

Our Mission and Principles

"Clearly, what I'm seeing is an expression of joy, beauty, generosity and trust. This is the work of heart. In seeking out leading edge practices for building, land stewardship and governance, and in learning through doing, you're activating inquisitive minds. And with Windekind's culture of craftsmanship, stewardship and the arts, you're engaging the hands. All together—heart, head and hands—passion and purpose are put to the good work of caring for the land, creating community and demonstrating the kind of living needed in an increasingly interconnected world." (Ross Chapin, Architect, Langley, Washington—letter to Mark and Marijke, 9/28/2015)



The Velveteen Rabbit, a children's book written by Margery Williams, is a story about a stuffed rabbit sewn from velveteen that is given as a Christmas present to a small boy. The boy plays with his other new presents that are modern and mechanical and forgets about the old fashion Velveteen Rabbit that sits forgotten in the corner. Then, the wisest and oldest toy in the nursery, the Skin Horse, who was owned by the boy's uncle, tells the rabbit about toys magically becoming real due to love from children. One night, the boy's Nana gives the rabbit to the boy to sleep with, in place of a lost toy. The rabbit becomes the boy's favorite toy, enjoying picnics with him in the spring, sitting with him at the table, and the boy regards the rabbit as "REAL."

There's a lot that is REAL about Windekind. Its buildings are eclectic and of different ages, they have been built, fussed with, and fitted again and again to meet the needs and expression of ourselves and all the hundreds of others who have visited the farm.

Canopies of mature trees have grown to offer shade and scale; meadows have been cleared, mowed, and planted; perennial flowers have grown and the gardens taken form and shape, and then, again and again, take form anew. Relationships that have developed from years of shared experience, deepen and expand. There is a history here. The patina of time creates a rich tapestry

of memory about people and place that is irreplaceable.

But like old clothes and old toys, a place and the people who live in them can get frayed and worn. They may not fit the way they used to or have the brightness of this year's fashion and latest technology. So it's tempting to leave all this behind and go elsewhere and build something anew from scratch. But, like the Velveteen Rabbit, the farm and its history has become very real and therefore very loved.

Loving this mountainside place means that we are unwilling to go elsewhere. To do this, we seek to create a transition to a participatory community—one with shared democratic values, combined with an ecology that respects the land.

We want to bring new points of view, new skills and technologies, and new capital to this place that we love. In order to do this, we have developed our Mission and its accompanying

Mission & Principles:

The Mission of the Commons is to be a neighborhood community that is aesthetically uplifting, culturally rich, and economically and environmentally sustainable.

Our Mission will be achieved by adhering to the following Principles:

1. Utilize a “living design” process in developing the community in which members actively participate in the design of their own homes and the larger Commons community;
2. Follow consensus and collaborative decision-making practices that value the input of all Commons members and create decisions and solutions that are inclusive of individual concerns while holding the good of the whole community as its central premise;
3. Promote supportive, caring relationships between Commons members that are built on a shared commitment to our vision and mission, recognize and appreciate our differences, and enable conflicts to be resolved in such a way as to build depth in our understandings of each other and our needs;
4. Build all homes and other structures to be as energy efficient as possible, utilizing construction and renewable resource technology to significantly minimize or eliminate the use of fossil fuels and apply high energy efficiency and conservation standards to all our biomass, water supply, septic and electrical systems;
5. In all our design and construction standards strive to design and build in a manner that minimizes noise, congestion, traffic, smoke pollution, soil erosion and factors, like an over dependence on parking areas, that contribute to an unsightly landscape;
6. Strive for diversity of age, background, culture, gender, race, skills and life experience within a frame work of common values and vision about community and

the environment. Striving for diversity means attention is given to funding mechanisms, pricing and seeking grant for making the community as affordable as possible for families and individuals who have less capital resources.

7. Hold all remaining acres, about 120 acres, under common ownership protected by stringent covenants for the purpose of protecting open space and the long term land stewardship and preservation of these resources for the Common's community, our neighbors and the greater communities of Huntington and Vermont;
8. Add value and beauty to the land through environmentally sensitive additions of gardens, orchards, ponds, rain gardens, wetlands, stonework, paths, trails, roads, public spaces, grazing areas and well managed woodland.
9. Apply Permaculture practices to build and maintain healthy, low energy regenerative ecosystems that provide an abundance of life-sustaining nourishment to the community that is locally available, enhancing our options for a low energy economy;
10. Encourage Commons members to share those things that make sense to co-own in order to make the most efficient use of purchases that because of their economy of use require less energy and consumption;
11. Encourage opportunities for local income generation like home offices, artisan shops, farming and gardening that reduces a dependence on back and forth commuting traffic while increasing the likelihood of a small interconnected local and less energy dependent economy;
12. Work, and when feasible, partner with The Camels Hump Nordic Skier Association for the purpose of enhancing non-motorized outdoor recreation in the area and the environmental awareness and appreciation that comes with hiking, biking and Nordic skiing;
13. Provide individual home sites that allow for privacy and our individual needs and interests while fostering connection, community, and respect for neighbors;
14. Provide Commons members with a sound real estate investment that fosters sustainable living and the building of long term equity. Relatedly develop the tools (like Excel) to assess risk and insure wise investments for the individual and the community;
15. Maintain an environment that welcomes and nurtures all ages, providing "village" support to parents in meeting the demands of raising a family, and to elders;

16. Be an exemplary environmental model, so that our model and principles inspire others to create their own visionary neighborhoods and communities with proven environmental standards; and

17. Establish a legal structure for the Commons that ensures legal integrity, wise use, and effective values-driven operations.