

DelVal CoCo Project Proposals

Concept

We are an organization predicated on community, connection, and relationships.

In a pandemic world, connection is still possible, but, at a distance. Relationships are still possible, but without touch in many cases, and community is still possible, but physically, at arm's length. (Two arm's length or greater to be precise). This ensures our health and possibly, for some of us, our very survival. If we end up living with this corona virus for the rest of our lives, we can trust that eventually, we will find ways to come closer together sooner or later.

To be especially positive, we may find a way to eradicate it eventually, but a realistic scenario is to expect distance in our workings and our relationships for about a year or two – or more... This proposal is a way to get back to our purpose and build community and co-living for the future. As such this pair of projects, (and they are separate but inter-related projects) is conceived as having a **two-year build-to-implement timeline**.

But they can be launched earlier than that as they will be initiated within the remote paradigm that we all currently find ourselves in. (I am using the two-year timeline as my best guess, based on all my research up till now, as to the amount of time most medical and social science experts that I have read give us till return to a more normal world and coming up with medical solutions to living with this virus.)

Project goals

As per many discussions that we have had, there are two broad socio-economic sectors we need to consider when we think about how people live currently.

Urban and Rural

At some point this may change, and we may have something evolve that will be a hybrid of the two, but we are not there yet. Furthermore, Suburbs, in my mind, are more a symptom of the problem than a real solution and it is my hope that in time, they will change and cease to exist, ultimately giving way to either a rural or an urban orientation. For now, this is conceived to bridge both the urban and the rural worlds and accomplish the following:

- Renew interest and involvement in our organization among members both current and prospective.
- Recruit new members and interested parties in our purpose.
- Mobilize and improve the network by encouraging collaboration among network members to engage in these projects. And ...
- Creating two actual co-living projects to live our dream and to serve as models to promote other initiatives in the Delaware Valley.

Rural Project: DelVal CoCo PeaceFarm

Inspired by the vision of Happy Farm that came out of our discussions with How and his partners. This flows from, not only what How's group is working on, but other ideas that came from our brainstorm such as investing in [GeoShips](#) to realize infrastructure and to broaden our reach into other areas we want to promote in terms of green sustainable models of living that can challenge the current system we live under. The [GeoShips](#) people are modeling a new kind of company that patrons of their project own. In essence, we invest in the organization which gives us discounts and profit-making options as well as access to sustainable structures which can be used to literally construct a "colony" of rural co-livers. As an interim step. We could begin with the less expensive [PacificDomes](#). These are hardy and easily installed, and are somewhat green and sustainable, if to a lesser degree, than the GeoShips... but are a good interim solution. We can transition from the one to the other over time.

Here are some examples:

PacificDomes



GeoShips



PeaceFarm would be dedicated to creating a co-living entity in a rural environment where members would live and work and interact with the surrounding municipalities to promote co-living in the community.

It would be dedicated to permaculture, organic food production for both member consumption to enable their own sustainability and making available for sale, barter, or sharing any surplus with the surrounding residents. A distribution network can be added relationally which might be run by partners such as Food Not Bombs or perhaps a local food co-op, furthering the network. Each entity and partner would join DeVal CoCo further growing the organization... Not only would the Farm be self-sustaining but potentially profitable.

It would also be a place where forums and workshops and other possible community events. These would relate to the larger surrounding areas to help people and local municipalities learn more about, and be encouraged to partner with, eco-friendly, sustainable, cooperative community ventures. In this way we hope to inspire a change in how the local community begins to organize itself with the propose our organization holds, which is to inspire the kind of change that people need to survive.

All the infrastructure, supplies, and actions that are part of the project, to the greatest degree possible, would be sustainable and as cooperative and non-competitive as can be maintained in the hope that eventually, and soon as possible, we can become the kind of change we promote.

PeaceFarm would be open to our members and anyone who would like to be a member of the project would have to be a member to join. This would serve as a home for members of our organization while at the same time serving as a rural headquarters, or settlement if you wish, for DeVal CoCo.

Urban Project: DelVal CoCo Peacehome

PeaceHome would be the urban sister project of **Peacefarm**.

Like PeaceFarm, it would serve as a community. A home for DelVal CoCo members and a headquarters, or an urban settlement for DelVal Coco. The residents of both PeaceHome and PeaceFarm would be members of a collective, with a set of operating principals drawn up to set the parameters of the living relationship, and the responsibilities of each member and how they would contribute to the community.

These “Operating Guidelines” would be based on the 7 cooperative principals.



The home would be self-sustaining, and potentially profitable just as Peacefarm by supporting member’s own work that would contribute to the project. Work at Peacehome would be both “Peacehome centric work” or members own work, be it their own business’s or self-sustaining profession. i.e., I am an activist and intend to be a member, one day, of Peacehome. As an activist I have various operations that support my lifestyle. This would also contribute to the overall good of the community. As in my example, we attract individuals who support themselves and build a cooperative community that can support each member’s lifestyle and their future and security.

To get a better picture, imagine an activist office space which different movements and organizations can use as a cooperative meeting space, and a space where we organize projects of our own as well. I do activist work as a means of employment. It would serve as my office too. Another member may be an artist or a physical therapist or a yoga teacher and can support themselves by having studio space at Peacehome. The location might have a workshop and, if the right property can be secured, an urban garden either on site, or nearby that would contribute to the group’s own consumption and possibly to be sold bartered or shared with a network like Food Not Bombs or a local Co-op just like Peacefarm.

Again, we would want a property that would have as low a carbon footprint as we can possibly manage. To start with we will need to consider what steps we must take to renovate an existing property when we find one> Here is a list

from the [Guardian](#).

Of course, there is plenty of stock in Philly. It would be best if we can find a property already zoned for multi-use. We may have to investigate getting a variance if we plan to have more than three people live there who are unrelated as local ordinances in Philly do not allow that.

Here is a resource I have been using to locate multi-unit rentals that would be affordable for a small group of Co-habitators who would form a co-living collective.

https://www.zillow.com/philadelphia-pa/row-house_att/

Here is one example of available rental property that has already been renovated to meet current “Green-Building.” Standards is this one, located in Fishtown.



There are any number of these popping up all over the city.

A location like this one would lend itself well to a multi-use dwelling in an up-and-coming part of town that could possibly offer opportunities for neighborhood networks and profitable community ventures. Just like PeaceFarm, PeaceHome would have, among its on-going activities, holding workshop webinars and physically distanced gatherings to share co-living initiatives and educational events to broaden our mission.