

Spokescouncil Meeting - Date: 08-09-2025, 3-5 pm

Agenda

start time 3:15

- Working Group and Admin Committee check-ins /role call (5 min)
 - reminder that only the speaking delegate can speak and voice FAs and blocking concerns, note taker delegate will take notes on whatever is relevant to their group and anything else they want to note down
- role assignments (5 min)
 - facilitator - Ash
 - meeting notes - TBD (will have to log all FA's and roll)
 - stack/ timer - Shelby
- Briar introduces Deadnamejar! + role to hand it around (5 min)
- Two Wheel Model (brief explanation w/ projection of image) (5 min)
 - Raise your hand if you were involved in any of the 585 emergency meetings ? Thank you!
 - What is the difference b/w a WG and an Admin Committee? WG's focus on a particular project - For Admin Committees, Ridgewood Commons is their project. The working groups are unified by the spokescouncil.
 - The admin collective is empowered by the spokescouncil to make day to day decisions to keep the space running. There are many ways in which power is balanced and kept primarily in the hands of the spokescouncil:
 - 1. The spokescouncil ratifies committee charters and will need to be re-ratified if major changes are made
 - 2. The spokescouncil has the ability to revoke the committee point person if they aren't fulfilling their obligations
 - 3. Admin Committees are made up of Working Group members. No committee member should be only participating in a committee, they should be involved in at least one WG regularly. We are trying to avoid having an "administrative class" in the space
 - 4. Admin committees will make regular announcements at Spokescouncil meetings and share what decisions were made and what is upcoming
 - A note on committee point people and members: Point people are committed long term to that role and are ultimately responsible to the fulfillment of the tasks. No point person can be point person for more than one committee! But a point person for one committee can be a support member in another. Committee members

support the point person with tasks and are encouraged to float around committees if they want to learn different skills and take on different roles.

- Important note! This model is currently our best attempt to create a collective space and we will have a meeting in 6 months to check in and see how things are going
- *Spokescouncil Planning Group open to discuss after! ask people to raise hands, find us after the meeting to chat including how to get involved in the working group*
- How voting works (specific to today only b/c of how many charters we have) (10 min)

- 1) Streamlined Charter Review

We've got a lot of charters to review (16 total) which means we can't do our usual deep-dive for each one.

So here's the plan: we'll quickly run through all the charters at the start of the meeting and ask if any delegates have blocking concerns or important friendly amendments.

If there are **no** concerns? That charter gets a thumbs-up and moves on.

If there **are** concerns? We'll pause and talk about just those.

- 2) How friendly amendments work

Think of friendly amendments as helpful suggestions, not binding changes. Since delegates can't accept or reject FA's on the spot, the group will decide how to integrate FA's **after** this meeting.

Working groups and committees will have the next month to review any friendly amendments and decide what to do with them. By the next spokescouncil meeting, the Spokescouncil Planning Group will check in to collect updated versions of the charters and see which suggestions were accepted or turned down (with a quick explanation if anything was rejected).

We'll share the updated charter with everyone afterward. And if there's still an issue (like a rejected amendment that folks feel strongly about) it can be brought back as a full proposal later on.

- **BREAK** (10 min)
- Charter time! 16 charters (up to 40 min)
 - Committees:
 - Comms and Tech
 - Finance
 - Fundraising and Grants
 - Rentals
 - Facilities
 - Relational skills (withdrawn)
 - WGs
 - Food pantry
 - gym
 - Readgewood tutoring
 - spokescouncil planning
 - dinner
 - technical collective
 - tues reading group

- writing group
- yoga and meditation
- Closing announcements/ remarks (5 min)
 - Call for proposals for next meeting, cleaning proposal
 - Offer to train people to do roles for next meeting, role volunteers
 - Last but not least, thank you to everyone who put blood sweat and tears into developing the spokescouncil mode and working on the transition of the space! we should be proud of ourselves! this is a new era of collectivity and i can't wait to see how it evolves. This afterparty is for you!
- Afterparty and potluck announcement: roles for cleanup, dishes, chairs, closing the space (5 min)
- Send speaking delegates to Paul to be added to the delegates chat

Announcements

Upcoming Events

- ⚡ Tuesday August 12 : Electrician will be making repairs at RC
- 📅 Friday August 15: Whole of RC is rented out from 7am to 7pm. But this shouldn't disrupt gym or meditation\!
- 📅 Friday August 15 to Sunday August 17: [Hackers on Planet Earth (HOPE) Conference](<https://schedule.hope.net/hope16>) @ St. John's University. Tech Collective (fka Basement) will be tabling there\! They have conference tickets to offer you if you want 'em
- ⚡ Tuesday August 19 – Abatement is happening in the basement at RC\! It shouldn't disrupt anything going on upstairs.
- 📅 Wednesday August 27, doors 6:30pm: Queer line dancing @ RC followed by a screening of Brokeback Mountain. Season opener for a 6-month series of queer film screenings\!
- 📅 Sunday August 31: Whole of RC is rented out morning til 3pm.
- 📅 Thursday September 4 6:30pm to 7:30pm: Narcan overdose prevention training @ RC, offered by the city. They'll have free kits for 50-70 people. Spread the word\! Free for all to attend.
- ***🌀 Thursday September 11, evening time TBA: RC Spokescouncil meeting***
- 📅 Saturday September 20 5pm to 11pm: Opening Party for Ridgewood Commons @ RC. Working Groups tabling, talent show, raffle, and more\!

Seeking Help

- ☐☐The Ridgewood Commons opening party needs YOU! To help, you can: volunteer to help set up/tear down, offer to donate a raffle prize, put yourself in for the talent show.
- ☐☐RC Food Pantry is seeking people ****with** **cars**** who are interested in helping shuttle food from various donation sites to RC. And seeking people ****free on Tuesday or Sunday evenings**** to help sort through donated food.
- ☐☐RC Facilities committee is seeking help with the ongoing task of cleaning up and organizing the basement! Contact Vanessa if you want to KonMari all that stuff.
- ☐☐Arie (our dear yoga instructor) is seeking other new-ish yoga instructors to cover classes or join in on the class schedule on a regular basis.
- ☐☐RC Tech & Comms Committee wants to know how YOU communicate (with your Working Group, with other Working Groups, with the broader community), so they can better support you. Keep an eye out for surveys and requests to chat from them.
- ☐☐RC has several new Admin Committees (like Programming, Finance, Fundraising, etc.) that need more members to help the space run! The only requirement to be on a committee is that you're involved with at least one RC Working Group.
- ✨If you're curious about how the Spokescouncil meeting came together and you want to help plan/run the next one, please join the Spokescouncil Planning Working Group

PSAs

- ☐☐If you cancel an event at RC, please let Programming Committee know, so they can offer the space to other groups / rentals. Especially right now, since cash is tight and rentals bring in \$\$\$
- ☐☐To help with RC's cash flow, we can all:
 - Be on the lookout for people/events who want to rent out the space
 - Think about how we can individually contribute to RC (can you throw in a few bucks a month, perhaps?)
- ☐☐Natalie from CSA wants Working Groups to know that you can table every Saturday when the CSA pickup happens. They have folks in and out picking up their veggies. It's a great time to promote your WG, do fundraising, etc.
- ☐☐The wifi network and password have been ****changed****! Next time you're in the space, look for posted signs for the new details.
- ☐☐The trash for RC goes out on Monday and Thursday nights! If you're using the space on one of those nights, please help out with trash! Contact the Facilities Committee to learn what to do.

Meeting Highlights

Attendance

Kaitlyn Notetaker spokes planning, Eva relational skills group, briar spokes planning, Julianna Gym, Iris Facilities, Jacob Writing Group, Shelby timekeeper stack, Natalie Sunday dinner, Eddie Sunday dinner, Johnny Rentals, LJ Gym, Calvin Finance, gigi Food Pantry, Shea Food Pantry, Jonathan Tech Collective, Daniel Tech Collective, Arie Yoga, Paul Tech and Comms, Ash Facilitator, Frankie meta notetaker

New Action Items

- All Working Groups (WGs) and Admin Committees (ACs) to discuss and decide whether incorporate Friendly Amendments before the next Spokes meeting (Sept 11)
- Any/all WGs to bring proposals to the next Spokes meeting (Sept 11)

Uncompleted/ In progress Action Items from Prior Meetings

- N/A

Charters Discussed

Passed

- Comms & Tech Admin Committee
- Finance Admin Committee
- Fundraising & Grants Admin Committee
- Rentals Admin Committee
- Facilities Admin Committee
- Programming Admin Committee
- Food Pantry Working Group
- Gym Working Group
- Readgewood Tutoring Working Group
- Spokesouncil Planning Working Group
- Sunday Dinner Working Group
- Tech Collective (fka Basement) Working Group
- Tuesday Reading Group Working Group
- Writing Group Working Group
- Yoga & Meditation Working Group

Did not pass

None

Withdrawals

- Relational Skills
-

Proposals We Didn't Get To Discuss (will flow forward to next agenda)

None

Detailed Meeting Notes

- Explanation of the “Two Wheel” organizing structure of RC (5 min)
 - [Diagram](<https://wiki.commonsnyc.org/books/spokescouncil-documentation/page/two-wheel-model-of-self-governance>)
 - What’s the difference between a Working Group (WG) and an Admin Committee (AC)?
 - WGs have a project. For ACs, Ridgewood Commons *is* the project.
 - ACs are empowered to make day to day decisions to keep the space running.
 - WGs are empowered to make decisions that further their projects
 - AC members should also be involved with at least one WG (that is, no one is *only* administering the space)
 - How are WGs and ACs accountable to the Spokescouncil?
 - Spokescouncil ratifies charters of WGs and ACs. If charters are changed or new WGs are formed, their charters will need to be (re) ratified by the Spokescouncil.
 - If AC members aren’t fulfilling their responsibilities, the Spokescouncil can delegate the responsibility to someone else.
 - At Spokescouncil meetings, ACs will share what decisions were made over the past month, and what’s decisions are upcoming in the next month.
 - How voting on charters will work today (10 min)
 - Why not just use the “normal” [proposal voting process](<http://Trash?%20When%20does%20the%20trash%20go%20out?%20The%20only%20thing%20I%20see%20is%20on%20the%20pantry.%20We%20are%20“responsible”%20on%20M/W%20about%20it.>)?
 - Under that process, each proposal gets 30 minutes of discussion. We have 16 charters to ratify. That’ll be way too slow!
 - So what are we doing instead?
 - If there are no blocking concerns with a charter, we’ll ratify it.
 - We can make non-blocking Friendly Amendments (FAs) to charters. WGs and ACs can decide whether to incorporate these changes after today.
 - But what’s a “blocking concern”?
 - A blocking concern, or “block”, means that no amount of friendly amendments is going to make your WG feel like this charter/proposal is a good idea. A block is a serious thing to do. You’ll need to justify it.
 - And what is a “Friendly Amendment”?

- A Friendly Amendment (FA) is a recommended change to a proposal or charter *that isn't mandatory*. If you won't sign off on a charter or proposal unless your suggested change is made, that means you have a **blocking concern**.

- What does it mean for the SpokesCouncil to ratify a charter?

- For WGs and ACs, the charter is the agreement that allows them to conduct tasks in the space.

- Ratification means that going forward, the committee or WG can do their thing in/related to the space, and that they're accountable to the SpokesCouncil for what they said they'd do in their charter.

- Discussion of Charters

- ***Friendly Amendments (FAs) that apply to all charters***

- For all Working Group (WG) charters: Please add something to the "Responsibilities" section that says something like, "we commit to working with the Fundraising Committee to find ways to support RC". You need not include a specific dollar amount.

- For all Admin Committee (AC) charters: Please add something to the "Responsibilities" section something like: "On the day before each SpokesCouncil meeting, we'll report out on the executive actions we've taken in the past month and the decisions we expect to make in the coming month/"

- If charters will be public, put terms in bold that are specific to RC. (inside jargon, like "Distro" or "Coached Sessions")

- Admin Committees (ACs)

1. Comms & Tech

- Friendly Amendment (FA): Please add some more information to your charter about how online credential sharing will work. Are y'all responsible for handling that?

2. Finance

- FA: Please make clear how the group will coordinate w/ the Fundraising Committee

- FA: Please add something about creating "discretionary budgets" for ACs and WGs to use. Dollar amounts on a regular basis that the group can use without prior approval, as long as they retain receipts.

3. Fundraising & Grants

- FA: Please make clear how the group will coordinate w/ the Finance Committee

4. Rentals ☐ No Friendly Amendments

5. Facilities

- FA: Add a Responsibility to manage restocking of consumables and medical supplies. (This doesn't necessarily mean Facilities always does the restocking themselves, but at least makes sure it's happening.)

- FA: Add Responsibility for coordinating waste management

- FA: Add a responsibility to keep the space safe

- FA: Add a responsibility to keep the space clean

- FA: Add something to the charter about offering skills training to other RC members so they can participate meaningfully in the Facilities committee / help maintain the space as well

- FA: Please clarify whether any members of the Facilities committee get paid. Is it all volunteer?

- FA: Please clarify what happens if the work that needs to be done goes beyond the skills of the people in the committee? Who decides about hiring someone? Does that entail working with the Finance committee?

- FA: In the current charter, there's a sentence that says something like "no improvement will be made without a proposal being submitted and approved by groups". This seems unrealistic for some decisions that must be made quickly (i.e. between Spokes meetings). Can you adjust the language to indicate how you'll make decisions and inform WGs about them when that's the case?

6. ~~Relational skills~~ (withdrawn, not ratified)

- This AC intends to be a group of people doing relational skills and conflict support work in organizing spaces. They are interested in questions like "What do we have to agree on vs. not agree on?"

- They have decided we should spend more time as RC working together before we attempt to formalize conflict resolution / relational skills as a working group.

7. Programming

- FA: Please add that it's the responsibility of the Programming Committee to manage the calendar(s) for the space (public, private)

* Working Groups (WGs)

1. Food Pantry

- FA: Be more clear about what it means to "manage trash" in Food Pantry charter.

2. Gym

- FA (from self): Gym offers to increase committed monthly contribution to the space (to \$600).

- FA (from Finance): Consider instead removing the specific dollar amount, since we don't want to have to re-ratify the charter just to change the amount.

3. Readgewood Tutoring

- FA: Add a Responsibility about how each tutor needs to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the space, since they're working with kids

4. Spokescouncil Planning

- FA: Be more specific about who constitutes a "RC member" (by "RC member", we just mean working group members, right?)

5. Dinner

- FA: Please specify how trash and compost are handled and where it gets placed at the end of Sunday dinner

6. Technical collective (fka Basement) ☐ No Friendly Amendments

7. Tuesday Reading Group ☐ No Friendly Amendments

8. Writing Group

- FA: Please specify what time of day the group uses the space

9. Yoga & Meditation ☐ No Friendly Amendments

- Closing Announcements / Remarks

* ***Next Spokescouncil meeting is Thursday Sept 11 2025***

* Bring new proposals to the next Spokes meeting

1. Perhaps, your group can make a cleaning proposal. We have a template for this\!

* Talk to today's facilitators if you want to help with the next Spokes meeting

* ***Delegates: Please go get yourself added to the delegates signal chat***

* There is now a signal chat that includes all of the Spokescouncil delegates that WGs and ACs sent to the meeting. That's a great place for discussion of proposals, and disseminating information between WGs. Talk to your WG/AC's delegate to learn more\!

Open discussion / Q& A

- Q: Why is Spokescouncil Planning a Working Group, not an Admin Committee?

* We didn't get to cover this one in the meeting :(

- Q: When will future spokescouncil meetings be?

* A: They will be monthly. They'll alternate between Saturday afternoons and Thursday evenings.

- Q: Will Spokescouncil meetings conflict with Writing Group?

* A: Nope\! Vanessa (Programming) has checked the schedule. There are no conflicts for the rest of 2025\.

- A lot of people have asked for clarity around the difference between the Tech Collective (WG) and the Comms & Tech committee (AC) We're going to work on making sure that there isn't so much overlap in the charters between "Tech" and "Tech Collective". Also, "people who happen to use the basement" and "people interested in tech education" are two groups of people active in the space, and we're still sorting out to what extent we'll do any of these roles.

- Q: There's a gap between the space's current expenses and the current inflow of cash, right? What's the gap? And what can we do about this as WGs and as individuals?

* A: We (Finance and Fundraising) are estimating a \$2k per month deficit. However, until RC has a bank account (which we're supposed to be getting next week), we can't accept donations. Once we have a bank account, we can offer for former Woodbine donors to shift their donations to RC. After that, we'll know better what the deficit is.

* A: We can encourage individuals to give \$ each month. Working groups can work with Fundraising to figure out other ways to fundraise. If a WG wants to contribute \$ to the space, that's great.

- Q: If we want to donate money now (before RC has a bank account), what should we do?

* A: There's not much you can do other than contribute cash to the "deadname jar" in the space until we have a bank account.

- Finance is working on a survey to pass around to working groups to get a good idea of the numbers and where they're coming from. What's everyone's spend? Then they can get a better picture of what's going on and how to help.

- Q: What if we're a WG and we want to use the RC Instagram, mailing list, etc. How do we work with Comms & Tech committee on this?

* A: We haven't figured this out yet. Stay tuned. Tech and Comms committee welcomes volunteers who want to work on this stuff to join the committee\!

- Q: There was a Friendly Amendment to the Facilities charter about "skill shares". Can you clarify that?

* The idea behind that is the Facilities committee represents people with a set of skills that not everyone has. But if more people had those skills, more people would be able to help reproduce the space. So the ask is for skillshare to help sustain the space.

- Q: What's the current status of the RC events calendar?

* A: Right now, we have a duplicated version of the Woodbine calendar, with RC specific events added. Anyone in any Admin Committee can have credentials to the private calendar. Johnny can give those creds now. We're in a liminal state right now, since we aren't publicly advertising the transition to "Ridgewood Commons" yet. Eventually, there will be a separate, public events calendar.

- Q: What's the deal with the trash? Who handles what and when?

* A: Trash needs to go out to the curb on Mondays and Thursdays. Gym Collective, Yoga, and

Writing WG participants help with this. Food Pantry helps gather and arrange trash on Monday and Wednesday mornings.

