



Sociocracy  
For All

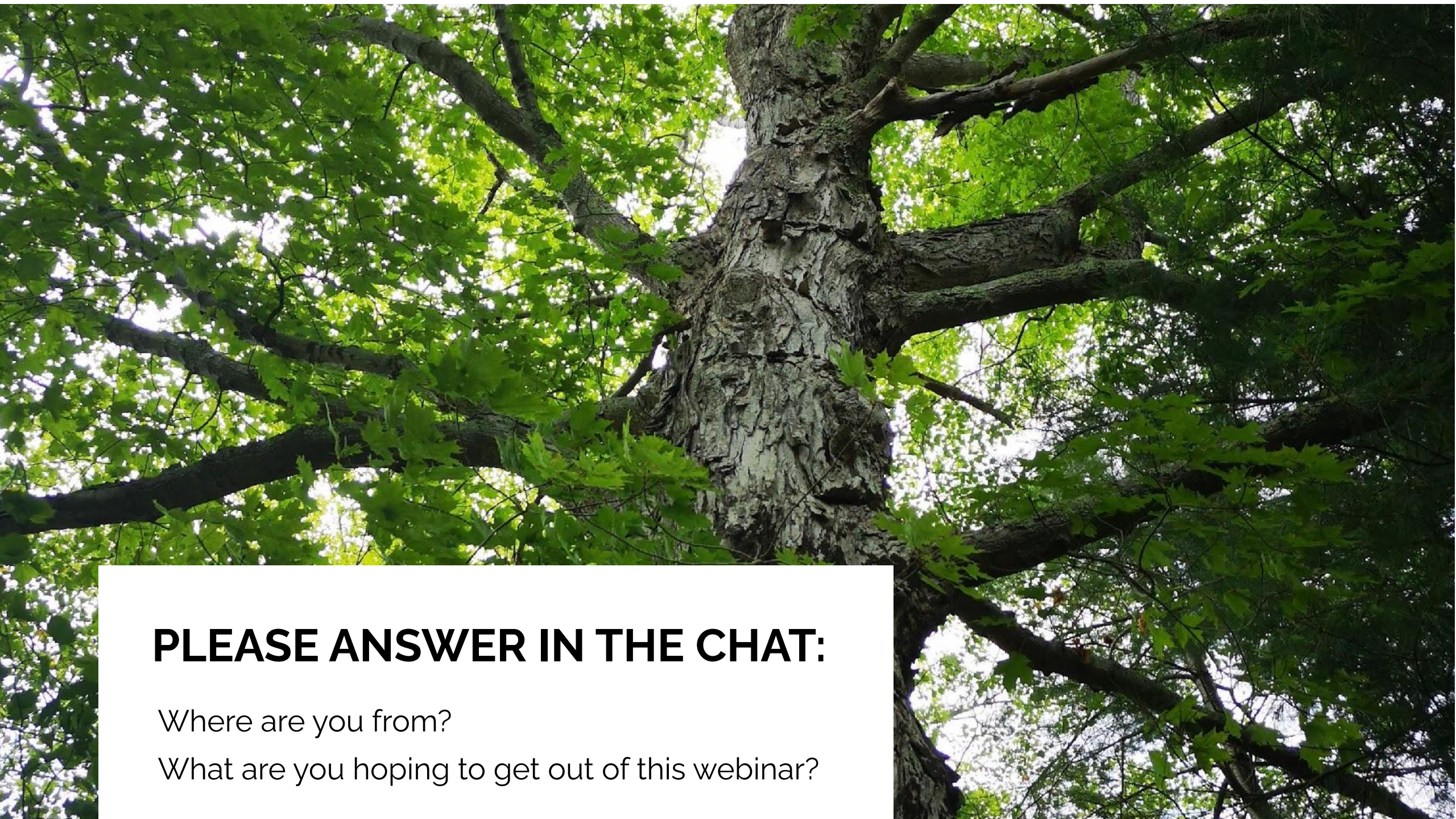


TREEHOUSE VILLAGE  
ECHOUSING

# Educating the Village

EMBEDDING SOCIOCRACY IN A  
COHOUSING COMMUNITY





## **PLEASE ANSWER IN THE CHAT:**

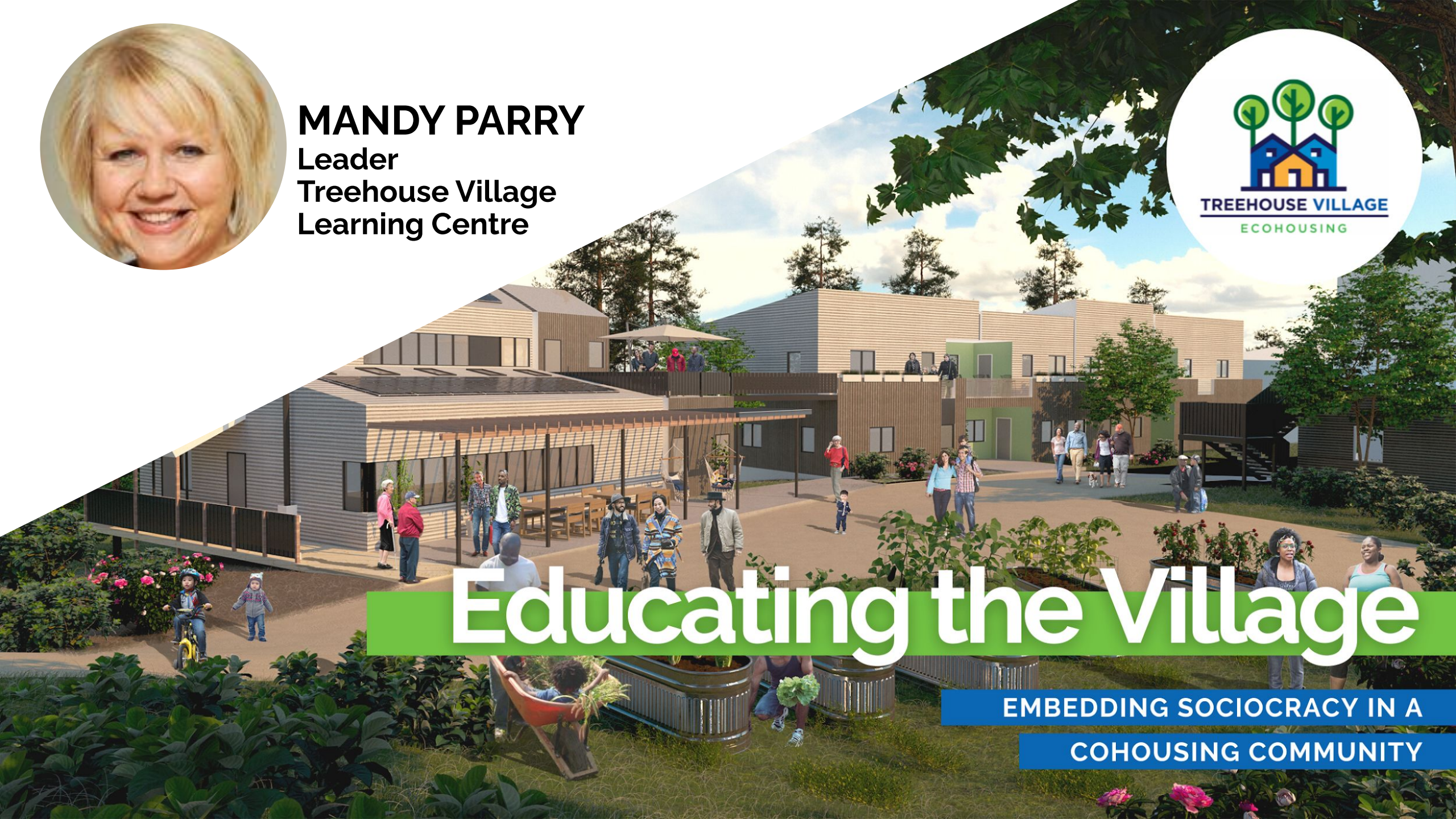
Where are you from?

What are you hoping to get out of this webinar?





**MANDY PARRY**  
Leader  
Treehouse Village  
Learning Centre



# Educating the Village

**EMBEDDING SOCIOCRACY IN A  
COHOUSING COMMUNITY**



# Housekeeping

- The slideshow will be sent out after the session
- Documents cannot be shared after the webinar
- There are 3 parts to this webinar – after each part there will be an opportunity to ask questions.
- You can put a question or comment in the chat function during the slideshow and we will respond when we can.
- If after the webinar you would like to discuss further, email: [mandyparrytraining@gmail.com](mailto:mandyparrytraining@gmail.com)

# What are we going talk about?

↩ What challenges have we faced in educating our members in Sociocracy?

↪ What works in educating a community in Sociocracy?

↻ If I could do everything again I would...



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# Vision

We envision a joyful, environmentally responsible, healthy, multi-age cohousing community in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, Canada.







**Our Planet**

**Core  
Values**

**Ourselves**

**Our Neighbours**





Living lightly  
on the earth





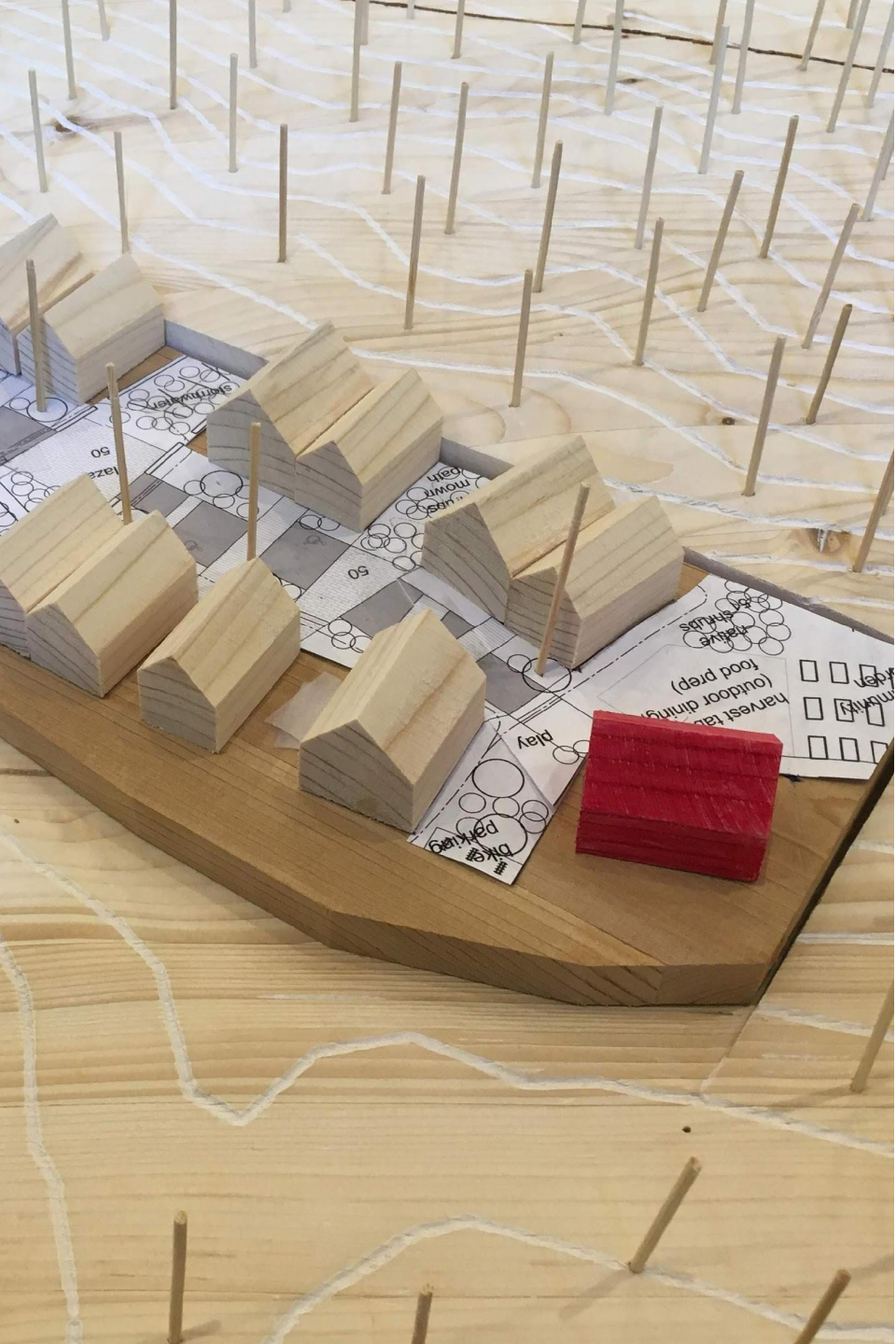
Sharing resources  
and joy, and  
welcoming to all





Living in a  
comfortable and  
healthy home





# Organizational Aim

- 30 private homes + common house, clustered form
- Located within the town of Bridgewater
- Access to nature and space for play and gardens
- Multi-age community
- Quality, durable construction
- Ultra energy efficiency (Passive House, PHIUS)
- Sociocratic governance
- Incorporated as a condominium
- Complete in 2022





# Organizational Structure

## March 2021

### Operational Roles:

CR = Community Reporter  
 EC = Explorer Coordinator  
 FC = Full Circle Coordinator  
 MP = Member Profile Manager  
 SE = Social Events Coordinator  
 TA = Tech Admin  
 VC = Village Crier

RM = Role Meetup Coordinator

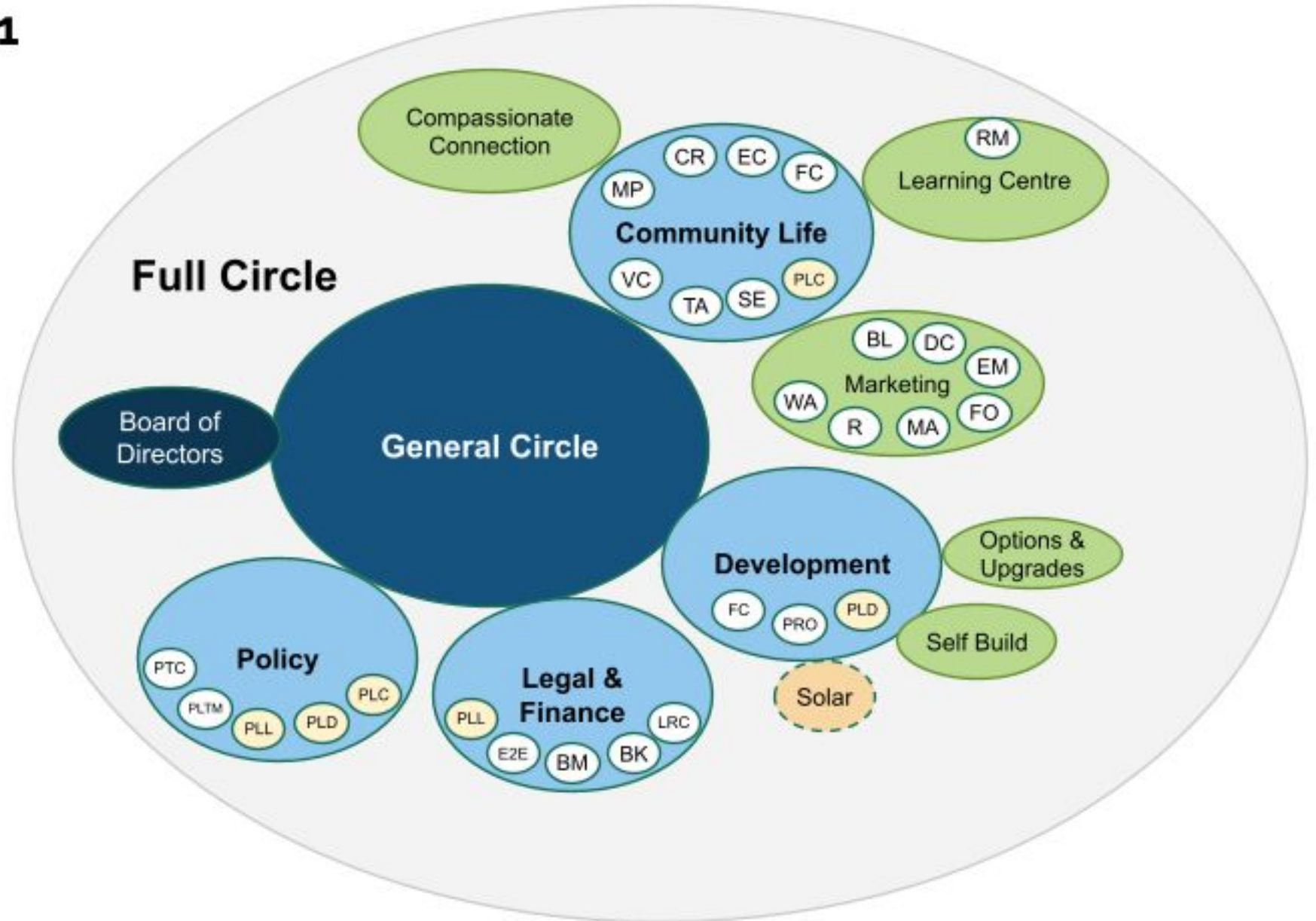
BL = Blog Coordinator  
 DC = Design & Communications  
 EM = External Marketing Coordinator  
 FO = Financial Officer  
 MA = Marketing Assistant  
 R = Recruiter  
 WA = Website Admin

PRO = Pro team representatives  
 FC = Financial Controller

BK = Bookkeeper  
 BM = Budget manager  
 E2E = Explorer to Equity Coordinators  
 LRC = Legal Review Coordinator

PLC = CLC Policy Liaison  
 PLD = Development Policy Liaison  
 PLL = Legal & Finance Policy Liaison

PTC = Policy Team Coordinator  
 PLTM = Policy Logbook and Template Mgr







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↩ What challenges have we faced in educating our members in Sociocracy?

↪ What works in educating a community in Sociocracy?

↪ If I could do everything again I would...



# Why did TVE choose Sociocracy?

## INITIALLY:

- All cohousing communities require a system of self-governance
- Recommended by cohousing consultant: Jasen Robillard
- Heard that people were switching to Sociocracy from consensus
- Resources were clearer than those relating to consensus governance
- Off the shelf training and consultancy service from SoFA
- Had to think quickly!



# Why was TVE happy it chose Sociocracy?

## AFTER A WHILE:

- Relatively quick decision processes – zone of tolerance for consent – ‘Safe enough to try, good enough for now’
- Quasi-autonomous decision making in small groups and sharing in rounds allows more people to make meaningful contributions and invites shared decision making across membership
- Ongoing evaluations ensuring effectiveness of processes and performance

*‘Sociocracy provides structure, principles, and planning for living harmoniously and joyfully. It offers a compelling model for connecting and empowering people, along with giving them the tools to collaborate, which is one of many reasons why we’ve adopted sociocracy.’*

TVE EXPLORERS CHECKLIST



# What challenges has TVE faced in teaching Sociocracy?

- Challenges specific to cohousing
- Challenges specific to TVE
- Challenges specific to sociocracy



# Challenges specific to cohousing

- Member turnover – community in development: risk, commitment, investment
- Members having different levels of knowledge – means newer people are less likely to consent to roles
- Decisions that can't be 'good enough for now'



# Challenges specific to TVE

- Aggressive timeline – people need to learn Sociocracy fast
- Capacity of members - families
- Uniqueness of the project - Eastern Canada
- Members from across 8 time zones

# Challenges specific to Sociocracy

- Very different from people's previous experiences of meetings
- You can't learn Sociocracy by osmosis: values, knowledge, skills
- Time given over to 'housekeeping' – reviews, evaluations
- Many Voices One Song (though works well for some members)
- How much can you change?



← What challenges have we faced in educating our members in Sociocracy?

Reflect on the challenges of teaching Sociocracy.

Do you have any clarifying questions or quick reactions?

← What challenges have we faced in educating our members in Sociocracy?

~ What works in educating a community in Sociocracy?

↻ If I could do everything again I would...



# Part two: What works in educating a community in Sociocracy?

- Committing to Sociocracy
- Getting new members up to speed
- Embedding a culture of Sociocracy
- Teaching Sociocracy
- Sharing Sociocracy
- Other ideas

# Committing to Sociocracy

- Buying 'the book' – ordered a box
- SoFA consultancy
- Worked with SoFA to draft our governance agreement in our shareholder's agreement
- SoFA training: Empowered Learning Circles, Facilitator's training, Sociocracy Leadership Training course
- SoFA membership



# Getting new members up to speed

- Basic tools: Cheat Sheet, MOOSE videos
- Orientation Checklist
- Explorer to Equity meetings
- Observing meetings
- Joining Circles

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See the Organizational Structure [Diagram in Google Drive](#)  
 Here is a more complete [video explanation](#) (Apr. 2021. 5 minutes)

Please note: [the Communication Hub](#). It is not necessary to go through this; just note what sort of information is available here so you will know where to find it.

For more detailed information in any area, climb into the [Learning Tree](#). There is a wealth of information in this tree with its many branches and different levels. [This is a video overview](#) (4&1/4 minutes) to introduce you.

### Sociocracy

Review: [A brief introduction to sociocracy and why we use it](#) document.

For the resources linked in the above introduction and much more detail, please see [the Learning Tree branch](#). For purposes of orientation you are not expected to work your way through all of the listed resources; explore what you wish. The [SoFA MOOSE videos](#), along with [the Sociocracy Cheat Sheet](#), may be particularly helpful.

### Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

Review: A brief introduction to [Nonviolent communication](#) (NVC) and why we use it.

Please see: [The Tree of Compassionate Connection - Resolving conflict in a cohousing community](#), a blog post by member Mandy Parry.

### TVE Finance Overview

[Affording a home in TVE.](#) (24 minutes)



# Embedding a culture of Sociocracy

- Community standards
- Using Sociocracy creatively: AGMs, lot selections
- 'Good enough for now!'

# Teaching sociocracy

- Full Circle learning
- Learning Centre subcircle
- Role mentoring
- Empowered Learning Circles – our way



# TVE Empowered Learning Circles

- Extra session that is specific to how Sociocracy is used in our community (5 x 2 hour sessions in total)
- Information on nonviolent communication (NVC)
- Agenda and minute templates
- In-house support for Group Leaders from ELC coach
- Opportunity to do the course at the same time as performing the role in a 'real' Circle

# Sharing Sociocracy

- Learning Tree
- Role Meetups
- Role Toolkits



# Other ideas

**NVC training:** self directed learning module and ongoing NVC practice groups

## **Future Sociocracy education ideas:**

- In-house sociocratic role training
- Advanced deep dive discussions on Sociocracy: hidden hierarchies, Sociocracy as a means of ending classism, Sociocracy and trauma
- Scripted video of consent process

~ What works  
in educating  
a community  
in  
Sociocracy?

Reflect on some of the solutions to teaching Sociocracy that Treehouse Village found.


Do you have any clarifying questions or quick reactions?




← What challenges have we faced in educating our members in Sociocracy?


↻ What works in educating a community in Sociocracy?


↻ If I could do everything again I would...

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- Never assume that your past experience prepares you for Sociocracy.
  - Don't have one expert on Sociocracy in the community.
  - Start the Learning Circle to think strategically about learning needs sooner.

- 
- Never underestimate the usefulness of a simple Cheat Sheet.
  - Ask for help sooner.
  - Offer help sooner.



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- Educate one small group at a time, don't do mass learning.
  - Don't buy the MVOS ebook – you can write notes in the hard copy.
  - Devise a system to store the learning links earlier.

- 
- Don't spend time in your Empowered Learning Circle trying to name yourselves.
  - Don't underestimate your own knowledge of Sociocracy.
  - Depart from Sociocracy with care – but understand it may be necessary at times to bend the rules.

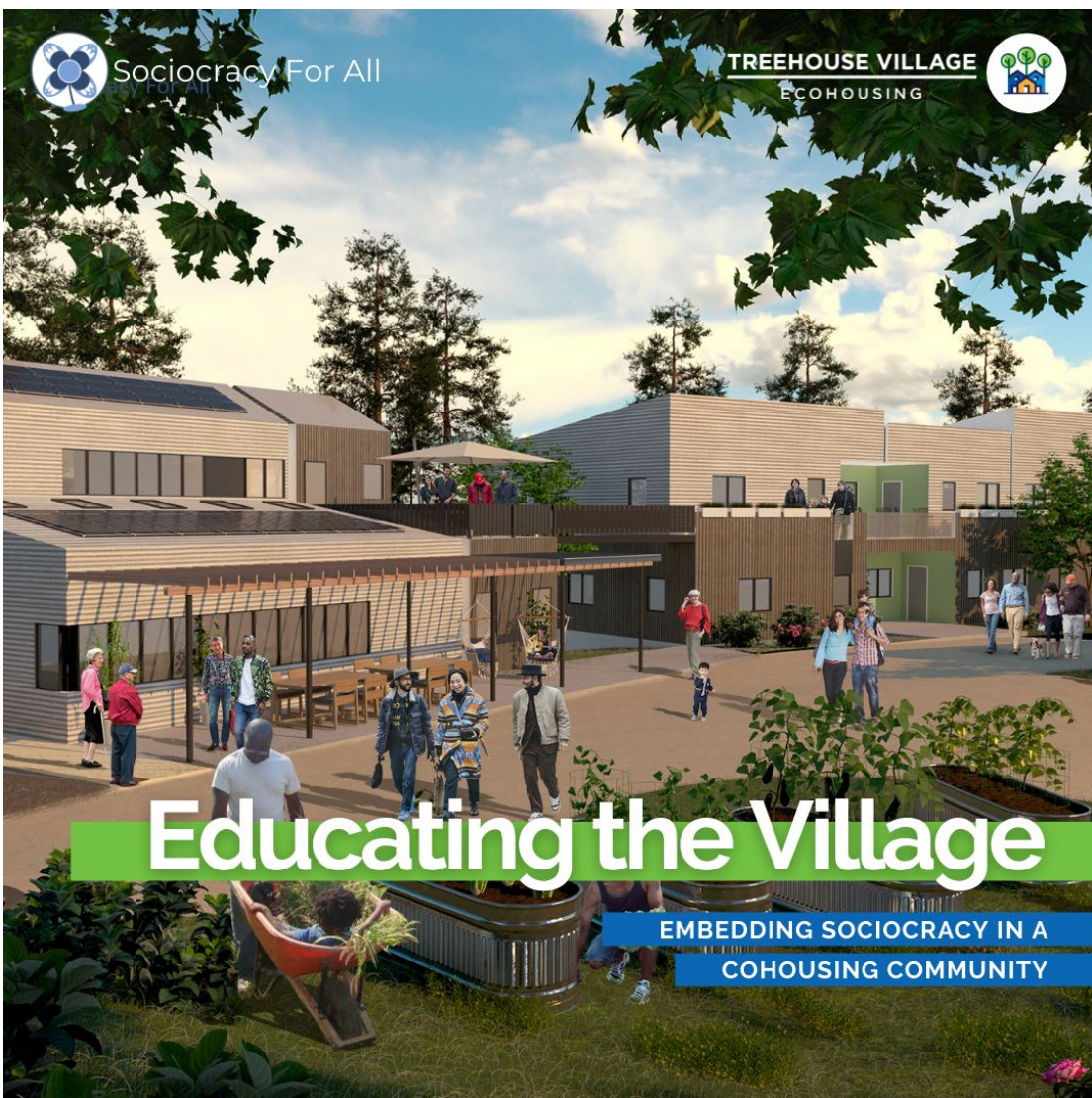
🔄 If I could do everything again I would...

Any final clarifying questions or quick reactions?

Please put feedback in the chat.

Thank you!





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