

Constitution of the North Spaulding Renters Association

The first draft of the constitution of the North Spaulding Renters Association was initiated on 3 June 2023 during a meeting convened for this purpose. It was ratified by Cadre Vote on 5 December 2023.

Glossary

CADRE DRIVE;

An online storage drive containing documents vital to The Organization, accessible by all Cadre.

CADRE MEETINGS;

A weekly meeting attended by Cadre and guests of the Cadre brought by invitation.

CADRE VOTE;

A vote carried out by Cadre members only. There are both ordinary Cadre Votes and extraordinary Cadre Votes

GENERAL VOTE;

A vote carried out by all general members.

OPERATIONS MANUAL;

A running document detailing certain evolving operational practices, kept in the Cadre Drive

QUORUM;

The necessary number of eligible members for a vote to be binding.

POWER;

Power is dialectical. The concept contains a positive side—ie. what might elsewhere be called a privilege or right—and also a negative side; i.e. what might elsewhere be called a responsibility or a duty. To acquire power in the organization is not to enjoy special rights or privileges *without* corresponding responsibilities.

ROLES ROTATION;

Cadre Meetings require a well-organized division of work. This work is carried out by Cadre in different roles. Cadre rotate through these roles weekly. This promotes the full development of every individual Cadre's powers and the broadest participation in the invention and development of the roles themselves.

1. Abstract Identity (the names of things)

- 1.1. The name of this organization is North Spaulding Renters Association. It might be referred to in discussion and official writing as NSRA or N.S.R.A. In this constitution, it is referred to as 'NSRA', or 'the Organization'.
- 1.2. NSRA is a tenant-union operating exclusively within the properties of M. Fishman & Co. Property Management. The Organization describes its most basic political commitment as revolutionary communist.
- 1.3. NSRA understands itself and the tenant movement in general as part of a historic and ongoing legacy of internationalist communist struggle, but it does not believe this requires the adherence to a closed, doctrinaire ideology nor the application of a pre-emptive method concerning the structure of the organization, its activity, or its strategy.
 - 1.3.1. In general, The Organization will avoid legal remedies and cooperation with elected officials in favor of direct action and cultural transformation,
 - 1.3.2. However, no tactic or strategy will be disregarded *a priori*, in the spirit of developing among its members the ability to make sound political judgments instead of the dogmatic application of its abstract principles.
 - 1.3.3. While The Organization derives many of these principles from the traditions of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism, it is not explicitly a Marxist organization, a Marxist-Leninist organization nor a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist organization.
 - 1.3.4. Pedagogy is central to our operations. This pedagogy is dialogical in character. It does not presuppose a one directional teacher-student dynamic between The Organization and the masses. Instead we are committed to investigating the elements of struggle together, learning about collective life and raising our level of consciousness in the process of deepening the interpenetration of theories with practices.
 - 1.3.5. We don't believe the revolution can be made in isolation from the people, therefore we are committed to working with the masses. As tenants ourselves, we do not aspire to leave this position behind and lead from above. Instead, we strive to exemplify our position within the masses.

- 1.4. The membership structure of the Organization is composed of four categories: Affiliate, General Membership, Pre-Cadre and Cadre. All organizational work is carried out using the power of its members in these four categories.

2. Practice (the contents of things)

Membership

Cadre

- 2.1. The Cadre is the core group of members with executive decision-making power. As such, they are expected to act in service of the aims of The Organization and held to the highest standard. While the General Membership is encouraged to criticize The Cadre about their conduct in this regard, the Cadre retains executive judgment and power to apply this criticism.
- 2.2. General decision-making is necessary both during meetings and during day-to-day operations. In non-meeting settings, i.e. during day-to-day operations, agreement about decisions will be reached organically as a living element of our practice.
 - 2.2.1. Where disagreement arises during day-to-day operations wherein the entire Cadre is not present, present Cadre members are invested with the power to make the decision via argumentation and debate no matter the proportion of the present Cadre to the whole Cadre;
 - 2.2.2. If any present Cadre member determines a disagreement about a decision to be so substantial as to warrant an ordinary Cadre Vote, they may call in the Cadre chat for the vote to be conducted via General Membership chat. Voting will be open for 24 hours following the announcement and the result will be valid on the condition that a quorum of least 50% Cadre participate by voting Yes, No or Abstain. General Members are encouraged to voice their opinion on the issue at hand but cannot vote.

- 2.3. During meetings, where disagreement arises any Cadre member may call for a ordinary Cadre Vote so long as a quorum of 50% of Cadre are present;
 - 2.3.1. If less than 50% of Cadre are present at a meeting when an ordinary Cadre Vote is issued, it must be conducted via the terms outlined in article 2.2.2.
- 2.4. Ordinary Cadre Votes can be added to the weekly meeting agenda by the request of any Cadre member in the same manner as agenda items are requested in general.
- 2.5. Major disagreement may arise during our practice and take the form of interpersonal conflict that threatens the cohesion of the Cadre. Interpersonal conflict resolution is not the personal responsibility of the parties directly involved, but the responsibility of the Cadre as a whole;
 - 2.5.1. Notwithstanding, interpersonal conflict may be resolved in a less-than-formal, organically developed manner which does not require officially sanctioned organizational power.
 - 2.5.2. In certain cases, no matter their relation to the conflict, any Cadre member may deem that the Cadre should commit its power to conflict mediation. In this case, the Cadre member may request a 'Red Flag' item to be added to the weekly meeting agenda,
 - 2.5.3. A quorum of three Cadre members who are not directly involved in the conflict must be present at the relevant meeting to act as a Preliminary Jury to decide whether the Cadre will proceed to mediate;
 - 2.5.4. If mediation is agreed to, after the meeting, the Preliminary Jury can begin a process wherein a Special Council of Three is selected to adjudicate and guide a mediation process.
- 2.6. During meetings, all Cadre participate in a rotational division of work that is required to facilitate Cadre Meetings known as the Roles-Rotation. The operation of these roles is not strictly limited to work that happens during meetings. Cadre will fulfill the powers of each role in accordance with an agreed upon, dialectically evolving set of norms and customs outlined in corresponding open source documents that will be found in the NSRA Operations Manual available in the Cadre Drive.

- 2.7. All Cadre participate in the training and induction of Pre-Cadre during their four-month training period
- 2.8. If a member of the Cadre is unable to retain tenancy under M. Fishman & Co. for reasons out of their or the Cadre's control, this member can make it known to the Cadre that they wish to retain their Cadre membership. Otherwise, they will be considered resigned from the Cadre.
 - 2.8.1. If they do decide to retain their membership, Cadre will reevaluate their status after a period of 6 months, at which point they can retire them using an ordinary Cadre Vote or allow them to remain affiliated indefinitely. In the latter case, The Cadre will continue to monitor their status on a touch-and-go basis .
- 2.9. Members can voluntarily leave the Cadre at any time in one of two ways, Resignation from The Organization at-large, or Self-Demotion.
 - 2.9.1. Resignation must be submitted in writing and will be effective immediately. If the resigned member desires to join again at a later date, they may do so by the relevant processes outlined elsewhere in this Constitution.
 - 2.9.2. If a member desires to relinquish Cadre powers for whatever reason, but otherwise wishes to remain a member of N.S.R.A., they may request Self-Demotion. Self-Demotion will be a process suited for individuals for particular reasons, and the terms of the process will be formalized in a special meeting convened for the purpose. 100% of the Cadre is quorum to approve the terms of Self-Demotion.
 - 2.9.3. Once a Cadre has demoted themselves, they may apply for readmittance to the Cadre no sooner than 6 months later in the manner detailed under article 2.10.

Pre-Cadre

- 2.10. Pre-Cadre are General Members who have declared a desire to become Cadre and have entered a four-month training period initiated upon agreement by The Cadre. This period must be completed before admittance to the Cadre. Over the course of the training period;
 - 2.10.1. Upon application, Pre-Cadre will be required to disclose all additional affiliations with external political organizations including their role and responsibilities therein.

- 2.10.2. Pre-Cadre will be trained by the Cadre in the decisive practices of The Organization. This includes everything covered in this Constitution and the Operations Manual.
- 2.10.3. Pre-Cadre must attend 75% of NSRA meetings during the training period, without missing more than two consecutive meetings at any time during the training period
- 2.10.4. During meetings, Pre-Cadre must train in each of the rotational meeting facilitation Roles.
- 2.10.5. Fulfillment of the training requirements does not automatically result in admission to the Cadre. At the end of the training period, the Cadre will reflect and vote on induction. All Cadre must be present in this decision.

General Membership

- 2.11. General Membership is made up of tenants who both pay rent to M. Fishman & Co. and support The Organization by paying dues. General Members are encouraged to provide additional power to The Organization but do so on a voluntary basis.
- 2.12. General Membership do not have any powers that Affiliates do not also have, except insofar as by paying dues General Members become eligible to apply for Pre-Cadre.

Affiliate

- 2.13. An Affiliate is any tenant who pays rent to M. Fishman & Co. Affiliate members are encouraged to provide power to The Organization but do so on a voluntary basis.

Discipline

- 2.14. At any time, a simple majority of the Cadre may determine that a member of The Organization outside of the Cadre has acted contrary to its principles, aims and objectives.
- 2.15. There are no formal disciplinary measures in place for such members outside of the Cadre. Nevertheless, the member in question, like every

member of NSRA, is subject to the criticism of the at-large membership, and the Cadre retains executive power to act in the service the membership to discipline the member in question to whatever extent they see fit in accordance with the principles, aims and objectives of The Organization. Disciplinary measures may include but are not limited to expulsion, denunciation, suspension, or demotion.

- 2.16. If the member in question belongs to the Cadre, a formal disciplinary process may be considered. Such consideration may occur via any channel of communication available to the Cadre, public or otherwise. Formal disciplinary action proceeds as follows;
- 2.17. The formal disciplinary process may proceed in the style of Suspension, Expulsion or Demotion. Discipline always defaults to suspension, however any Cadre except the member in question may argue that the penalty be upgraded to Demotion, or Expulsion.
 - 2.17.1. In the case of Suspension, an ordinary Cadre Vote is sufficient to begin discipline.
 - 2.17.2. In a case in which Demotion or Expulsion or deemed necessary, an extraordinary Cadre Vote is required.
 - 2.17.3. Communication of disciplinary action involving the Cadre will be conveyed to General Membership in a manner detailed in the Operations Manual.

Cadre Suspension

- 2.18. If Suspension is the discipline agreed to, the vote and suspension period proceeds in the following manner:
 - 2.18.1. If the suspended member belongs to the Cadre, they immediately lose all Cadre voting powers for a period of three months beginning on the day of the vote to suspend.
 - 2.18.2. For the period of suspension, the disciplined Cadre also does not count towards the vote quorum. At the end of this period, another ordinary Cadre Vote occurs to determine whether: (a) The discipline has been sufficient, in which case all ordinary powers are returned to the disciplined Cadre or, (b) three months are to be added to the Suspension period before another ordinary Cadre Vote to reinstate the member is held. Such periods may be added indefinitely.

- 2.18.3. During the Suspension period, Cadre in good standing will routinely check in with the disciplined member, affirm their standing with The Organization and field their critiques of the disciplinary process.
- 2.18.4. The formal disciplinary process is not intended to be punitive, but educational whenever possible. Furthermore, diminishing the power of a Cadre via discipline reduces our collective power and it is in everyone's interest to retain maximum collective power at all times. Therefore, at any time during the Suspension period, Cadre in good standing may introduce additional measures for the disciplined member to undergo in the pursuit of learning from our mistakes. These additional measures will be strictly voluntary but incentivized by reductions in the disciplinary period, the scope of which is to be weighed by the judgment of the Cadre.
- 2.18.5. At any time during the Suspension period, the disciplined Cadre may resign from the organization at large (see article 2.9.1.) or Self-Demote (see article 2.9.2.)

Cadre Expulsion

- 2.19. If Expulsion is the discipline agreed to, the discipline proceeds in the following manner:
 - 2.19.1. An extraordinary Cadre Vote requiring a quorum equal to the entire Cadre minus the member in question must be held. This may occur in person if the entire Cadre is present. Otherwise the vote to expel will be held in the General Membership chat with the same quorum.
 - 2.19.2. If the expulsion vote fails, any member of the cadre may call for an ordinary Cadre Vote to suspend the member in question. If this vote passes, discipline is to proceed in the manner described in article 2.16.2 and below.
 - 2.19.3. If the expulsion vote passes, the penalized member is immediately expelled from the organization. Dues will cease to be collected from the expelled member effective the following collection period.
 - 2.19.4. If the expelled member is an elected member (e.g. Treasurer), the Cadre will hold an extraordinary election via Cadre Vote to elect a

temporary replacement, until an appropriate General Vote can be held for long-term elections.

- 2.19.5. In six months time, the expelled member may apply for readmittance to The Organization pending an ordinary Cadre Vote. If the member is granted readmittance they may join as a General Member with all of the corresponding powers.

Cadre Demotion

- 2.20. If Demotion is the discipline agreed to, matters proceed in the following manner;
 - 2.20.1. An extraordinary Cadre Vote requiring a quorum equal to the entire Cadre minus the member in question must be held. This may occur in person if the entire Cadre is present. Otherwise the vote to demote will be held in the General Membership chat with the same quorum.
 - 2.20.2. If the demotion vote fails, any member of the Cadre may call for an ordinary Cadre Vote to suspend the member in question. If this vote passes, discipline is to proceed in the manner described in article 2.16.2 and below.
 - 2.20.3. If the demotion vote passes, the demoted member is immediately re-established as a General Member with all of the same powers.
 - 2.20.4. After a period of 6 months, the demoted member may request to rejoin the Cadre and will be readmitted pending an ordinary Cadre Vote. The process of readmittance will be determined by the executive power of the Cadre on a case-by-case basis.

The Process of Appeal

- 2.21. After the Cadre has voted to carry out a disciplinary process, the disciplined member may appeal the decision at the following Cadre Meeting.

Democratic Centralism

- 2.22. To foster and maintain unity of action among the group, all Cadre and Pre-Cadre are obliged to uphold the results of all Cadre Votes, regardless of their own position on the issue at hand prior to the vote and their opinions on the result.
 - 2.22.1. The Cadre will uphold a spirit of free and open debate before coming to decisions or holding votes.
 - 2.22.2. Every Cadre is free to criticize any other, question their positions and challenge their views without fear of reprisal, no matter their perceived or official standing in The Organization.
 - 2.22.3. If a simple majority of the Cadre determine that another member has acted contrary to article 2.22., the member in question will subject themselves to a formal critique and self-critique.
 - 2.22.4. Repeat violation of article 2.22 will result in the initiation of a formal disciplinary process in one of the manners described under section 2.17.
- 2.23. The Organization must always strive to retain a critical attitude toward its own decisions and make repeated re-evaluations of the line it takes on every issue.

Finances

- 2.24. NSRA is financed in three ways: Dues, Cadre Personal Fund and Donations. The sum total of money in possession of the Organization at any given time is referred to as the Treasury.
- 2.25. Dues are collected monthly from General Membership, Pre-Cadre and Cadre;
 - 2.25.1. The minimum amount of money accepted as Dues is \$5 per month. Anything given above that amount is done on a voluntary, pay-what-you-can basis and does not earn a member special powers.
 - 2.25.2. Any expense wanting over \$200 worth of Dues shall require approval by simple majority through a General Vote;
 - 2.25.3. This vote will be held in the General Membership chat and be open for a 48-hour period.

- 2.26. Cadre are expected to contribute and split costs for special expenses that arise in the course of our work that go above and beyond what is covered by Dues in what is called the Cadre Personal Fund (CPF).
- 2.27. The Organization holds an open channel for one-time donations and recurring monthly donations from individuals outside of the purview of our M. Fishman & Co. properties. This does not grant these individuals any special organizational powers, including the power to vote regarding the use of these funds. These powers are reserved for dues-paying tenants of M. Fishman & Co.
- 2.28. The Treasury will be overseen by a Treasurer elected from the Cadre yearly at the Constitutional Assembly.
 - 2.28.1. Treasurer will hold dues in an FDIC-insured bank account,
 - 2.28.2. Treasurer will provide Treasury Reports upon request from Cadre or General Membership. These shall entail a simple financial statement concerning the amount of Dues presently available for Organizational work and what Dues have been spent on in the preceding 3 months.
 - 2.28.3. It is the power of the Treasurer to oversee the settling of any outstanding CPF debts that have been recorded in the 'expenses' ledger.
 - 2.28.4. Treasurer is recallable at any time by Cadre Vote.

Communication

- 2.29. There will be two categories of communication used in NSRA, known as External Communication and Internal Communication, each with different procedures and forms. External Communication covers all information-sharing that reaches between NSRA and outside persons, organizations and other entities of whatever kind. This includes email, webpage and social media communications. Internal Communication covers all information shared strictly within the membership of the organization itself, composed primarily of the storage Drive, the calendar, private and semi-public group chats.

External Communication

- 2.30. NSRA has an online and social media presence. Every member of the Cadre shall have access to the password for these accounts as well as the power to use them.
- 2.30.1.1. Using social media is a skill and therefore may become the special purview of Cadre who are especially apt or interested in the practice. Experience has not yet provided the Organization a strong impulse to formalize a social media code of conduct. In lieu of this, Cadre members using social media are expected to act with decorum established by organically evolving critique and self-critique that analyzes our practice as it stands against our principles, furthermore;
 - 2.30.1.2. At each yearly Constitutional Assembly, our social media practice will be reviewed and a decision will be made as to whether a code of conduct shall be drafted and implemented.
- 2.30.2. The Organization focuses on mass work through an evolving variety of methods including but not limited to external political education, canvassing, tabling, semi-regular publications and social investigation.

Internal Communication

- 2.31. Internal organizational information will be kept and organized in an online storage drive that is made accessible to all members of the Cadre. At all times, the Cadre Drive will be up-to-date with essential organizational information, such as this Constitution, meeting agendas, meeting notes, and tenant contacts.
- 2.32. NSRA relies on one regularly scheduled, in-person mode of internal communication known as the weekly Cadre Meeting.

Constitution

- 2.33. Once a year, there will be an in-person Constitutional Assembly where this document will be extensively criticized and amended. All Cadre and Pre-Cadre must be present for this assembly. If a Cadre or Pre-cadre

member cannot attend the assembly, they must notify the Cadre 24 hours in advance and will not count towards the quorum. General Membership and Affiliates are encouraged to join and bring proposals for draft amendments.

- 2.34. The first Constitutional Assembly will occur no later than April 30 2024. In addition to the provisional assembly procedure detailed in the assembly planning document, the assembly will conclude with a period of critique in which this section is re-written based on feedback from the assembly.
- 2.35. Amendments shall be submitted at the start of the meeting. No new amendments will be accepted once the meeting commences.