmation](#) that our site is well above the 100-year flood plain.
- At [Final Home Selection](#), 24 households selected their homes and were photographed placing their "[front door](#)" on the CoHo map.
- The Design & Development Committee trimmed unit price increases.
- Joining the CoHo family were [Alex, Greg, Jodi, and Katie](#); [Debby and Ron](#); and [Jeremy, Jessica, Rachel and Shoshana](#).

March

- CoHoots greeted 40+ visitors at our first Welcome Weekend.
- Construction drawings were 95% complete.
- Our plans were filed with the city in time to avoid a \$10,000 increase in permitting fees.
- More than 100 photos were added to our website.
- Tree Bressen, a Eugene consultant who has worked with CoHo over the years, facilitated a workshop on our gun policy.
- Landscape plans and a long list of member sweat-equity projects were reviewed; we'll need many helping hands!



April

- Hundreds of folks helped us celebrate CoHo's future at our April 18th Groundbreaking Ceremony (blessed with sunny skies!) A hardy crew (working partly in the rain) marked the boundaries of the Common House with stakes and brightly colored tape. CoHoots stayed after the ceremony and enjoyed their first meal on the land. The wiggling fingers in this photo signal our applause for the event.



- Our Finance Committee generated and shared a condo process flowchart to show the financial steps for the project overall.
- Reservation documents were signed and folks "put an apple on the tree" to show they were committing to CoHo.
- The sunny skies held so that CoHoots could take part in the Earth Fair parade in their famous CoHo costume (aka "the big fish").
- Visitors were greeted at the April Welcome Weekend and throughout the 8-month Farmer's Market season that started this month.

May

- The appraisal documented the overall value of our project, our WorkShare policy was adopted, and interviews began for a new general contractor.



- At the Welcome Weekend, folks learned the fine art of button-spinning and then shared their talent at Farmers Markets.
- Because they contribute greatly to the overall CoHo census, CoHo pets started contributing articles to the newsletter.
- Camas was again harvested from our meadow by Native American students at Oregon State University for their annual salmon bake. We got tips on growing and harvesting camas.
- Jessica, Mason, Meredith and Ted joined the CoHo family.





June

- A large sign was posted on the land.
- Fortis Construction was selected as our general contractor, the project received preliminary loan approval, and a back yard proposal was initiated.
- To expand our skills, two members were trained in Sociocracy, a consent-based strategy. CoHo decided to experiment with using sociocracy at

meetings and to modify techniques to blend with our consensus and NVC practices.

- The June Welcome Weekend was bustling, with 18 visitors overall.
- The TRUTH about how CoHo got its name was revealed.

July

- Our July 1st Wellness Retreat launched a busy month.
- CoHoots had a booth at the local daVinci Days Festival and then closed out the weekend with a front yard party to celebrate the approval of our construction loan.
- A Children's Subcommittee was formed and a Waiting List Agreement was completed.
- To keep cool, CoHoots and friends enjoyed a river rafting and tubing trip on the Willamette River (ending right in Corvallis) and a group swim at the Osborn Aquatic Center.
- CoHo ranks were increased with new members Andy, Caleb and Stacey; Aria, Dave and Joey; Elizabeth and John Jo; Jen, Rob and Skya; and Peter. We reached the long-awaited goal of 80% of our units presold, a requirement for our construction loan.



August

- Another awesome flowchart was set up to show the communication channels during construction.
- A Coordinating Committee was formed to be the primary interface with our project manager and neighbor, Bruce.
- Work continued on fine-tuning our condo docs, and estimating homeowner's association dues.
- To improve communications for out-of-town folks calling into our

community meetings, "phone buddies" were trained in the fine art of moving fast.

- Another Welcome Weekend was held pool-side.
- The 25th issue of CoHo's email newsletter was published and the newsletter switched from a weekly to a monthly schedule.
- Our Health and Safety Subcommittee was launched.

September



- After final home prices were set, a session was held for those who wanted to swap homes.
- Election of board (but not bored!) officers was done using the Sociocratic selection process.
- Three representatives from our general contractor met with CoHoots and neighbors to answer questions about the project.
- A consensus training session was held with Tree Bressen.
- A Food Folks Subcommittee started work on our meal program and bulk buying so we'll be ready to go as soon as we move in.
- A family picnic at Willamette Park was followed by a final blessing ceremony on the land.
- The building permit was approved, construction began and some trees came down.... Sigh.
- Patricia joined CoHo.



October



- With construction underway, a Watch Us Build page was added to the website. Now CoHo members and supporters (local and across the country) can watch our homes being built.
- Members made selections from the early upgrades package.
- At the October Welcome Weekend, we started to collect recipes to build a CoHo recipe book for common meals.
- Our Landscaping Committee started gearing up for their role in our site construction. They also researched creative and practical ways to use timber harvested from our land for benches, shelving, and landscaping features.
- Isabelle and Renee; and Sue became members.

November

- Discussions were renewed on long-term affordability, the transition from our current organizational structure to WorkShare, and the Friends of CoHo category.
- Decisions were made about garages and our expanded community workshop.
- Our Interiors Committee (recently renamed the Department of Interiors) reconvened and gave us a preview on interior finishes to be selected in the next package of options and upgrades.



- At the November Welcome Weekend, we celebrated birthdays, danced to live music (accordion, mandolin, guitar, fiddle, and drums) and gave our input to the Food Folks Subcommittee on our experiences dining at round vs. rectangular tables.
- Some CoHoots braved the rain to press gallons of cider; others shared a Thanksgiving meal and a tummy-challenging game of Twister.
- There were 2,623 visits to our website in November.



December

- CoHoots continued their active meeting schedule, but also found time for a bring-your-own-mug vegetarian soup potluck and a festive holiday party.
- In support of our sustainability goal, members offered alternative holiday giving ideas.
- The second CoHo NVC (nonviolent communication) class of the year was nearing completion.
- Construction was 12% complete (in early December).

To find out more about CoHo Cohousing

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Juva plays with husband, Denny, sharing ice cream and birthday cake at the November Welcome Weekend, and



Susan enjoys a chuckle with Denny at a community meeting



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Share this link with someone who may be interested in CoHo!

