

## **General Information About Ten Stones Community Life**

### **July 2023**

**Ten Stones is a place** that integrates a social, supportive community life and a connection to the land, where we enjoy a healthy balance of privacy and community. We share a commitment to living together cooperatively and ecologically. By combining our efforts, we deepen our relationships with each other, the land, and our shared resources. Our community life offers many opportunities for connection as fellow caretakers of our shared home. Eating together, celebrating events, combining our creative talents in music and art, caring for each other's homes and pets when the need arises, and working together to bring our talents and interests into the practical business of caring for our community, all weave the tapestry of our life here.

Our community agreements are fully outlined in our Ten Stones Village Association Bylaws, Ten Stones Declaration of Covenants, and through our community agreements. This is community information you want to be aware of when considering joining the Ten Stones Community.

**Participation in the Community Decision-Making Process** - The Ten Stones Community is self-governing and operates on a consensus decision-making model. Community members are strongly encouraged to attend community meetings (held on a bi-weekly or monthly basis). Decisions in these meetings are made through a consensus decision-making process. Some decisions, considered to "significantly impact the quality of life or environment of Ten Stones Village" are considered to be High Impact, and move to a supermajority vote. Each lot has two votes, with one vote for each household in the duplex.

**Ten Stones Association Dues and Fees** - Association dues cover the cost of shared operations and capital (water supply, septic, road maintenance and plowing, equipment purchase and maintenance, Common House operations, capital replacement and repair, liability insurance, etc.). Dues are set on an annual basis and are to be paid quarterly by the end of the first month of each quarter. Residents of the duplex split the cost of per lot dues. Ten Stones may also levy special assessments or fees by community agreement per our Bylaws.

**Community Work Requirement** - The Ten Stones Community depends on work contributions from every household to meet our needs for self-administration and governance, utilities management, land management, and community-building. Every adult community member is required to complete individual community work hours through a sign-up process and to attend the 2-3 x per year community work days. On average, the annual work commitment has been approximately 30 hours per adult resident per year, not including the community work days. This number will vary based on job requirements, special projects, and the number of adults in residence. This requirement also applies to any renter within the community. Young adults and children are also welcome to participate when able.

**Utilities: Water and Septic** - Ten Stones Village Association is responsible for supplying all houses with these utilities. The community is responsible for well maintenance, water testing for all wells, pressure tank testing, and septic system maintenance, including septic tank maintenance/pumping. The homeowner is responsible for all components of the water system within their home (pressure tank replacement, water treatment systems, plumbing, etc.) and leading to the tank. The constructed wetland component of the septic management system is an

organic living system that needs to be maintained and protected. Homeowners must not send chlorine or bleach, fats/oils (e.g., bacon fat) and inorganic matter (e.g., paints/solvents, or anything that does not immediately biodegrade, like facial tissue) into the septic system. As with any septic system, no tampons or pads should be flushed into the system. All of these substances may threaten the life of the wetland and result in great expense to the community. The cost of operating and maintaining the water and septic systems represents our biggest annual expense. There are both shared wells and individual wells that serve various homes. Prospective buyers should consult with sellers on details.

**Modifications to Home/Property** - The Ten Stones Community delegates review of all new construction and exterior remodelling (including painting) of dwellings, structures, and landscaping to our Design Review Committee. Prior to making any modifications to the exterior of your home or property, you are required to check town regulations, talk with your neighbors, talk to the Design Review Committee, and submit an application form to the Design Review Committee. Upon review of proposals, The Design Review Committee will report to the community its findings regarding alignment between the homeowner's proposal and the design review criteria. The community will then approve the project or request modifications. The use of any kind of fence is discouraged.

**Lot Boundaries** - There is a list of GPS coordinates for all boundaries available as a Google doc.

**Common Property** - Homeowners share community property and infrastructure. The community has shared agreements in place for use and guidelines around common space. Personal items (e.g., vehicles, boats, etc.) are to be stored on homeowner's private lots. A request can be made to the community to store items in common areas. Modifications to the common land or the addition of a structure to common property must come forward to the community as a proposal for approval. We also share our road and for the safety and enjoyment of all who use it, we ask that drivers observe the speed limit of 10 mph.

**Home Rentals** - Dwellings may be leased or rented, subject to the terms and conditions of the Bylaws. Homeowners must have completed a minimum of six months of using the property as their primary residence before renting. The Champlain Housing Trust has additional guidelines particular to the duplex. The Ten Stones Bylaws include additional information about leasing (Article VII, Section P). We do not currently allow for Airbnb or similar publicly advertised rentals in the community.

**Animal Ownership** - House pets (e.g., cats and dogs) are welcome at Ten Stones; the community has dog guidelines that homeowners are expected to follow. Keeping bees, goats, and chickens are individual and group activities limited to the agricultural areas of the property (with the exception of brooding poultry). The introduction of other types of outside animals and livestock must be presented as a proposal to the community for approval.

**Environmental Engagement** - Environmental awareness is a major component of life at Ten Stones with focused projects evolving with the interests of the community.

**Land stewardship** efforts include respect for the Vermont Class II Wetland guidelines along the Western edge of both private and shared property, invasive species mitigation in the meadow and new growth forest, and recent efforts anticipating the advancing emerald ash borer.

**The Community Garden** is another major anchor for the community. Like the animal coop, participation in the garden is optional. The garden has historically been a place to connect to the land and to each other. It continues to thrive as a community center after 20+ years.

**Solar** has a large presence at Ten Stones with a solar array in the meadow serving some households. Others have rooftop solar panels or off-site solar CSA membership.

**Original development decisions at Ten Stones** reflected environmental awareness of the day, such as straw bale homes, natural materials, and energy efficiency. In the next generation of energy use, many households are converting to technologies such as heat pumps as a further commitment to lighten environmental impact.

**Social Engagement** - Life at Ten Stones thrives when members are engaged in the community in a variety of ways. Opportunities for interaction range from scheduled meals and annual events to spontaneous meetings on the property. All members are encouraged to create opportunities for interaction and enjoyment of our life together.

**In closing**, each household that joins becomes a new and equal voice that enriches our community. We recognize the wisdom of those with history and the fresh perspectives offered by those who come with new ideas.